



XXXII SCAR Delegates' Meeting

Portland, USA, 23-25 July 2012

Agenda Item: 8.1

Person Responsible: S Chown

Report of the SCAR Delegation to CEP XV and XXXV ATCM in Hobart, Australia June 11-20th 2012

Executive Summary

Title: Report of the SCAR Delegation to CEP XV and XXXV ATCM in Hobart, Australia June 11-20th 2012

Authors: M Sparrow, S L Chown, M C Kennicutt, P O'Brien, L Newman, A Terauds

Introduction/ Background: SCAR provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and other organizations on issues affecting the conservation and management of Antarctica.

Important Issues or Factors: The XXXV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and XV Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) took place in Hobart, Australia, from June 10-20th 2012. SCAR provided five Working Papers (WPs), seven Information Papers (IPs) and one Background Paper (BP) on subjects such as: Outcomes from the Aliens in Antarctica Project (also the subject of the SCAR lecture by Aleks Terauds), Tsunami risks, Antarctic Conservation Biogeographic Regions, Anthropogenic sound in the Southern Ocean, the SCAR Products, the Southern Ocean Observing System, an ACCE update and a paper on communicating climate change. Many were submitted jointly with other Parties, Observers and Experts.

Budget Implications: \$20k per year for SC-ATS. Funds are also budgeted so the SCAR Delegation can attend the Antarctic Treaty Meetings

Report of the SCAR Delegation to CEP XV and XXXV ATCM in Hobart, Australia June 11-20th 2012

1. Introduction







The XXXV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and XV Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) took place in Hobart, Australia, from June 10-20th 2012.

The SCAR Delegation consisted of M D Sparrow (SCAR Executive Director), M C Kennicutt II (SCAR President), S L Chown (CO of SC-ATS), P O'Brien (deputy Chief Officer of SSG-GS), A Terauds (SCAR Speaker) and L Newman (SOOS Executive Officer). Only M D Sparrow and M C Kennicutt stayed for the full 8 working days of the meeting. SCAR Vice Presidents R Ravindra, Y-D Kim and S Marensi were also present as part of their national delegations as was deputy Chief Officer of SC-ATS, Kevin Hughes.






2. SCAR Input



SCAR provided five Working Papers (WPs), seven Information Papers (IPs) and one Background Paper (BP). Many were submitted jointly with other Parties, Observers and Experts:

Working Papers (WP)


-  WP005: Outcomes of the International Polar Year Programme - Aliens in Antarctica (BP001 supports this paper)
-  WP006: Reducing the risk of inadvertent non-native species introductions associated with fresh fruit and vegetable importation to Antarctica
-  WP013: Understanding Risk to National Antarctic Program Operations and Personnel in Coastal Antarctica from Tsunami Events (joint paper with COMNAP, headed by COMNAP)
 -  Attachment: COMNAP Preliminary Research Report - Understanding Risk to National Antarctic Program Operations and Personnel in Coastal Antarctica from Tsunami Events
-  WP023: Antarctic Conservation Biogeographic Regions (joint paper with Australia and New Zealand, headed by Australia)
-  WP057: Antarctic Environments Portal (joint paper with New Zealand and Australia, headed by New Zealand)

Information Papers (IP)

-  IP001: SCAR Annual Report 2011/12
-  IP002: The Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS)
-  IP021: Anthropogenic Sound in the Southern Ocean - an Update
-  IP035: Antarctic Conservation for the 21st Century: Background, progress, and future directions (joint paper with IUCN and New Zealand, headed by SCAR)
-  IP040: SCAR Products available to support the deliberations of the ATCM

-  IP044: Communicating the Science of Climate Change
-  IP045: Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment - an Update

Background Paper (BP)

 BP001: Continent-wide risk assessment for the establishment of nonindigenous species in Antarctica (in support of WP005)

All papers are available from: <http://www.scar.org/treaty/atcmxxxv/>

3. Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP XV)

The full report of the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) meeting will be available from <http://www.ats.aq>. In this report only those items directly relevant to SCAR are presented. At the request of the CEP IPs were only presented if absolutely necessary. Therefore unless otherwise stated below the SCAR IPs were taken as read by the committee.

3.1 Strategic Discussions on the Future Work of the CEP (CEP Agenda item 3)

New Zealand presented WP57 *“The Antarctic Environments Portal”*, co-sponsored by Australia and SCAR, which highlighted a proposal to develop an online Antarctic Environments Portal. The portal would serve as the primary source of information on Antarctic Environments, and act as an efficient means to strengthen the link between Antarctic science and policy, as well as enhance the CEP’s advisory role to the ATCM, facilitate SCAR’s advisory role to the ATCM and CEP and assist in communicating information on Antarctic environments to the public.

