

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING ON THE COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING
RESOURCES (CCAMLR)**

(Hobart, Australia, 27 October to 7 November 2008)

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1. My previous reports on CCAMLR Meetings XXIV to XXVI have provided details on the purpose and membership of CCAMLR and will not be repeated here. Further details can also be found at the www.ccamlr.org website.
2. The twenty-seventh annual meeting of the Commission was held at the CCAMLR headquarters in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, from 27 October to 7 November 2008. The meeting was chaired by Mr. P. Amutenya (Namibia). After the opening of the meeting, the Commission typically adjourned for the first week to allow the Scientific Committee (SC) to first conduct its activities and report back to the Commission. The Scientific Committee met between 27 and 31 October and was Chaired by the Scientific Committee's Vice-Chair Dr K. Sullivan (New Zealand) due to the passing of the SC Chair Prof. Edith Fanta. The meeting of the Commission resumed on 3 November.
3. A report on SCAR activities of relevance to CCAMLR was submitted in advance and was registered as Commission background document CCAMLR-XXVII/BG/42. This report is available via the SCAR website. An additional report (CCAMLR-XXVI/BG/43) on the "The Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS) Meeting Report (St Petersburg, Russia, 5 to 7 July 2008)" was also submitted for CCAMLR's interest in climate change research. This report was requested by CCAMLR.
4. I gave a detailed report on SCAR activities to the Scientific Committee (SC) as part of a standing item on the SC Agenda - "Cooperation with other organisations, (i) Cooperation with the Antarctic Treaty System." I reinforced key issues in a second presentation to the full Commission, again as a standing Commission Agenda Item – "Cooperation with other elements of the Antarctic Treaty System, (ii) Cooperation with SCAR".
5. This present report deals with CCAMLR activities of relevance to SCAR, plus comments, discussion and feedback on the SCAR report to CCAMLR, mentioned in (3) above, which should also be read in conjunction with this report.
6. Both the Commission and the Scientific Committee commenced their meetings with a remembrance to Prof Edith Fanta, Chair of the Scientific Committee, who passed away in May 2008. CCAMLR noted that Prof. Fanta will always be remembered for her dedication to both CCAMLR, especially her role as SC Chair, and SCAR through her participation in the SCAR Life Sciences Standing Scientific Group and the EBA Program.

APIS

7. CCAMLR acknowledged the importance of the distribution and abundance estimates of pack-ice seals resulting from the SCAR APIS Program. CCAMLR recognised that this

was an ambitious and very difficult program of work and was of great relevance to CCAMLR's work. The CCAMLR-IWC Workshop, August 2008, benefited considerably. Australia in particular thanked SCAR for the foresight to embark on the APIS programme. Had SCAR not started the programme, CCAMLR would now be trying to initiate this on the work. The Scientific Committee encouraged SCAR to find ways to undertake the final analyses of the APIS abundance data which remain outstanding.

CAML

8. CCAMLR noted CAML has been the biggest single internationally coordinated research project conducted in the Southern Ocean and the outputs were essential to the work of CCAMLR.

9. The Scientific Committee strongly endorsed the initiatives undertaken by CAML as part of IPY. The SC noted that these initiatives were a great example of the successful cooperation and coordination that could take place between countries within the ATS. CAML had provided the opportunity for scientists from CCAMLR Member countries to collaborate together in the planning and undertaking of shared research and in the shaping of a new era in polar science. The SC further noted that the analyses from surveys conducted by the 18 countries participating in CAML surveys were well under way. The results would assist CCAMLR with its conservation of the unique Antarctic marine environment. The census would also strengthen understanding of the impact of significant global changes such as climate change.

10. The Australian Delegation thanked the many countries that have participated in the CAML and encouraged all CCAMLR Members to support ongoing data analysis and synthesis activities in support of CAML.

