



# **CIRCUMPOLAR SEABIRD GROUP**

## **CBIRD XIV**

**Nuuk, Greenland  
8 February – 11 February 2008**

## **Meeting Report**

**February 2008**



**Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna**

**CIRCUMPOLAR SEABIRD GROUP**

**CBIRD XIV**

**Nuuk, Greenland**

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**Meeting Report**

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## ***I. Executive Summary***

The concept of a Circumpolar Seabird Group (CBird) was approved by CAFF in 1993 in recognition that Arctic countries have many seabird species in common and often share the same populations and conservation issues, and therefore share a joint and equal responsibility for their conservation. This was CBird's 14<sup>th</sup> meeting and in the past 14 years CBird has been instrumental in addressing and raising the visibility of priority circumpolar Arctic seabird conservation issues. It has published two Conservation Action Plans (Murre and Eiders), six CAFF Technical Reports, two editions of the Circumpolar Seabird Bulletin, three posters, 13 Progress Reports, and participated in numerous meetings and workshops. CBird is one of the species groups for the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program. CBird has been successful in meeting its objectives because the members are united and focused on their desire to conserve Arctic seabirds and realize that there is synergy in bringing experts from all Arctic countries together to address pressing circumpolar issues such as climate change. CBird meets once a year to ensure progress is made on their action items and projects.

CBird conducted its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in Nuuk, Greenland 8 to 11 February 2008. The meeting was attended by about 25 seabird specialists and managers representing the eight Arctic countries, and an official observer from UK along with several interested local attendees. CBird primarily focused its attention on the following issues: Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database, Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan, Birds of Arctic Conservation Concern, International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy, Seabird Information Network, Harvest of Seabirds in the Arctic, and a Circumpolar Black-legged Kittiwake Status and Trends [Paper](#). Funding for the Seabird Information Network and Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database was recently obtained and promises to speed the completion of these projects. The next year will be busy as always; CBird has four products that are high priority for completion. These include: (1) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Framework, (2) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan, (3) International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy, and (4) Harvest of Seabirds in the Arctic. For more details please see the Meeting Report that follows and the CAFF website [www.caff.is/](http://www.caff.is/) for the complete CBird XIV Meeting Report with all appendices attached.

## ***II. CAFF/Circumpolar Seabird Group Work Plan, 2006-2008, Progress in 2007***

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna  
Work Plan 2006 - 2008

### **A. Conserving Arctic Species**

- 1.1 Implement conservation strategies on Murres, Eiders, and Ivory Gulls (3 projects). *Lead: Canada, Norway*

Countries continued to implement applicable action items in the CAFF report “International Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan” and related national implementation plans, and report progress at the CBird XIV meeting. The first paper submitted to a peer-reviewed journal by CBird was recently accepted by *Global Change Biology*. The title of the paper is “Fluctuations in circumpolar seabird populations linked to climate oscillations”.

Countries continued to implement the “Circumpolar Eider Conservation Strategy and Action Plan”. It was noted that the eider population in Greenland has increased since new hunting regulations were implemented in 2002.

The final Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy is very near completion and will be delivered to CAFF in September. Since the issue of Ivory Gull declines had been recognized and the issue was promoted by CBird, new surveys have been completed in Canada, Norway, and Russia.

#### 1.2 Report on Seabird Harvest in the Arctic (two projects). *Lead: Greenland*

Countries reported on seabird harvest and implementation of applicable recommendations in CAFF Technical Report No. 5. Because of the recent increase in eiders in Greenland, discussions on revising the hunting regulations may begin soon in Greenland.

The draft Technical Report on circumpolar seabird harvest is near completion and will be delivered to CAFF in September.

#### 1.3 Begin work on writing a “Technical Report on Seabird Gillnet Bycatch” (one project). *Lead: US*

Each country reported on seabird gillnet bycatch issues at CBird XIV. We had proposed to write a CAFF Technical Report on the status of gillnet bycatch, however the lead on that report retired. No other delegates were able to take on this project at the time. We propose to move this project from the work plan to the “Future Projects” list.

### **B. Conserving Arctic Ecosystems and Habitats**

No CBird work at this time

### **C. Assessing and Monitoring Arctic Biodiversity**

#### 3.1 Complete a circumpolar seabird monitoring plan (one project). *Lead: Iceland and US*

The Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Network (CSMN) Framework was a prerequisite to writing the monitoring plan. We have completed the CSMN

CAFF, Circumpolar Seabird Group, CBird XVI, Nuuk, Greenland

Framework and will complete a draft Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan by September 2008.