The discussion that followed the presentation of the paper focussed on issues such as the long-term maintenance of the portal (in particular financial), whether portal content should be approved by the Parties first and ensuring the information in the portal is not repeating information already available elsewhere. There was, though, broad support for producing a pilot version of the portal to be considered in 2013.

AGREEMENT: SCAR to work with New Zealand and Australia in producing a pilot version of the Antarctic Environments Portal.

3.2 Climate Change Implications for the Environment: Strategic Approach (CEP Agenda item 3)

The SCAR Executive Director, M Sparrow, presented IP45 *“Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment: An Update”* both to the CEP and ATCM (see also Section 4.2). This was the third update report since the publication of the SCAR Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment (ACCE) report in 2009, which is itself freely available from the SCAR website.

The original ACCE document contained 80 ‘key points’ that represented an Executive Summary of the full report. The SCAR ACCE Expert group – which has been expanded to include representatives from e.g. Russia, China and Argentina - has been working on an update to these 80 key points, incorporating material included in previous ATCM updates, making use of results emerging from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report, and also rectifying some omissions identified in the original report. This update, which is much more comprehensive than previous updates, is currently being finalised for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

IP44 “*Communicating the Science of Climate Change*” was also presented by the SCAR Executive Director. One of the major recommendations from the Antarctic Treating Meeting of Experts on Implications of Climate Change for Antarctic Management and Governance held in Norway in April 2010 was that the ATCM develop an Antarctic climate change communication plan to bring the findings of the SCAR ACCE report to the attention of decision makers, the general public and the media. Following on from this recommendation, and underpinned by funding from Norway, the UK, and ASOC it was agreed that it would be appropriate for SCAR to lead with this initiative. Based on this, SCAR has been working on a SCAR Climate Change Communications Plan and is actively implementing innovative ways to improve its communications in this area. The UK thanked SCAR for taking the lead with this initiative.

Other Issues:

Under this agenda item Norway presented WP33 “*RACER: Rapid Assessment of Circum-Arctic Ecosystem Resilience*”. This paper introduced WWF’s RACER tool that is being used in the Arctic to identify and map places of conservation importance on the basis of ecosystem resilience. The paper suggests that work be carried out to test the RACER methodology on a trial area in the Antarctic to assess its applicability. The CO of SCATS noted that the RACER methodology would assist in refining areas of high resilience within biogeographic regions, but also raised a concern that the establishment of non-native species in such areas is not considered at the moment.

AGREEMENT: SCAR offered to work with the UK and Norway on the RACER methodology inter-sessionally.

3.3 Human Footprint and Wilderness Values (CEP agenda item 7d)

New Zealand introduced WP 50 “*Concepts for Wilderness protection in Antarctica using tools in the Protocol*”.

AGREEMENT: SCAR agreed to participate in inter-sessional work with New Zealand and the Netherlands to explore possibilities of inviolate areas and wilderness values in conservation planning.

3.4 Other Annex V Matters (CEP agenda item 7f)

Australia introduced WP 23 “*Antarctic Conservation Biogeographic Regions*” jointly prepared with New Zealand and SCAR, which presented the results of recent analyses of the relationships between the best available Antarctic terrestrial biodiversity data, the Environmental Domains and other relevant spatial frameworks. The analysis identified 15 biologically distinct ice-free regions encompassing the Antarctic continent and offshore islands within the Antarctic Treaty area. The committee congratulated the authors of the paper on their thorough analysis towards a systematic approach to area protection. The areas were adopted as a means to further conservation planning in the terrestrial Antarctic.

The US also introduced WP 38 “*Developing Protection for a Geothermal Area; Volcanic Ice Caves at Mount Erebus, Ross Island*”.

AGREEMENT: SCAR agreed to work alongside Parties to further develop this initiative

3.5 Quarantine and Non-native Species (CEP agenda item 8a)

The CO of SCATS, S Chown, introduced WP 5, “*Outcomes of the International Polar Year Programme: Aliens in Antarctica*” supported by BP 1. “*Continent-wide risk assessment for the establishment of non-indigenous species in Antarctica*” which together reported on the assessment

of the risks of establishment of non-native species, and which concluded that the highest current risk is posed to the western Antarctic Peninsula coast and the islands off the coast of the Peninsula.

The report concluded that by 2100 the risk of establishment of non-native species would continue to be highest in the Antarctic Peninsula area, but as a result of climate change would also increase substantially in the coastal, ice-free areas to the west of the Amery Ice Shelf and to a lesser extent in the Ross Sea region. SCAR recommended that the CEP: (i) include the spatially explicit, actively-differentiated risk assessments in further development of strategies to mitigate the risks posed by terrestrial non-native species; (ii) develop a surveillance strategy for areas at high risk of non-native species establishment; and (iii) give additional attention to the risks posed by intra-Antarctic transfer of propagules.

