

Recommendations from the LSSSG meeting, SCAR XXX, St. Petersburg 2008.

Recommendation XXX – LSSSG – 1 (Internal) (previously XXIX – LSSSG – 1)
Concerning the Membership of EGHB&M.

Noting that there remain large numbers of vacancies in national representation on EGHB&M:

- In that several nations have not nominated delegates to the Expert Group despite an active participation in science in the Antarctic.
- In that several people who have recently retired from EGHB&M have not been replaced despite contact between the executive of EGHB&M and the national nominating body.
- That ICSU committees representation is largely non existent or inactive.

Considering that this:

- Depletes the number of collaborators in research
- Reduces the scope of expertise available to EGHB&M
- Limits the overall functionality of the group
- Tends to hamper effort to stimulate participation in Health research in the Antarctic.

The EGHB&M and LSSSG recommends and requests that:

- SCAR maximizes influence on national appointing organizations and ICSU to nominate members for EGHB&M, and encourages support for attendance at meetings.

Endorsed by the Delegates, , XXX SCAR, St. Petersburg 2008

Recommendation XXX – LSSSG – 2 (Internal)

Concerning the formation of an Expert Group on Birds and Marine Mammals

Noting that there is a benefit in merging the Expert Group on Birds and the Expert Group on Seals into one Expert Group on Birds and Marine Mammals (EGBMM)

The LSSSG requests the Delegates of SCAR to endorse the establishment of such a group with the following provisions by the Standing Scientific Group on Life Sciences (LSSSG):

- The Expert Group on Birds and Marine Mammals is established via a transitional period of two to three years, this at the discretion of the group. There will be an initial meeting of the group within one year. An evaluation of the group will be made after two years and be reported to the LSSSG meeting at XXXI SCAR in 2010. The outcome of the evaluation report will be decisive for further actions to be taken.
- The group will continue the research currently in progress in the two constituent groups.
- Meetings of the new group will be as much as possible combined. The group will meet in plenary or in two parallel sessions as they see fit and as the need arises.
- All members and co-opted members of the two constituent groups will automatically become members or co-opted members of the new group.
- In the transitional phase the group will seek extension of the membership with experts in the field of processing of large data sets and mathematical modelling.
- The group will consist of (i) a three person executive - initially to be led by a D. Patterson-Fraser (co-ordinator), M. Bester, and a Secretary (vacancy), (ii) A core group of invited experts (10-15 people) and (iii) co-opted members from the wider community, as required.

- The Expert Group will, wherever possible, seek formal collaboration with similar groups from other ATS bodies, especially with a view to facilitating data exchange and management to improve the information and advice provided by this group to SCAR and to the ATS.
- In one of its first meetings the group will discuss and adopt rules of procedure, especially with respect to the use of published and unpublished data.
- The provisional Terms of Reference for this group will be:
 - a. To quantify the role of birds and marine mammals in the Antarctic marine and terrestrial ecosystems
 - b. To work with other components of SCAR towards a multidisciplinary synthesis of biophysical and biochemical coupling mechanisms in the Antarctic.
 - c. To collate and provide information on the status and trends of populations of specific species in the SCAR area of interest based on needs identified by SCAR or by the group.
 - d. To provide advice to ATS bodies and others as requested from time to time, as agreed by SCAR, and in collaboration with these bodies including the exchange of data.
 - e. Contribute to the conservation and management of Antarctic and subantarctic birds and mammals through the appropriate utilisation and interpretation of currently available scientific data.

Endorsed by the Delegates, XXX SCAR, St. Petersburg 2008

Recommendation SCAR XXX - LSSSG- 3 (External)

Concerning the future of the SCAR Marine Biodiversity Information Network (SCAR-MarBIN)

Recognizing the achievements and crucial usefulness of the SCAR-MarBIN network in terms of compilation, integration, accessibility and dissemination of Antarctic marine biodiversity data for research, management, conservation and monitoring purposes,

Considering

- the SCAR involvement in the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), as an associate member,
- the need to secure the IPY-CAML information legacy,
- the strong expression of interest by Parties at the CEP X (Kiev, June 2008) and by CCAMLR for the Southern Ocean bioregionalisation process,
- that Belgium alone will not be able to continue funding beyond 2009 and is seeking contributions from an international consortium,

SCAR recommends that National Committees urge their national funding agencies to consider contributing to SCAR-MarBIN funding for the period 2010-2014.