3.2 Conduct analyses for papers on “The Status and Trends of Black-legged Kittiwakes” and “The Decline of Glaucous Gulls in the Arctic” (two projects).

*Lead: Norway, Iceland, Canada and US*

We had a work session on the ongoing analyses of the kittiwake data. It was suggested to examine possible co-variates such as sea surface temperature, chlorophyll, or zooplankton abundance. CBird will continue to analyze data.

The Glaucous Gull decline paper was discussed at CBird XIV and a draft will be completed for the 2008-2010 work plan.

3.3 Begin work on creating a web-based “Seabird Information Network” and a “Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database” (two projects). *Lead: Norway, Canada, US*

Canada has agreed to fund most of the Seabird Information Network and some of the other CAFF countries have agreed to contribute funding. Canada is letting a contract with a firm to complete Phase One, creating the web-based data entry system.

The US has funding to get the Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database started and has begun the process of contracting with a company to create an online version of the database.

**D. Global Issues**

4.1 Implement the CBird-STAMP Project (one project). *Lead: Norway, US*

A proposal was written with the idea being that CAFF would conduct the seabird population and productivity monitoring through CBird and that AMAP would conduct the seabird pollutant monitoring through STAMP. CAFF and AMAP are still discussing the joint project.

**E. Engaging Society**

5.1 Continue to produce the Circumpolar Seabird Bulletin (one project).

*Lead: US*

The members of CBird decided that while the Circumpolar Seabird Bulletin is a worthwhile product, with the new initiatives associated with CBMP, CBird has to prioritize how it spends the valuable time of the participating scientists and we concluded that the bulletin priority is below our threshold for products that will be completed.

5.2 Hold CBird XV in Iceland 23-26 September 2009; and CBird XIV in Victoria, BC, Canada in conjunction with the first World Seabird Conference 12-14 September 2010. *Lead: 2009 Iceland, 2010 Canada (Canada will chair meeting)*

CBird XIV was held in Greenland. We had much participation from the local scientists and managers. The meeting was very engaging and productive. We thank Greenland for hosting us.

5.3 Continue updating CBird and CFG products on the CAFF Website.

*Lead: CAFF International Secretariat*

CBird will continue working with the CAFF Secretariat to update and expand the CAFF website.

*III. Summary of Deliverables Due on or before CAFF Biennial Meeting*

**Due**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| March 31 | 1. Complete a final “International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy”.<br><b>Lead: Canada-Grant Gilchrist/Norway-Hallvard Strom</b>                             |
| May 1    | 2. Complete a Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Network Framework.<br><b>Lead: Iceland-Aevar Petersen/US-David Irons</b>  |
| Delayed  | 3. Complete a CAFF Technical Report summarizing the results of each country’s Birds of Arctic Conservation Concern status report.<br><b>Lead: US-Kent Wohl</b> |
| Sept. 1  | 4. Complete a circumpolar seabird monitoring plan draft.<br><b>Lead: US-David Irons, UK-Jim Reid</b>   |
| May 25   | 5. Update Technical Report on Harvest for 2006<br><b>Lead: Greenland-Flemming Merkel</b>   |
| Delayed  | 6. Write a technical report on Seabird Gillnet Bycatch.<br><b>Lead: US-Kent Wohl</b>   |
| Sept. 1  | 7. Publish peer-reviewed paper on murre trends and climate change<br><b>Lead: US-David Irons/Norway-Tycho Anker-Nilssen/Canada-Tony Gaston</b>                 |
| Sept. 1  | 8. Publish an Arctic Report Card on the decline of Ivory Gulls for CBMP<br><b>Lead: Canada-Grant Gilchrist</b>   |

***IV. Summary of Deliverables for the CAFF 2008-2010 Work Plan***

1. Seabird Information Network
  - Action: Complete project, get on web, populate with data
  - Lead US-David Irons
  - Due: 2010 CAFF Biennial Meeting
  
2. Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database:
  - Action: Create Online Circumpolar Seabird Colony Database
  - Lead: Norway-Hallvard Strom, Canada-Grant Gilchrist, US-David Irons
  - Due: 2010 CAFF Biennial Meeting
  
3. Circumpolar Seabird Status and Trends Report
  - Action: Complete Final Draft
  - Lead: Iceland-Aevar Petersen
  - Due: 2010 CAFF Biennial Meeting
  
4. Glaucous Gull Decline Paper
  - Action: Complete draft
  - Lead: Iceland-Aevar Petersen
  - Due: 2010 CAFF Biennial Meeting
  
