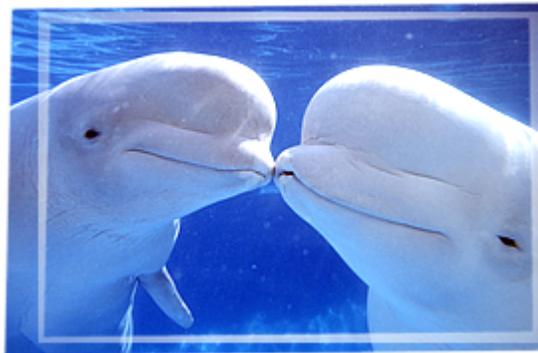




CONSERVATION OF ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

CAFF



Beluga Whales

**Progress Report
October 2006-March 2007**

**Presented to the Senior Arctic Officials
Tromsø, Norway
12-13 April 2007**

CAFF
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

CAFF has begun work on the projects listed in the 2006-2008 Work Plan. There continues to be a strong focus on the follow-up to the ACIA through the CBMP and on the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. CAFF is also prepared to contribute to new projects as requested by the SAOs and those being developed under the Norwegian chairmanship, including adaptation to climate change (e.g. migratory species, protected areas), and on integrated oceans management. There are also new initiatives to report.

FOLLOW-UP OF CAFF WORK PLAN, CBMP AND EXPERT GROUPS

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

Canada continues its commitment to lead the CBMP and fund the CBMP Secretariat located in Whitehorse. The CBMP is structured around an ecosystem based management approach, and built up as a coordination of existing species, habitat and site-based networks. The following projects have received funding under the Canadian IPY: 1) **CARMA** - *Monitoring the Impacts of Global Change on Caribou and Wild Reindeer and their Link to Human Communities* (CARMA publication to AC Ministers 2006) – several million dollars over the next five years. 2) **ITEX** - *Climate Change Impacts on Canadian Arctic Tundra* (ITEX publication to AC Ministers 2004) - several million dollars over the next five years. 3) *Climate Variability and Change Effects on Chars in the Arctic* – several million dollars over the next five years. 4) *Arctic Freshwater Systems* – several million dollars over the next five years. However, the CBMP Secretariat did not receive Canadian IPY funding. CARMA and ITEX are officially established networks under the CBMP. Arctic Char is under development as a CBMP network. Arctic freshwater systems may develop into a CBMP established network.

A complete list of all IPY-funded projects related to the CBMP, for all CAFF countries, will be included in the 2007 CBMP Annual Report.

An international CBMP workshop was organized in Anchorage in November 2006 where over 100 participants helped in the development of a draft Implementation Plan. *A draft Overview Document for the CBMP Implementation Plan is being presented to the Senior Arctic Officials for this meeting.*

The Arctic Marine Mammal Workshop for Ringed Seals and Beluga Whales was conducted 4-6 March in Spain (CAFF Work Plan Item: 5.7). Discussions on developing circumpolar monitoring strategies are proceeding. The US Marine Mammal Commission and others at this workshop have expressed interest in cooperation with the CBMP in writing implementation plans for these species.

A Stakeholders workshop is being planned for fall, 2007 in Washington DC with the intention to engage new partners for implementation of the CBMP.

ECORA- an integrated ecosystem approach to conserve biodiversity and minimize habitat fragmentation in the Russian Arctic

CAFF is continuing to contribute to ECORA, a 5-year Global Environment Facility (GEF) project between CAFF, the Russian Federation and UNEP/GRID-Arendal. The immediate project objective is the adoption and implementation of Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) strategies and action plans in Kolguev Island Model Area, Kolyma River Basin Model Area, and Beringovsky District Model Area. 2006 saw the implementation of a number of activities of the project, with a particular emphasis on field studies and training activities. Key upcoming activities in 2007 are the drafting of IEM Strategies and Action Plans and the development of pilot projects to test IEM projects in the Model Areas. The pilot projects are intended to be of

short duration that can show some early benefits of adopting IEM strategies. A Mid-term Review (MTR) will be undertaken by GEF in 2007 in order to monitor and evaluate the project and to provide a basis for possible amendments and improvements.

ACIA Follow-up and an Arctic Observing Network

CAFF remains prepared to contribute to AMAP efforts on climate change monitoring and to SDWG on necessary adaptation efforts in the Arctic. CAFF's response to ACIA follow-up is primarily through the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), community-based monitoring as part of the cooperation with Permanent Participants, and the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. CAFF will also work on additional aspects of ACIA follow-up through IPY-endorsed projects, and projects by CAFF's expert groups, CBird and CFG. The CBMP has been put forth as the biodiversity component of an Arctic observing network (in support of the coordinated action requested by SAOs regarding an Arctic observing network as referred to in the 2006 Salekhard Declaration).

