

REPORT FROM THE SCAR DELEGATION TO XXIX ATCM IN EDINBURGH

Introduction

1. The meeting in Edinburgh took place at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre from 12-23 June 2006. A Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) Workshop on strategy and planning on 9-10 June 2006 preceded this.
2. The SCAR Delegation comprised Colin Summerhayes, David Walton and Marzena Kaczmarek for the whole period, with the addition of Steven Chown for the CEP week, Jörn Thiede for the first three days and Valerie Masson-Delmotte for the SCAR lecture. SCAR hosted a short reception immediately after the lecture to bring delegates together. Walton, Chown and Summerhayes also attended the CEP Workshop prior to ATCM.
3. One day was devoted entirely to the IPY, and the ATCM agreed an IPY Declaration. The IPY will remain on the agenda for reporting and discussion until at least 2009. The IPY Programme Office attended the meeting in its own right.
4. Romania began to take an active part this year and wishes to join SCAR to develop its science programmes. Belarus was admitted as an Observer country for the first time. The Czech Republic indicated its ongoing interest in joining SCAR, and that it plans to form an appropriate national committee.
5. This was a good meeting for SCAR with plenty of evidence in both the CEP and the ATCM reports of the range and importance of the advice and information we provide.

SCAR Input

6. As an Observer, SCAR has the privilege of providing Working Papers, as well as Information Papers. SCAR provided 4 Working Papers and 6 Information Papers for consideration (this compares with 3 Information Papers and 2 Working Papers at XXVIII ATCM, and 5 Information papers at XXVII ATCM). Several of these were papers taken at XXVIII ATCM, which were requested to be resubmitted in a different format to correspond to newly agreed decision trees developed by CEP. Others were in response to requests made by CEP for information as well as papers SCAR submitted to inform the CEP and ATCM about present and planned activities.

7. The papers comprised:

Working Papers:

WP 37 Biodiversity in the Antarctic

WP 38 Proposal to list the Southern Giant Petrel as a Specially Protected Species under Annex II

WP 39 Proposal to de-list Antarctic Fur Seals as Specially Protected Species

WP 41 SCAR report on Marine Acoustics and the Southern Ocean

Information Papers:

IP 77 Climate change – an Antarctic perspective (*text of SCAR lecture*)

IP 79 SCAR Report to XXIX ATCM

IP 87 SCAR's involvement in the International Polar Year (2007-2008)

IP 88 Practical biological indicators of human impacts in Antarctica (joint with COMNAP)

IP 89 Plans for an Antarctic Climate Assessment – trends and impacts

IP 98 Broadband calibration of marine seismic sources – a case study

8. All the papers were presented in one or more committees and engendered a wide range of discussions. In addition there were many references to SCAR in the discussions of other papers and a number of requests for assistance from SCAR. The ATS Standing Committee has prepared a draft work plan which covers all these requests as well as other activities that SCAR should consider contributing to. This is attached as Annex 1.

9. The SCAR lecture was again a highlight of the meeting with an excellent presentation by Valerie Masson-Delmotte explaining the importance of ice cores to climate change studies. This lecture was repeated in the evening for a public audience.

10. The proposal to list Southern Giant Petrels as Specially Protected Species under Annex II could not be taken forward at this meeting as the preceding ACAP meeting considered new information that appeared likely to change the global status of the species from “Vulnerable” to “Near Threatened”. SCAR has been asked to contact Birdlife International over the reassessment of global status and also to conduct a regional status assessment of Antarctic populations for resubmission next year. In the meantime the meeting adopted a Resolution on the Conservation of this species.

11. The proposal to delist *Arctocephalus* species from Annex II generated considerable problems for two countries which were resolved through extended discussions. The CEP accepted the advice from SCAR and delisted *A.gazella* and *A.tropicalis* at the final plenary meeting, through Measure D.

12. The report from the Cadiz Workshop on marine acoustics was well received and broke new ground in discussing the natural marine noise environment within which the additional anthropogenic noise needs to be placed. The survey undertaken by COMNAP of existing marine acoustic equipment in use on research and logistic vessels was a very useful addition in establishing the limited extent of the problem. The submission of the paper written by Germany on the acoustic characterisation of *Polarstern* provided another important step forward in indicating a way to supplement the general risk assessment with ship-specific data, and to use the model to design the most effective deployment of mitigation measures. The CEP recognised the value in connecting with the International Whaling Commission and intends to invite them to attend the next meeting.