Approved by the Delegates, XXX SCAR, St. Petersburg 2008

Recommendation XXX – LSSSG – 4 (Internal)

Concerning the formation of an Expert Group on Continuous Plankton Recorder Research

Noting that

- The sensitivity of plankton to changes in the environment makes them useful early warning indicators of the health of ocean systems.
- Continuous Plankton Recorders (CPRs) have been towed behind ships for 75 years in the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean to monitor the condition of those systems.
- These have been important in identifying major changes in the marine ecosystem which have ecological and economic impacts.
- The Southern Ocean CPR Survey was established in 1991 to map biodiversity of plankton in the region as well as monitor its health through studies of regional, seasonal, inter-annual and long-term variability in plankton patterns.
- It also serves as a reference on the status of the Southern Ocean for other monitoring programs.
- Changes in plankton abundances and patterns have already been detected and these are expected to have a significant effect on the rest of the ecosystem.

Considering that

- The SCAR SO-CPR Survey maintains a database on plankton abundance and distribution which is available for use by Antarctic community.
- The SO-CPR Survey was supported by an Action Group, and has been successful in the last two years.
- The SO-CPR Survey has become a hub linking SCAR, CAML, CCAMLR, SOOS, ICED and the developing Sentinel program.
- The SO-CPR Survey is a long-term on-going project and it is appropriate to have a long term group providing support and advice similar to the Council of Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science (northern hemisphere CPR surveys).
- The Expert Group will serve as a support and advisory group to help develop and expand the SO-CPR Survey. It will provide advice to SCAR and to the ATS.

The LSSSG recommends the Delegates of SCAR to endorse that the Action Group on Continuous Plankton Recorder Research becomes the Expert Group on Continuous Plankton Recorder Research, with the following Terms of Reference:

1. Provide guidance to the SCAR Southern Ocean CPR Survey in order to meet the survey objectives.
 - a. Map the biodiversity and distribution of plankton, including euphausiid (krill) life stages, in the Southern Ocean.
 - b. Use the sensitivity of plankton to environmental change as early warning indicators of the health of Southern Ocean, by studying spatial-temporal variation in plankton patterns.
 - c. Serve as reference on the general status of the Southern Ocean for other monitoring programs.
2. Develop and maintain the SO-CPR Database and to improve access for users.
3. Expand and enhance the SO-CPR Survey to include more ships and repeat transects around Antarctica.
4. Provide appropriate advice on CPR methodology, data and results to SCAR and to the ATS.

Endorsed by the Delegates, XXX SCAR, St. Petersburg 2008

Recommendation XXX - LSSSG - 5 (Internal):

Concerning a Code of Conduct for the Exploration and Research of Subglacial Aquatic Environments

Noting that

- subglacial aquatic environments are becoming an increasingly important focus for Antarctic science.

- a primary focus of research will involve questions about microbial life in these unusual biomes that are now known to be quite prevalent across the Antarctic landscape beneath thick ice sheets.
- the scientific goals of this research will require entry, sampling, and emplacement of sensors in SAE at multiple sites.
- these environments are potentially sensitive to disturbance during efforts to enter and sample these environments in the conduct of important ground-breaking research.

Recognizing the value of these environments and the need to exercise wise environmental stewardship,

The LSSSG recommends to the Delegates Meeting of XXX SCAR that an Action Group comprised of suitable representatives from the three SSGs be formed, since a wide range of disciplines is involved in research in these environments, and since they bring differing but important perspectives on protecting these environments, to devise a “Code of Conduct for the Exploration and Research of Subglacial Aquatic Environments”.

Endorsed by the Delegates, XXX SCAR, St. Petersburg 2008

Recommendation XXX – LSSSG - 6 (External) (previously XXIX – LSSSG – 4)
Concerning the use of flipper bands on penguins

Recollecting Recommendations SCAR XXVII-Biol-2, SCAR XXVII-10, and SCAR XXVIII-10, discouraging the use of flipper bands for external marking of penguins.

Noting the substantial and increasing scientific evidence for adverse, cumulative long-term (i.e. greater than one year duration) impacts of flipper bands,

Recognising that banding studies of varying durations are still underway within some national programmes,

SCAR recommends that National Committees urge researchers to give careful consideration as to whether flipper bands should be used, and under what circumstances

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