



# Antarctic Treaty Secretariat Newsletter

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## Foreword of the Executive Secretary

Dear colleagues and friends in the Antarctic community and beyond,

The first issue of our Newsletter, which came out in February, was received with great enthusiasm in the Antarctic Community. We received many thanks and expressions of support and some people immediately put the newsletter on their own distribution lists, so it spread quite quickly. Quite a few people who heard about the newsletter asked to be sent a copy, and we were happy to do so.

The Secretariat website [www.ats.org.ar](http://www.ats.org.ar), is still under construction, and at present we are concentrating on the web page with the documents for the upcoming 28<sup>th</sup> ATCM in Stockholm. As soon as we can, however, we will publish the current edition of the newsletter on the website, and also include instructions how to subscribe to the newsletter, change your mailing address etc.

Our next issue will contain news of the outcome of the Stockholm meeting.

Johannes Huber  
Executive Secretary

## Current ATS activities

### International exchange

Even at this early stage in the build-up of the secretariat, we have been lucky in obtaining assistance from scholars from abroad. The first in this position is *Adrian Howkins*, a British graduate student doing research on Antarctic history in Argentina, who has been working with us for the past months.

- Adrian: "I came to Argentina in September 2004 from the University of Texas at Austin to conduct research for a doctoral thesis on Antarctic history in the 1940s and 1950s. By happy coincidence, my arrival in Buenos Aires coincided exactly with the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat in the city. This gave me the opportunity to see at first hand how the Antarctic Treaty, the origins of which I am studying, has developed and flourished since its foundation almost 50 years ago. Coming here at the very beginning of the Secretariat's life has also allowed me to witness some of the challenges involved in establishing a new international organization. It has been interesting to see how the office has developed over the course of the eight months or so that I have been here: where once all the rooms were bare I am now sitting in a fully equipped office with maps of Antarctica and bookshelves that contain the nucleus of an Antarctic Library.

Since Christmas, I have been helping out at the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, one day a week, working on the historical database of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings. When it is finished, this database will contain all the recommendations of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings, as well their attached annexes in the four official languages of the Treaty: French, Spanish, Russian and English. My job has mainly been to attach the various annexes to their associated recommendations. This is a relatively easy task for the more recent ATCMs, but for the earlier meetings, before the days of the word processor files and the Internet, the task is more complicated, and I hope my historical training has been put to some use! Working on the database has proved to be a fantastic introduction to the Antarctic Treaty System, and it is very interesting, from a historical point of view, to see how the priorities of the ATCMs have changed since the first meeting in Canberra in 1961."

### Visit to the Antarctic Peninsula

Upon invitation of the Argentine Antarctic Program, the Executive Secretary from March 2 to 9 paid a brief visit to the Antarctic Peninsula on the icebreaker "Almirante Irizar", visiting Marambio, Paulet Island, Esperanza, Camara, and Jubany.

Jan: "This visit gave me a wonderful opportunity to see the Antarctic Peninsula for the first time – up to now I had only been to Antarctica once in the Ross Sea region – and traveling on the ship on its regular supply mission was very instructive, since I could see from up close how complicated the logistic operations underlying an Antarctic programme are, with supplies being landed by boat or dropped from helicopters (depending on the weather), scientists and support personnel being exchanged etc. It was great to see for myself the different characteristics of the different stations and the range of their activities. Also, the visit of the icebreaker several times turned into a good excuse for complete fiestas, with the station cooks turning out



*Adrian Howkins*



*Jan Huber close to the Nordenskjold hut at Paulet Island, Antarctic Peninsula*

astounding banquets from quite limited resources, and boisterous singing and dancing led by the folk singers from Salta region in Argentina traveling on the 'Irizar'! I not only learned a lot, but had an unforgettable experience meeting the men and women of the Argentine Antarctic Programme."

### The ATS Information Officer

Since October 2004, José Luis "Pepe" Agraz occupies the position of Information Officer of the Secretariat. As such he is responsible not only for general information activities, but especially for the Secretariat's website and databases, which are essential for the preparation of the Antarctic Treaty Meetings, the communication between the Secretariat and the Consultative Parties and the collection and publication of the ATCM documents.