13. The proposal for the SCAR Antarctic Climate Assessment met with almost universal endorsement and it is possible that several countries will be willing to provide some limited support to enable this to be done on a reasonable timescale. Discussions with Bob Correll as the prime mover behind the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment proved fruitful in establishing some of the management elements needed

in such a project to deliver an outcome that is both scientifically sound and valuable for policy makers.

Other inputs

14. The CEP made progress in a number of important environmental management areas. There were WPs addressing “Wildlife awareness for aircraft operations” (WP3), much discussion of relationships with CCAMLR especially over marine protected areas (WP 7), and further papers on ASPAs and ASMAs.

15. Revised management plans were tabled for ASPAs 116 (WP31), 127 (WP24), 131 (WP31), 134 (WP29), 136 (WP9) and 150 (WP30). New areas were proposed at Edmonson Point (WP12), Hawker Island (Vestfold Hills) (WP 10) and Port Martin (WP21). A new ASMA plan, that has taken many years to negotiate, was tabled for the Larseman Hills (WP8) but could not progress as India announced its intention of building a new station outside of the previously agreed services area. The proposal for Ardley Island was also sent back for modification as the area apparently included a tourist area within its boundaries.

16. New Zealand provided a checklist for inspecting specially protected areas (WP33) and a report on its use for areas in the Ross Sea (WP34). The USA provided a report on the Dry Valleys ASMA and its implementation and management.

17. A proposal for an ASMA for Fildes Peninsula (King George Island) was not agreed and Chile is to host a workshop together with Germany later this year to take this forward (WP22).

18. The report of the New Zealand sponsored workshop on non-native species was discussed and a Resolution on discharge of ballast water was adopted. The CEP seems keen to return to address quarantine procedures in the future.

19 A paper from Russia (IP 8) addressed the introduction of pathogens and asked for input from both COMNAP and SCAR to scope the problem both at the medical treatment level through MediNet and through the research of the medical research group in SCAR.

Proposed actions for 2006-2007

20. The Specially Protected Species work will continue to run for some years yet. Working Papers are needed next year for the Southern Giant Petrel and Macaroni Penguin to complete the present work on birds and global threats. Both species will require draft Action Plans the form of which has not yet been agreed by the CEP so may need reworking after this initial submission. Future work will need to address the regional problems of birds in more detail and attempt to keep in step with ACAP. An important step forward here for informing discussions at the CEP will be to lay out in a Working Paper the regional criteria used by IUCN and their relationship to Antarctic species.

21. The Ross Seal remains at present on the Annex II Specially Protected Species list. It is imperative that SCAR provides an assessment of its status and trends so that its future retention or removal from the list is scientifically justified.

22. The CEP are at present interested in non-native species in a wide variety of contexts. To establish clearly what is non-native requires some baseline assessment and a paper on terrestrial biodiversity of native species would therefore be a useful tool. In addition there are questions about marine non-native species as well as questions raised by the Russians about pathogens in both human populations and wildlife populations.

23. Questions were raised at the meeting about SCAR Field Work guidelines for terrestrial research. Whilst the RiSCC guidelines were circulated for information it seems sensible to try to meld all the existing guidelines for scientific work together (including those for example developed for the Dry Valleys ASMA) to provide a unified set which can be used anywhere in the Antarctic.

24. Russian progress with sampling water from Lake Vostok continues and again generated considerable discussion. A SCAR statement on the recent publications on subglacial hydrology provided useful extra information but a report from the SALE Grenoble meeting would be welcomed by the CEP.

25. Whilst there is no formal request to SCAR for a further review of marine acoustics of the kind undertaken in Cadiz, it is expected that two relevant reports will be published this year. SCAR should consider these to see what, if anything, should be provided to XXX ATCM to continue the educational effort in this complex field. It is likely that Australia will submit an Information Paper that provides a simple guide to the technical details of acoustics, which will usefully supplement the SCAR contributions. Whilst SCAR cannot undertake any data collection on the natural noise levels it could provide a major step forward by synthesising existing data to map noise corridors against whale migration routes. Germany proposes to hold a workshop in September on marine acoustics to which SCAR has been invited.

26. CCAMLR and the CEP are both working to progress development of designation of marine protected areas. There will be a workshop on this next year and SCAR could be involved in the scientific basis of this aspect of conservation. This also bears on the development of a new Antarctic Conservation Strategy. An initial workshop was held in South Africa in 2005 and a principal outcome was the recognition that to achieve our objectives jointly with IUCN requires a much greater effort to bring all the relevant stakeholders together. Initial planning of this as a joint project with appropriate funding requests will take place at a meeting with IUCN later this year.

