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## The Arctic Council and biodiversity – need for a governance framework beyond monitoring and assessments?

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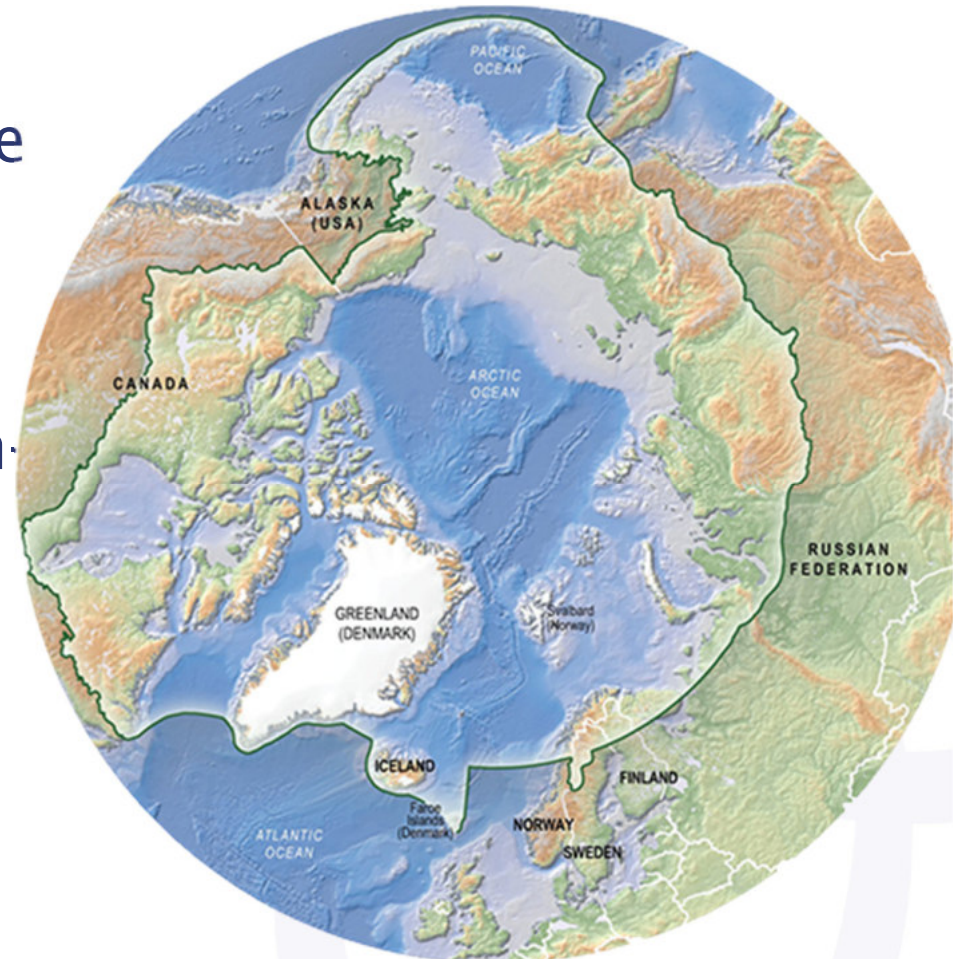
*‘there is a wide gap between what we know and how we act. Although research to fill gaps in knowledge is still needed, there is enough knowledge about what needs to be done to act now. A companion to this message is the urgent need to shorten the time it takes for scientific understanding to be translated into policy in the Arctic.’*

Co-chairs report from Arctic Biodiversity Congress, 2014.



# Areas of research

- To what extent does the Arctic Council provide the institutional, policy and regulatory means necessary to protect it?
- What are the roles of non-state actors (science, business and NGOs) in Arctic biodiversity governance?
- Implications of the UN BBNJ process on Arctic marine biodiversity governance?