Pepe is a biologist from University of Buenos Aires with extensive Antarctic experience. He started to work at the Environment Management Department of the Argentine Antarctic Program in the early nineties. Pepe served as scientific leader of Argentine Antarctic Expeditions and as SCALOP delegate from Argentina. In the course of his career he also acquired experience in non-environmental subjects such as logistics and operations, exchange of information and information technology. This background enabled him to become the developer and administrator of the provisional website concerning Antarctic Treaty information exchange ([www.infoantarctica.org.ar](http://www.infoantarctica.org.ar)) and, together with the colleagues of the South African Antarctic Program, the website of XXVII ATCM. Now he is the man behind the new, improved web page with the documents for the Stockholm meeting!



*José Luís "Pepe" Agraz*

### Norway opens the new Troll Station and the Troll Airfield

On 11 February 2005 a Hercules C-130 operated by the Norwegian Air Force conducted the first direct flight from Cape Town to Troll Airfield in Dronning Maud Land, and the first landing there of a large wheeled aircraft. On board the plane were 38 passengers including HM Queen Sonja of Norway. She is as far as we know the first Queen to visit Antarctica.

On 12 February HM Queen Sonja officially opened the new Troll station. This Norwegian station, situated at 72 degrees South, 2 degrees East at 1270 m elevation, has over the last few months been expanded to accommodate year-round operations. The existing station has been expanded by 350 square meters, a new emergency station and a generator building have been built and a satellite communication link has been established. The opening ceremony marked the official start of a new era in Norwegian Antarctic activities, where winter expeditions will once again constitute an essential part of the research program. The Norwegian Polar Institute will run the station, conduct research and coordinate other national and international research activities at Troll. The research will include a variety of activities such as monitoring of glaciers; studies of greenhouse gases, UV-radiation and heavy metals in the air; meteorological observations and bird monitoring. In addition, the Norwegian Space Centre plans to establish a station at Troll within the next year for the downloading of data from satellites in orbit.

The Norwegian Minister of the Environment, Knut Arild Hareide, inaugurated Troll Airfield in an official ceremony. Minister Hareide pointed out that Troll Airfield is expected to greatly facilitate research activity in Dronning Maud



*Overview of the new Troll station still under construction (Photo: Stein Tronstad, Norwegian Polar Institute)*



*HM Queen Sonja officially opens the new Troll Station (Photo: Stein Tronstad, Norwegian Polar Institute).*



*From the first landing of a large wheeled aircraft at Troll Airfield. It was very smooth! (Photo: Stein Tronstad, Norwegian Polar Institute)*

Land, and that Norway has established the airfield as part of the DROMLAN cooperation. Under the DROMLAN program Antarctic operators can in future plan regular flights from Cape Town to Dronning Maud Land for the complete summer season.

In addition to HM the Queen and the Norwegian Minister of the Environment Lena Sommerstad, the Swedish Minister of the Environment, and representatives from the South-African and Norwegian governments attended the opening ceremony. The Queen's party included Rolf Trolle Andersen, now Lord Chamberlain, who will be known to many Antarctic colleagues as a former Norwegian polar ambassador and a major architect of the Environmental Protocol. Sigurd Helle (84 years old), the leader of Norway Station during the IGY, was also present.

The inaugural party made various excursions in the surroundings of Troll. In addition, the South African National Antarctic Programme provided helicopter transport to SANAE IV so that the Queen's party had the opportunity to also see the Antarctic operations of another nation. The party was guided around SANAE by Franz Hoffmann.

Article sent by Birgit Njaastad: [njaastad@npolar.no](mailto:njaastad@npolar.no)

## **Workshop on Biological Indicators of Human Impact**

The US National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs (NSF-OPP), the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP), and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) sponsored an environmental monitoring workshop in Bryan/College Station, Texas from March 16 to 18, 2005. The workshop was entitled "Practical Biological Indicators of Human Impacts in Antarctica" and was co-hosted by the Office of the Vice President for Research of Texas A&M University and the British Antarctic Survey (BAS).