5. Murre population model for the Atlantic Report
  - Action: Complete final report
  - Lead: Canada-Greg Robertson
  - Due: 2010 CAFF Biennial Meeting
  
6. Arctic Report Card on murres and climate change
  - Action: Write an Arctic Report Card for CBMP
  - Lead: US-David Irons
  - Due: 2008

## **Summary of ongoing work**

Birds of Arctic Conservation Concern status report

Action: Complete a draft report

Lead: Finland-Marti Hario, Greenland-Nette Levermann

CBirdSTAMP Project

Action: Work with AMAP to implement if selected

Lead: Norway-Rob Barrett, US-David Irons

Due: 2010

Kittiwake Status and Trends Data

Action: Analyze data for relation to climate shifts

Lead: Norway-Rob Barrett, Tycho Anker-Nilssen, Canada-Greg Robertson,  
US-David Irons

Due: 2010

Arctic Tern Migration and Population Trends

Action: Collect geolocators and analyze data

Lead: Greenland-Carsten Egevang

Due: 2010

## **Future Project Ideas**

Report on circumpolar seabird gillnet bycatch issues

Peer-reviewed paper on the world status of Ivory Gulls

Peer-reviewed paper on the change in circumpolar seabird phenology in relation to climate change

Summarize information on seabirds as indicators of change in the marine ecosystem in easy to use and update format – discuss at CBird XV

Index to Arctic seabird health – discuss at CBird XV

Report on implementation of Eider Conservation Strategy

Arctic Report Card on Arctic Tern Migration

## **Other Issues**

The AEWA Secretariat, Sergey Dereliev, joined us for the CBird meeting and explained that AEWA was expanding the numbers of seabirds in their agreement; they were adding 21 species and 33 populations. Sergey asked the CBird group to consider reviewing flyway population delineation and status. In the long-term he suggested that CBird could help guide research, monitoring and conservation work of AEWA and help in compiling population assessments.

## ***IX. Circumpolar Seabird Group Work Plan Recommendations: 2008-2010***

### **A. Conserving Arctic Species**

#### **1. International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy**

***Action: Complete a final “International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy”.***

**Lead: Canada-Grant Gilchrist/Norway-Hallvard Strom**

**Schedule:**

**Comments on draft returned**

**March 1**

**Final Strategy**

**March 31**

#### **2. Circumpolar Eider Conservation Strategy**

***Action: Countries will continue implementing applicable action items in the CAFF report “Circumpolar Eider Conservation Strategy and Action Plan Countries” and related national action plans, and report progress at CBird meetings.***

**Lead: Canada-Grant Gilchrist**

**Schedule:**

**CBird XV**

#### **3. Circumpolar Murre Conservation Strategy**

***Action: Countries will continue implementing applicable action items in the CAFF report “International Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan” and related national implementation plans, and report progress at CBIRD meetings.***

**Lead: US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

**CBird XV**

***Action: Develop a Thick-billed Murre population model for the Atlantic Region.***

**Lead: Canada-Greg Robertson**

**Schedule:**

**Send out Draft**

**Oct 31**

**Comments Due**

**Nov 30**

**Final**

**Jan 31**

***Action: Complete a peer-reviewed publication Seabirds and climate change.***

**Lead: US-David Irons/Norway-Tycho Anker-Nilssen/Canada-Tony Gaston**

**Schedule: Accepted for publication, Global Change Biology Done**

#### 4. Seabird Harvest in the Arctic

*Action: Countries will continue to report on seabird harvest and implementation of applicable recommendations in CAFF Technical Report No. 5.*

**Lead: Greenland-Flemming Merkel**

**Schedule: CBird XV**

*Action: Update Technical Report on Harvest*

**Lead: Greenland-Flemming Merkel**

**Schedule:**

**Send out draft for review May 15**

**Review comments due May 25**

**Final Completed April 15**

#### 5. Seabird Gillnet Bycatch in Commercial Fisheries in the Arctic

*Action: All countries will continue to report on seabird bycatch initiatives including implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization/Committee on Fisheries International Plan of Action to Reduce Seabird Bycatch in Longline Fisheries of the World and related national implementation plans.*

**Lead: US-David Irons**

**Schedule: CBird XV**

### **B. Conserving Arctic Ecosystems and Habitats**

No CBird recommendations at this time.