27. For some years New Zealand has been developing an approach to a Systematic Environmental-Geographic Framework for dividing the Antarctic into a series of zones, which will provide a basis for conservation and environmental management. They have asked if SCAR would undertake an independent assessment of the applicability of the progress so far, as well as indicating if there are any relevant data sets that could be incorporated into the analysis.

28. In the past the Bird Biology Group has provided data syntheses to the EMM Committee of CCAMLR at their request. It is expected that this Committee will need topical data on bird and seal populations to progress their modelling activities. The form of the data and its proposed use will be discussed at the EMM meeting next year at which SCAR needs to have appropriate representation.

29. SCAR are the major providers of independent scientific advice to the CEP. We therefore have a major interest in the development of the CEP work plan and its primary objectives, arising from the CEP Workshop this year. SCAR needs to keep this under review and provide appropriate input.

30. More interest was expressed this year in education and outreach. COMNAP have no educational remit but intend to provide a summary of public outreach efforts from their newly resuscitated INFONET. SCAR could consider providing a similar paper on both education and outreach. However, it appears likely that the UK will lead an effort involving both SCAR and COMNAP to provide a report on education and outreach next year.

DWH WALTON
C SUMMERHAYES
S CHOWN
27 June 2006

Annex 1

Actions for SCAR arising from XXIX ATCM

Proposed Working Papers

1. Specially Protected Status for Southern Giant Petrel

ACTION - Expert Group on Birds

2. Specially Protected Status for Macaroni Penguin

ACTION - Expert Group on Birds

3. Regional vs Global Assessments for Specially Protected Status

ACTION - ATS Standing Committee and Expert Group on Birds

4. Status of the Ross Seal

ACTION - Expert Group on Seals

5. Terrestrial biodiversity paper

ACTION - Steve Chown and EBA Steering Committee

Proposed Information Papers

6. Possible Review of the IWC Marine Acoustics Report and Marine Mammal Commission London Meeting Report

ACTION - ATS Standing Committee and IWC.

7. Non-native species in the marine ecosystem

ACTION - Steve Chown and EBA Steering Committee

8. Code of conduct for terrestrial Field Work

ACTION - LSSG

9. Report of the Grenoble Meeting of SALE

ACTION - Expert Group on Subglacial Antarctic Lake Exploration

Actions

10. Review of New Zealand's Systematic Environment-Geographic Framework

ACTION - LSSSG/GSSG/PSSG

11. Project to synthesize ship track data, seismic lines and whale distribution as a contribution to studies on marine noise

ACTION - Steve Chown

12. Marine Protected Area developments

ACTION - LSSSG to consider appointing observer for the CCAMLR workshop in 2007

13. 21st century Conservation in Antarctica

ACTION - ATS Standing Committee to develop joint project with IUCN Antarctic Committee

14. German Acoustics workshop 6-8 September 2006

ACTION - ATS Standing Committee to appoint representative.

15. Meeting of Environment Measurement and Monitoring Committee of CCAMLR in 2007

ACTION - LSSSG to consider appointing relevant representatives

16. Committee on Environmental Protection work plan and strategy ICG

ACTION - ATS Standing Committee

17. SCAR involvement in KGI/Fildes meeting on ASMA development

ACTION - LSSSG to decide if SCAR involvement is necessary

18. SCAR involvement in cumulative impacts from visitors

ACTION - LSSSG might be asked to provide scientific advice

19. Monitoring of pathogenic microbiota

ACTION - LSSSG to discuss possible actions arising from XXIX ATCM IP 72

20. Education and Outreach

ACTION - Secretariat to consider if an IP on SCAR activities would be useful for the Operational WG.

21. Other items

It is possible that there will be a new version of SCAR Code of Conduct on Animal Experimentation submitted to LSSG which once adopted should be sent to CEP as an Information Paper.

There may also be a need for papers to CCAMLR Scientific Committee. CCAMLR has already requested that we submit the Marine Acoustics paper to the Scientific Committee.

Timing

XXX ATCM will be 30 April to 11 May in New Delhi. To meet the expected timetable for submission of WPs and IPs:-

- Drafts to SCAR Delegates by end January
- Revise by end February.
 - Submit WPs mid-March
 - Submit IPs by early April 2007

Annex 2

Composition of the Antarctic Treaty System Standing Committee from Hobart 2006 onwards

Chair - Steven Chown (terrestrial biologist; South Africa)

Chuck Kennicutt (environmental chemist, USA)

Sergio Marensi (geologist, Argentina)

Heinz Miller (geophysicist/glaciologist, Germany)

Graham Hosie (marine biologist, Australia) CCAMLR representative

Allied to these for advice are the three chairs of the Standing Science Groups and individuals from those science groups who have volunteered to assist the ATS Committee.