# Biodiversity in the Arctic Council

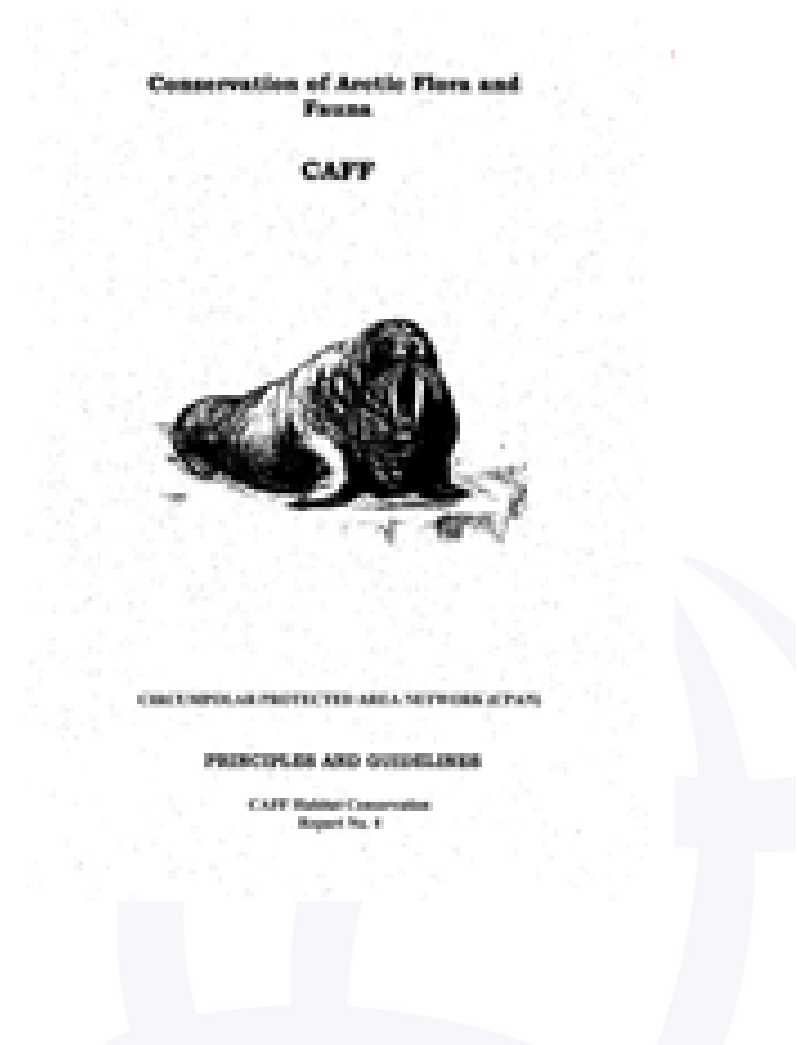
- Working group on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) established under the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, (AEPS) in 1991 and continued under the Arctic Council.
- CAFF quickly aligned itself with CBD approaches – especially the ecosystem approach – and later the ecosystem services approach.
- Biodiversity is cross-cutting - has ramifications in all AC working groups.
- The original CAFF mandate was not only scientific! a mix of scientific, policy and regulatory approaches.



# Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN)

Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) –early ambitious CAFF endeavour that was stopped in 2004 due to lack of political buy-in.

CAFF from then on focused mainly on scientific cooperation.



# International biodiversity commitments and Arctic Council/CAFF

- International biodiversity commitments have guided the work of the Arctic Council /CAFF in generating new scientific knowledge on Arctic biodiversity.



- In return this knowledge has proven very useful for the various global biodiversity-related regimes and has contributed to greater global awareness on Arctic biodiversity.





# Global and regional regimes relevant for Arctic biodiversity governance



# Recent and ongoing international cooperation relevant for Arctic biodiversity

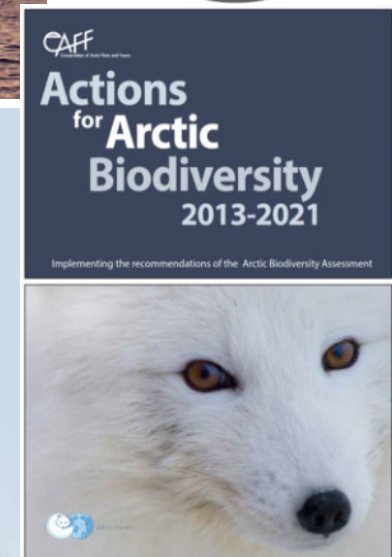
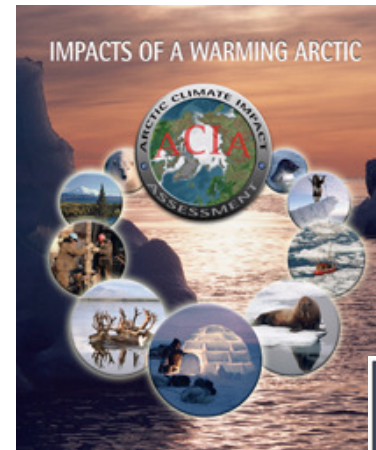
- Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement concluded in 2017.(«Arctic 5 + 5”)
- Negotiations has begun in the UN on an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).