### **C. Assessing and Monitoring Arctic Biodiversity**

#### **1. Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Network of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program**

*Action: Participate in the CAFF Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program as the Coordinator of the Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Network.*

**Lead: US-David Irons**

**Schedule: Ongoing**

*Action: Complete a Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Network Framework.*

**Lead: Iceland-Aevar Petersen/US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

**Draft Completed**

**Review Comments Due April 15**

**Final May 1**

*Action: Complete a circumpolar seabird monitoring plan.*

**Lead: US-David Irons UK- Jim Reid**

**Schedule:**

<b>Draft</b>	<b>Sept 1</b>
<b>Review Comments Due</b>	<b>Oct 31</b>
<b>Final Due</b>	<b>Dec 1</b>

**2. Birds of Arctic Conservation Concern.**

*Action: Complete a draft CAFF Technical Report summarizing the results of each country's BACC status report and prioritized recommendations.*

**Lead: Finland-Marti Hario/Greenland-Nette Levermann**

**Schedule:**

<b>Draft BACC Technical Report</b>	<b>CBird XV</b>
<b>Final BACC Technical Report</b>	<b>CBird XIV</b>

**3. Circumpolar Seabird Status and Trends Report**

*Action: Write report on the status and trends of Arctic seabirds.*

**Lead: Iceland-Aevar Petersen/US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

<b>Draft</b>	<b>May 15</b>
<b>Comments back to Aevar</b>	<b>Sept 30</b>
<b>Final</b>	<b>Oct 31</b>

**4. Seabird Information Network**

*Action: Create a Seabird Information Network (SIN) on the web in conjunction with UNEP-WCMC and CBMP.*

**Lead: US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

<b>Online version</b>	<b>CBird XV</b>
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**5. Circumpolar seabird colony database**

*Action: Produce an online circumpolar seabird colony database.*

**Lead Norway-Strom/US-Irons/Canada-Gilchrist**

**Schedule:**

<b>Demo</b>	<b>CBird XV</b>
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**6. Glaucous Gull Decline Paper**

*Action: Write paper for peer-reviewed journal on the decline of Glaucous Gulls in the Arctic.*

**Lead: Iceland-Aevar Petersen**

<b>Schedule: Draft paper</b>	<b>CBird XV</b>
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## **7. Circumpolar Black-legged Kittiwake Status and Trends**

*Action: Analyze all data collected in circumpolar countries on kittiwake population trends and productivity.*

**Lead: Norway-Rob Barrett/Tycho Anker-Nilssen/US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

**Present results CBird XV**

### **D. Global Issues**

#### **1. CBirdSTAMP Project**

*Action: Wait for decision from CAFF on whether to implement CBirdSTAMP project as a joint CAFF/AMAP project.*

**Lead: Norway-Rob Barrett, US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

**CBird XV**

#### **2. Arctic Tern Project**

*Action: Collect and analyze geolocator data.*

**Lead: Greenland-Carsten Egevang**

**Schedule:**

**Collect and analyze data**

**CBird XV**

### **E. Engaging Society**

#### **1. Continue updating the CAFF CBird Website**

*Action: Put CBird documents on website*

**Lead: CAFF Secretariat**

**Schedule:**

**June 1**

### ***V. Discussion of New Issues***

We discussed how to interact efficiently with the CBMP. There was much discussion on the usefulness and the methodology of pulling together data from circumpolar countries and making it available on the internet. We would like to make colony data available but we do not want to have to create new databases to do so, or at least we want the data to be compiled seamlessly.

CAFF, Circumpolar Seabird Group, CBird XVI, Nuuk, Greenland

A representative from African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) made a presentation and asked for CBird's help in reviewing documents on issues involving seabirds in the Africa-Eurasian region.

The issue of how CBird should pull seabird information together to help serve as an indicator of Arctic marine ecosystem change for the CBMP was discussed briefly. We decided to address it more fully after getting guidance from CBMP.

We also discussed coming up with a seabird health index, similar to what the UK is pursuing, we decided to follow the progress of the UK and discuss at our next meeting.

***VI. Future Circumpolar Seabird Group Meetings***

It was proposed that the next Circumpolar Seabird Group Meeting be in Iceland in September 2009 and have the next meeting in conjunction with the World Seabird Conference in Victoria, B.C., Canada in September 2010.

**Lead: US-David Irons**

**Schedule:**

**Iceland**

**Sept 2009**

**Canada**

**Sept 2010**

### *VII. List of Participants*

List of Participants, CBird XIV, Nuuk, Greenland, 8-11 February 2008

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>e-mail</b>
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### ***VIII. Appendices***

#### **1. List of CBird Products**

#### **2. List of CBird Meetings**

Reports can be found at the CAFF website [www.caff.is/](http://www.caff.is/)