Sacred Sites Workshop as follow-up to Sacred Sites Report of 2004

RAIPON will hold this Workshop in Salekhard 6-7 April 2007. The Swedish National Representative is representing CAFF at this workshop. The government of Yamal is funding a large percentage of this workshop. Canada has provided some additional funds. However, it is extremely important that RAIPON receive financial assistance to cover additional costs of this workshop. The CAFF International Secretariat has issued a reprint of the Sacred Sites Report to be distributed at the workshop. This Workshop has direct relevance to the interest of the Norwegian Chairmanship to increase focus on cultural heritage in the Arctic, especially as linked to the protected areas and sacred sites of the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic. It is hoped that this workshop will become a model which other Indigenous communities may use in protection and management of their cultural heritage sites (Work Plan item 2.4).

CAFF Expert Groups

Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group - CBird

CBird conducted its 13th annual meeting 28 Feb-3 March 2007 in Stockholm, Sweden. A progress report from this CBird meeting will be posted on the CAFF Website in April. The meeting was attended by about 25 seabird specialists and managers representing the nine Arctic countries including the Faroe Islands, and an official observer from Great Britain along with several interested local attendees. CBird primarily focused its attention on the following issues: Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, Birds of Arctic Conservation Concern, International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy, Seabird Information Network (SIN), Harvest of Seabirds in the Arctic, Seabird Gillnet Bycatch, Arctic Seabird Status and Trends Report, a Circumpolar Black-legged Kittiwake Status and Trends Report.

The Nordic countries have completed a database of seabird colonies, and there is also an existing North Pacific Seabird Colony Database. CBird has proposed to create a Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database, which would be web-based and make data readily available to all users. CBird has 6 products that are high priority for completion. These include: (1) CAFF Technical Report on Birds of Arctic Conservation Concern; (2) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Framework; (3) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan; (4) International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy; (5) Technical Report on Seabird Gillnet Bycatch; and (6) Harvest of Seabirds in the Arctic (Work Plan items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.3).

CAFF Flora Group - CFG

The Flora Group meeting is scheduled for 15-18 May 2007 in Torshavn, Faroe Islands. This workshop will also be used to begin the work on the circum-Arctic boreal vegetation map.

Funding still needs to be obtained for the full-scale boreal vegetation mapping workshop (Work Plan item 2.3). Links to the Red Lists of endangered plant species for each of the CAFF countries are now being put up on the new CAFF website (Work Plan item 1.5).

Circumpolar Protected Areas Network - CPAN

CPAN remains dormant until a CAFF country takes the position of lead country. CAFF continues discussions on CPAN in accordance with Work Plan item 2.2.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER WORKING GROUPS

CAFF-AMAP Cooperation

CAFF-AMAP cooperation continues to progress. CAFF and AMAP are now preparing a *Green Paper* which takes the process of harmonizing monitoring between the two Working Groups to the next level. In addition, each country has been asked to submit a national list of ongoing monitoring activities that relate to a joint CAFF/AMAP mandate, or both. With the *Green Paper* and this list of ongoing national monitoring programs, the two Working Groups are developing a plan for further joint action. The success of CAFF-AMAP harmonization is through coordinating already existing national monitoring programs. In addition, new projects may be initiated to realize circumpolar coverage of already ongoing national programs.

PAME - Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA), Large Marine Ecosystems (LME), Regional Program of Action (RPA), Marine Sensitive Areas SDWG/PAME Integrated Oceans Management (IOM)

CAFF met with PAME in Tromsø in January to identify areas of potential cooperation on the AMSA, RPA, LMEs and Marine Sensitive Areas. A CAFF representative attended the PAME Working Group annual meeting in March to more formally identify how CAFF and PAME will broaden their cooperation. A CAFF representative also attended the SDWG/PAME meeting in Tromsø in February on the Norwegian-led project on integrated oceans management (IOM), and CAFF remains prepared to contribute to this project as appropriate.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

CAFF cooperation with UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal

CAFF has continued a close cooperation with UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal on development and data management of the CBMP and a web-based portal.

CAFF cooperation with IUCN

The CAFF Flora Group is now the official Arctic Plants Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN. In addition, the Chair of the CBMP will be at IUCN for one year beginning in June 2006. CAFF is now beginning the process of formulating a joint project with the Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) of IUCN in connection with the CBMP. A proposal for a circumpolar project is currently being written by the chair of the PBSG.

Cooperation with oil and gas industry on biodiversity conservation efforts

CAFF is continuing dialog with the biodiversity working group of IPIECA and OGP (the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association and Oil and Gas Producers), to develop possible joint projects.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF CAFF

CAFF Management Board Meetings

CAFF held four management board meetings in 2006, and the first of 2007 was just held in Copenhagen 8-9 February 2007. The next CAFF management board meeting is set for 5-7 September 2007 in Copenhagen.

NEW PROJECTS

2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment

The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment was endorsed by AC Ministers in Salekhard 2006. This Assessment is part of CAFF's follow-up to ACIA. The US, Canada, Finland, Russia and Greenland are considering co-leading this assessment, but the only firm commitment to date is from Finland conditional upon other countries sharing as co-leads. There is also strong interest expressed by the PPs to participate. *A draft 2010 ABA Work Plan and Financial Strategy have been prepared, as requested by the SAOs in Salekhard. However, this document has to undergo final CAFF Board review before submission to the SAOs.*

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Additional Submissions to SAOs

1. *CBMP Implementation Plan – Draft Overview Document – for information only – no decisions needed by SAOs*