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CAFF-IASC Science Policy Fellowship *For information/decision*



BACKGROUND:

As two international organizations based in Akureyri, Iceland, the Conservation of Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and Arctic Council Observer the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), teamed up together and with the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) to help early career scientists get more involved in the process of taking research from results through to science policy recommendations.

The first CAFF-IASC Science Policy Fellowship program ran from Jan 2018 – Jan 2019. This memo provides an overview of the outcomes of the fellowship and recommendations for a second cohort. The goals of the Fellowship program were to:

- Provide an opportunity for early career scientists to participate in international science cooperation;
- Provide the fellows experience in the process of taking research from results through to science policy recommendations; and
- Provide opportunities for CAFF and IASC to gain new perspectives and engagement from the next generation of scientists.

Two early career scientists, Erica Oberndorfer (Canada) and Thomas Lameris (the Netherlands) were selected based upon a competitive application process organised by the Association of Early Career Scientists (APECS). The two fellows joined, respectively, the CBMP Terrestrial and AMBI Steering Committees (SC). 37 applications were received for only 2 slots, clearly demonstrating the interest in opportunities for early career Arctic scientists to get more involved in the process of taking research from results through to science policy recommendations. Each fellow was expected to:

- Attend several meetings over the course of the fellowship including a CAFF Board meeting, Project meeting, and the Arctic Biodiversity Congress; and
- Contribute to a report developed by the respective initiatives the fellows joined.

The total cost of the program was 16,000 Euros with funding coming from Sweden (11,000 Euros) and IASC (5,000 Euros). The program has proved very effective both at providing experience to the Fellows and in providing benefit to CAFF and IASC in the form of contributions to reports, meeting organisation and participation.

ACTIVITIES OF FELLOWS:

Thomas Lameris:

- Meetings:
 - CAFF board meeting (Chena, Alaska, 6-8 February 2018)
 - AMBI steering group meeting and workshop (Rovaniemi, 7-8 October 2018)
 - Arctic Biodiversity Congress (Rovaniemi, 9-11 October 2018)
 - Several bi-weekly group calls AMBI steering group
- Contributions to CAFF-IASC documents and reports:
 - Co-development of text for IASC information page for early career researchers
 - Contributions to AMBI work plan 2.0 for the African-Eurasian flyway
 - Lead author on review on the impacts of climate warming on Arctic migratory birds
 - Co-presenter on behalf of the Netherlands during AMBI workshop Rovaniemi
- Contributions to the Arctic Biodiversity Congress (Rovaniemi 9-12 Oct 2018):
 - Rapporteur for 3 sessions

Erica Oberndorfer

- Meetings
 - CAFF Board meeting (Chena, Alaska; 6-8 Feb 2018)
 - CBMP Terrestrial Group (Copenhagen, 23-26 Apr 2018)
 - CBMP Terrestrial Group (Rovaniemi, 8 Oct 2018)
 - Arctic Biodiversity Congress (Rovaniemi 9-12 Oct 2018)
 - Monthly CBMP Terrestrial Group calls
 - IASC Fellowship calls
- Contributions to CAFF-IASC documents and reports:
 - CAFF-IASC Fellowship report on board meeting
 - Co-development of text for IASC information page for early career researchers
 - Contributions to IASC Early Career Fellowship Program Guidelines
 - Ongoing contributions to State of the Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity (START) Report and AMBIO special issue
- Contributions to the Arctic Biodiversity Congress (Rovaniemi 9-12 Oct 2018):
 - Presented paper: Oberndorfer, E., Lundholm, J., Broomfield, T., & Ljubicic, G. (2018). Biodiversity and cultural landscapes: Inuit cultural practices increase small-scale biodiversity and create novel vegetation communities in Nunatsiavut (Labrador, Canada). Arctic Biodiversity Congress.
 - Invited panellist: Oberndorfer, E. (2018). The State of the Arctic Biodiversity Terrestrial Report (START) The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, Terrestrial.
 - Session chair for 1 session
 - Rapporteur for 5 sessions

FELLOWSHIP REPORT (authored by the Fellows):

Introduction:

In January 2018, we were selected as CAFF-IASC Fellows for one year. Our aim as CAFF-IASC Fellows was to contribute to the work of these organizations, and in particular to contribute to the CAFF Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative steering group and CBMP Terrestrial group, respectively. In this report, we reflect on our experiences during this fellowship, and detail the opportunities we had to be involved with these organizations.

Reflections on the CAFF-IASC Fellowship:

“Being a CAFF-IASC fellow has helped me to find my way in the world of conservation policy, and to connect my research with conservation of Arctic migratory birds. By attending several meetings, I have established connections with an international network of conservationists, which has also helped to increase my connection with conservation and policy on a national level in the Netherlands. The experience of being a fellow in 2018 drives me to continue to interweave conservation, both in CAFF and other organizations, with my scientific research on Arctic biodiversity, and to stay active as a conservationist. Also, my intention is to finish writing the review on climate warming effects on Arctic migratory birds, which I started in 2018 during my time as a fellow”. -*Thomas Lameris*

“The CAFF-IASC Fellowship provided an accelerated introduction to the international networks that collaboratively advance Arctic biodiversity conservation, and the mechanisms through which conservation science and policy advance one another. The Fellowship has been a tremendous opportunity to participate in these processes, and to contribute in a tangible way to the state of Arctic biodiversity knowledge. The CAFF-IASC Fellowship is a powerful tool for encouraging early career researchers to connect their knowledge and findings to broader conservation initiatives”. -*Erica Oberndorfer*

Conclusions:

We view this fellowship as having delivered mutual value for us as Fellows, and for CAFF and IASC as the fellowship host organizations. We anticipate that our involvement with CAFF-IASC will continue into the future, and that we will continue to bring the experience acquired during our fellowship to the work of these organizations. We also see our role continuing as peer mentors for incoming CAFF-IASC Fellows. Overall, the CAFF-IASC Fellowship has been an exceptional experience for us as early career researchers. We would like to highlight the welcoming and collaborative spirit of the colleagues we have worked with in these organizations, and especially acknowledge Tom Barry and Allen Pope for their guidance and commitment to the success of this fellowship program.

RECEPTION & PROGRAM FUTURE:

The CAFF-IASC Fellowship program was positive and productive. The future of the CAFF-IASC fellowship is dependent on the availability of funding as well as continuing to identify appropriate projects and mentors. The demand and interest in this program are clearly present and the extension/expansion of the program would help future Arctic science experts to provide policy-relevant information to the Arctic Council and other Arctic decision makers. In addition to continuing the CAFF-IASC Fellowship, it would be interesting to consider expanding this model to other Arctic Council working groups.