



International Expert Workshop on the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators and Post-2010 Indicator Development

A workshop convened by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)

In cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Hosted by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with funding provided by the European Commission (EC), the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

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The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

Support for the workshop provided by the following:



The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

The arctic plays host to a globally significant array of biodiversity and the size and nature of Arctic ecosystems make them of critical importance to the biological, chemical and physical balance of the globe.

The Arctic supports globally significant populations, including more than half of the world's shorebird species, 80% of the global goose populations, several million reindeer and caribou and many unique mammals. During the short summer breeding season, 279 species of birds arrive from all corners of the earth¹ to take advantage of the long days and intense period of productivity. Thirty species come from as far away as South Africa, twenty six from Australia and New Zealand and twenty two from South America. Several species of marine mammals, including grey and humpback whales and harp and hooded seals also join the migration.

The Arctic is estimated to contain a quarter of the world's remaining oil and gas reserves development of which is expected to increase. Already, 10% of the world's oil and 25% of the world's natural gas is produced in the Arctic, with the majority coming from the Russian Arctic².

The Arctic is a region of global significance and what happens there will have an effect felt far beyond its confines. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) (<http://www.amap.no/acia/index.html>) called for improved capacity to monitor and understand changes in the Arctic and to improve and enhance long-term Arctic biodiversity monitoring. The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) (www.caff.is/aba) is one of the primary vehicles by which the Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna (CAFF) Working Group of the Arctic Council (www.arctic-council.org) is responding to these calls.

The purpose of the ABA is to: *To synthesize and assess the status and trends of biological diversity in the Arctic.* The ABA will provide a baseline which will provide policy makers and conservation managers with a synthesis of the most current scientific research and traditional ecological knowledge. It will:

- Provide up to date scientific & traditional ecological knowledge
- Identify gaps in the data record
- Identify the main stressors
- Identify the key mechanisms driving change
- Produce recommendations

The ABA will serve as a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of Arctic biodiversity and form a key piece in the process of understanding what is happening and focusing efforts on those areas where it is most needed. The availability of such information in an easily accessible format will be of great value to the governments, organisations, and peoples of the Arctic region in their struggle to ensure the sustainability of Arctic biodiversity and Arctic communities.

¹ Except for the interior of Antarctica

² The Arctic Oil & Gas, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (2007), Page 17

The ABA is a dynamic assessment and consists of multiple activities that will be a springboard for future developments. Its primary deliverables and timeframes are:

1. *The Arctic 2010 Highlights Report* based upon the suite of indicators developed by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP) (www.cbmp.is). This is scheduled to be completed in 2010.
2. A full scientific assessment scheduled to be completed in 2013
3. Policy recommendations completed by 2013

Its first product *the Arctic 2010 Highlights report* will be completed by 2010 during the International Year of Biodiversity. The Arctic 2010 Highlights Report will present 22 indicators of trends in Arctic biodiversity based on the suite of indicators developed by the CBMP. This report will help to address the conservation of Arctic biodiversity by communicating the findings in a popular way and providing a preliminary assessment of the status and trends of key Arctic biodiversity indicators. It will also form the Arctic Council's input to the Third Global Biodiversity Outlook, being prepared by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The following are the indicators being addressed in the report:

<u>Species of Special Interest</u>	<u>Ecosystems</u>	<u>Ecosystem Goods and Services</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic Species Trend Index • Polar Bears • Reindeer/Caribou • Shorebirds (Red Knot) • Seabirds (Murre) • Seabirds (Common Eiders) • Range changes in invertebrates • Flora – bryophytes • Arctic Char • Lemmings • Invasive species – human induced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in protected areas <p><i>Terrestrial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greening of the Arctic • Reproductive phenology (including snow cover) <p><i>Freshwater</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permafrost change (appearance and disappearance of lakes) • Ice cover duration (including nutrient change) <p><i>Marine</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing distribution of fish • Seafloor destruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in harvest (subsistence & commercial) • Reindeer herding • Seabird harvest • Linguistic diversity <p><u>Genetic Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic genetic diversity

The ABA is led by Finland, Greenland/Denmark and the United States. Other members of the Steering Committee include Canada, UNEP GRID Arendal and UNEP WCMC, Gwich'in Council International, and the Arctic Athabaskan Council.

Further information can be found on the following website: - www.caff.is/aba or by contacting the CAFF Secretariat at Email: caff@caff.is Phone: +354 4613352