11. CAML has already made an immediate and significant contribution to CCAMLR. High definition images from cameras mounted on beam trawls used during the Collaborative East Antarctic marine Census (CEAMARC) *Aurora Australis* survey were used to identify two VMEs in area 58.4.1. These were registered for protection as VMEs by CCAMLR at the XXVII meeting. Commercial fishing will not be permitted in the VMEs. The two VMEs are 400 km² areas approximately 160km north-east and 110km north of Dumont d'Urville, respectively. The VMEs were recognised for their high species richness and complex benthic communities, which contained deep-water calcareous organisms. CEAMARC was the Australian-French-Belgian-Japanese collaborative contribution to CAML, using 3 vessels from Australia (*Aurora Australis*), France (*l'Astrolabe*) and Japan (*Umitaka Maru*).

SCAR-MarBIN

12. I gave a report on the considerable progress made by SCAR-MarBIN, its value to CCAMLR and the wider scientific community, and the current situation with funding. The Belgium Delegation reinforced this with their paper. They noted that funding for SCAR-MarBIN is only secured until the end of 2009.

13. MarBIN has proved its value for CCAMLR during the Workshop on Bioregionalisation in Brussels, Belgium, in 2007. CCAMLR's Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA) and the Scientific Committee recognised the value of SCAR-MarBIN as a valuable source of information for identifying Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME), including data on the taxonomy, distribution and abundance of benthic fauna. SCAR-MarBIN can also play a crucial role in CCAMLR's environmental

mandate to act in the Southern Ocean and to conserve marine biodiversity through the promotion of the rational exploitation of marine living resources.

14. Belgium proposed the establishment of a SCAR-MarBIN Special Fund to allow CCAMLR Members to make voluntary financial contributions to SCAR-MarBIN. There was not much response in session to this proposal. Australia supported the value of SCAR-MarBIN. It is both a major contributor and user of the MarBIN data, especially for CCAMLR purposes. Australia suggested that SCAR-MarBIN be put on the agenda for the SC-CAMLR-CEP Workshop in Baltimore, April 2009. CCAMLR and CEP agreed to put future general data requirements and handling on the agenda for that workshop and the future of SCAR-MarBIN is expected to be discussed under this item.

VME

15. VME was a major topic of discussion at CCAMLR in relation to identification, classification, and protection. As noted above, CCAMLR is appreciative of the value of CAML and SCAR-MarBIN for this work now and into the future.

16. A workshop on VMEs is scheduled for 2009, probably August, in Washington DC, USA. The Co-conveners are Dr K. Martin-Smith (Australia) and Dr C. Jones (USA). The venue and timing of meeting will be announced by December 2008. Three experts are expected to be invited to the workshop. I would expect SCAR to be involved through CAML/SCAR-MarBIN and the new AG on Cold Seeps and Hydrothermal Vents in Antarctica. I will maintain contact with Dr Martin-Smith to discuss how SCAR can assist.

17. The Scientific Committee endorsed the proposal of WG-FSA to designate 2010 as the Year-of-the-VMEs in order to focus further research activities aimed at developing approaches to avoid and mitigate significant adverse impacts of bottom fishing on VMEs.

WG-IMAF Report

18. The Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF) noted the fundamental importance of up-to-date information on the status and distribution of seabirds in order to develop risk assessments of interactions in fisheries. The WG-IMAF welcomed continued cooperation and coordination with ACAP and BirdLife International. This included the standing invitation to experts from ACAP and BirdLife International to ensure the best available scientific information was available to CCAMLR.

19. I have noted in previous reports that there is a need for the expert groups on Birds and Seals to adapt to the requirements of CCAMLR and to provide advice in a timely manner, or CCAMLR will seek the advice risk elsewhere. It would appear the SCAR Bird EG has already been marginalised. The executives of the new EG on Birds and Marine Mammals should make direct contact with CCAMLR to determine how EG-BMM can assist and interact with CCAMLR. This should be done as a matter of priority as the new EG is still to establish its terms of reference.

SC-CAMLR-CEP Workshop

20. This workshop will be held in Baltimore USA prior to ATCM XXXII. Invitations will be issue by end of 2008. Chair of CEP Neil Gilbert is expected to extend an invitation to the SCAR President and ask if he would give a presentation on SCAR Business Products.