The terms of reference were:

- 1. To consider the range of biological indicators of human impacts that can be appropriately applied in the Antarctic setting.*
- 2. To assess the available history and data on biological indicators from the molecular to the ecosystem level and assess the strengths and weaknesses of these methodologies.*
- 3. To consider if the monitoring of key species is practical, and to assess the limitations of monitoring schemes based on these biological representatives.*
- 4. To review existing biological monitoring protocols that have been tested, validated and used in temperate climates and determine how they might be adapted to Antarctica.*
- 5. To develop a series of recommendations that will assist National Antarctic Programs in establishing meaningful and practical long-term monitoring programs in Antarctica that provide for comparability across programs and optimize the ability of monitoring program results to inform management decisions.*

Forty-five (45) participants from fourteen (14) countries were convened to discuss the status of biological indicators of human impact in Antarctica. The deliberations were the next step in a series of workshops and conferences that have addressed national and international requirements for monitoring and minimization of human impacts in Antarctica. The workshop participants

prepared for their discussions by considering a series of oral presentations and summaries, concept (white) papers, guiding documents, discussion questions, poster presentations, and other background information. Most of this material is available for review on the workshop web site:

<http://vpr.tamu.edu/antarctic/workshop/workshop.php>.

Discussion groups of 8 to 12 people were provided with a set of questions to assist the deliberations. Each group had a designated discussion group leader and a reporter to record the group's discussions. Membership on each group represented the breadth of expertise and national origin of the workshop participants. Each group provided detailed notes of their deliberations and a summary of their discussions in four or five slides for presentation to the larger group. The points covered in the presentation were: general discussion items, key findings or lessons learned, conclusions, and recommendations.

The outcomes from the workshop will be available shortly and will include a two volume final report and an Information Paper to be presented in Stockholm to the 28<sup>th</sup> ATCM. Additional details can be provided by Dr. Mahlon C. Kennicutt II, Texas A&M University.

Article sent by Mahlon C. Kennicutt II, [m-kennicutt@tamu.edu](mailto:m-kennicutt@tamu.edu)



## The SCAR composite Gazetteer

The Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica (CGA) is an international compilation of all geographical names used in Antarctica. The work is being performed in the framework of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). SCAR entrusted the CGA to Italy in 1992 at its 22nd Meeting, held in Bariloche (Argentina).

Data are introduced in a general database which is available on the web at the site [www3.pnra.it/SCAR\\_GAZE](http://www3.pnra.it/SCAR_GAZE), where some search facilities are provided as well. The data are also available in printed form in two volumes issued in 1998 plus a supplement which was introduced in July 2004 at the 28th SCAR Meeting in Bremen (Germany).

The database is updated quarterly, the last updating having been on 1 January 2005. At that time 17.671 different features were stored in the database with 35.277 geographical names. The geographic border of the CGA compilation is the 60° south latitude. The database contains data from 22 countries plus the undersea data from the General Bathymetric Chart of the Ocean (GEBCO).



The routine work performed by the Italian team, based at Consorzio PNRA in Rome, mainly consists of adding new features or new names (given to some already named features), adding to the existing names descriptions of the features and approval dates of the names, and detecting and correcting misspellings, mistakes and inconsistencies.

Sources of the information are the representative of the Countries in the SCAR, which in turn obtain the basic information from their National Geographic Boards. The link between the Italian team and the representatives in SCAR is at the moment suffering from the recent adoption of a new SCAR structure. Nevertheless the compilation work progresses steadily, due to the unceasing commitment of the previous national experts. Contact point: [chiara.ramorino@enea.pnra.it](mailto:chiara.ramorino@enea.pnra.it)

Article sent by Roberto Cervellati: [roberto.cervellati@casaccia.enea.it](mailto:roberto.cervellati@casaccia.enea.it)

## Upcoming Meetings

### **XXVIII ATCM**

The XXVIII Antarctic Meeting Consultative Meeting will be held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 6 to 17. The Meeting will take place at the Technical Museum in the Eastern museum area close to downtown Stockholm.

For additional Information Contact: [secret@ats.org.ar](mailto:secret@ats.org.ar)

Websites: [www.ats.org.ar/28atcm](http://www.ats.org.ar/28atcm)

[www.sweden.gov.se/atcm](http://www.sweden.gov.se/atcm)

### **COMNAP XVII**

The 17th Meeting of the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP) will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria from July 11 to 15, 2005.

For additional information contact Antoine Guichard, COMNAP Executive Secretary: [sec@comnap.aq](mailto:sec@comnap.aq)

Web Site: [www.comnap.aq](http://www.comnap.aq)

### **JCADM**

The 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Committee on Antarctic Data Management of SCAR and COMNAP will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 12 to 16 September 2005.

For additional information contact the JCADM Chief Officer, Taco de Bruin: [bruin@nioz.nl](mailto:bruin@nioz.nl)

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