# Arctic Biodiversity cornerstones

- **The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) 2005.**
- **Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP).** Focuses on the major ecosystems of the Arctic – freshwater, coastal, marine and terrestrial. Marine status report issued in 2017.
- **Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) (2013).** 17 policy recommendations.
- **Arctic Biodiversity Congress (2014, 2018).** Largest gathering of people in the history of the Arctic Council.
- **Actions for Arctic Biodiversity, 2013 – 2021: Implementing the recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. (2015).**



## Actions for Arctic Biodiversity, 2013 – 2021:

- Plan for implementation of the 17 ABA policy recommendations in two-year periods.
- «Actions» mainly concern new knowledge generation, guidance, public awareness, data collection and outreach activities by CAFF or other AC bodies - not much policy and actions on the ground.



# Important proceedings outside the biodiversity context

- Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP) (2015)
- Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSAII) (2013)
- Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (2015)
- 3 legally binding agreements concluded. (oil spill preparedness and response, search and rescue and scientific cooperation.
- Targets and guidelines for the reduction of black carbon.
- Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC) (2015).



# Arctic Council Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC)

- Established 2015 *“to assess future needs for a regional seas program or other mechanism, as appropriate, for increased cooperation in Arctic marine areas” and “to make recommendations on the nature and scope of any such mechanisms.”*
- 2017: Mandate renewed for the TFAMC *to establish “terms of reference for a possible new subsidiary Body, and recommendations for complementary enhancements to existing Arctic Council mechanisms, for consideration by Ministers in 2019.”*
- Overall strategic objective: The Ecosystem Approach.
- Links to SDG Goal 14 on oceans, and the BBNJ process.
- *“Arctic marine cooperation should develop among the Arctic States and evolve within the Arctic Council, consolidating and strengthening the Council’s marine work”.*



# Non-state actors: Business

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, recommendation 4:

*Require the incorporation of biodiversity objectives and provisions into all Arctic Council work and encourage the same for on-going and future international standards, agreements, plans, operations and/or other tools specific to development in the Arctic. This should include, but not be restricted to, oil and gas development, shipping, fishing, tourism and mining.*

- Actions for Biodiversity 2013 – 2021:
  - *Strengthen collaboration with industry in Arctic biodiversity monitoring.*
  - *Develop, as needed, binding and/or voluntary agreements/standards that work towards the harmonization of industry-specific and cross-industry standards related to the conservation and/or sustainable use of biodiversity.*
  - *Strengthen and develop new strategic partnerships, particularly with industry, to seek innovative solutions and expand responsibility for taking care of biodiversity.*
- Apparently, no guidelines for business will be developed. Case study for incorporation of biodiversity concerns into the work of a selected industry: Mining.



# Non-state actors: NGOs

- Key NGOs: World Conservation Union (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Both Arctic Council Observers.
- WWF: Arctic Program since 1992. 2017: Partner in the TEEB Arctic Scoping Study. WWF Arctic Council Conservation Scorecard. Initiative on a pan-Arctic marine protected network. (PAN PAM).
- IUCN: CAFF Flora Expert Group serves as an IUCN Arctic plants specialist group. IUCN provides the scientific advisory group for the Polar Bear Agreement.





# Some concluding remarks

- Scientific knowledge generation has been the backbone of Arctic Council/CAFF work on biodiversity guided by international commitments. But, lacking executive powers, the AC has not been in a position to take joint implementation measures in response.
- Other areas of AC cooperation have moved further in policy-making and setting norms.
- Business involvement has been limited. How could its role be stronger? Observer status in the AC?
- NGO involvement has been mainly through WWF and IUCN and mainly to support scientific work.
- Would there be stronger incentives for non-state actors involvement if AC was more policy-making and norm setting?
- Would it be more in the interest of the Permanent Participants?



# Areas for strengthened Arctic cooperation on biodiversity

- Maintain the high scientific quality!
- Speed up collaboration with industry on incorporation of biodiversity concerns.
- Establish a framework for Arctic marine governance (through the Task Force or otherwise) including
  - a network of Arctic marine protected areas;
  - a regime for protection of biodiversity in the Central Arctic Ocean.