The Members expressed their appreciation to SCAR for this study and emphasised that this subject was of major interest to the CEP, including aspects related to the increased risks due to climate change, and the further development of the non-native species risks. The committee endorsed the recommendations of WP5.

AGREEMENT: SCAR to work in collaboration with Treaty Parties (along with COMNAP, IAATO and IUCN) on Recommendation 2 of WP 5 in terms of developing a surveillance strategy for areas at risk of non-native species establishment.

WP 6 “*Reducing the Risk of Inadvertent Non-Native Species Introductions Associated with Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Importation to the Antarctic*” was also introduced by the CO of SCATS. The Committee welcomed the report.

3.6 Other Annex II Matters (CEP agenda item 8c)

The deputy CO of SSG-GS, P O’Brien, presented IP 21 “*Anthropogenic Sound in the Southern Ocean: An Update*”, which responded to a request of CEP XIV for an overview of research developments regarding the potential impacts of anthropogenic sound in the Southern Ocean. SCAR also informed the Committee of publication of a substantial scientific synthesis on the subject by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (The impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/12).

AGREEMENT: SCAR agreed to provide updates on this issue when substantive new information becomes available.

The CO of SCATS introduced IP 35 “*Antarctic Conservation for the 21st Century: Background, progress and future directions*”, which reported on initial steps undertaken by SCAR, New Zealand and IUCN on the development of an integrated and comprehensive future strategy for the conservation of Antarctica and associated and dependent ecosystems. The committee expressed its keen interest in the steps taken to date in this respect and a number of Parties offered to maintain collaborative engagement in the work.

3.7 Environmental Monitoring and Reporting (CEP agenda item 9)

The Executive Officer of the Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS), L Newman, presented IP 2 “*The Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS)*” on behalf of SCAR. She noted that a SOOS Science plan has been published and is available from the SOOS website (www.soos.aq) – hard copies have also been made available. A SOOS Science Steering committee was formed from a pool of international candidates and a first meeting was held in the US earlier this year. The next meeting will be held in China in May 2013.

The committee expressed its strong support for the programme. Several Members indicated their willingness to participate.

The SCAR Executive Director also introduced IP 40 “*SCAR Products available to support the deliberations of the ATCM*”. The products described in the paper provide scientific information in a form that is useful to scientists and others, for example providing meteorological, oceanographic or ice-core data (the READER databases), biodiversity data (e.g. SCAR MarBIN and ANTABIF) or Southern Ocean bathymetry (IBCSO), to name just a few.

The United States welcomed SCAR’s increased involvement in recent years in topics central to the work of the CEP and congratulated SCAR for the high quality of the material produced in response to requests for advice from the CEP.

4. Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM XXXV)

As above only those items directly relevant to SCAR are presented. IPs were only presented if absolutely necessary.

4.1 SCAR Annual Report 2011/12 (ATCM agenda item 4)

The SCAR President gave the SCAR annual report (IP 1) to the plenary session of the Treaty. As well as reminding Parties of SCAR’s role in the Treaty System (that of providing independent, sound, scientifically-based advice, including the use of science to identify emerging trends), he highlighted several items including the next generation of SCAR Research Programmes, the Southern Ocean Observing System and the Ice Sheet Mass Balance and Sea Level (ISMALSS) group. He also highlighted SCAR’s Antarctic Conservation in the 21st Century initiative as well as the Martha T Muse Prize winners for 2011 and 2012 and the SCAR Medal winners. He noted that two of the winners were Australian (Steve Rintoul, the 2012 Martha T Muse Prize winner and Ian Allison, the SCAR Medal winner for coordination).

4.2 Safety and Operations in Antarctica (ATCM agenda 10)

COMNAP introduced WP13 “*Understanding Risk to National Antarctic Program Operations and Personnel in Coastal Antarctica from Tsunami Events*”, joint paper with SCAR. This paper reported on a preliminary analysis showing that risks of a moderate to concerning level to National Antarctic Program operations and personnel in coastal Antarctica from Tsunami may arise on occasion. The meeting supported COMNAP’s recommendation that organisations with expertise in tsunami detection, modelling, research and warning systems management should work together with COMNAP and SCAR on the next phase of this project, namely, to develop a simple, cost-effective, practical tsunami warning communications plan and tsunami awareness education materials.

4.3 Inspections under the Antarctic Treaty and the Environmental Protocol (ATCM agenda item 12)

Responding to a query from Spain regarding recommendation or procedures relating to drilling exercises, SCAR referred to its Code of Conduct for the Exploration and Research of Subglacial Environments, and its Expert Group on Advancing Technological and Environmental Stewardship for Subglacial Exploration in Antarctica (ATHENA). It offered to provide a report on the activities of ATHENA for the next meeting.

AGREEMENT: SCAR agreed to provide a report on the activities of ATHENA for CEP XVI

4.4 Implications of Climate Change for Management of the Antarctic Treaty Area (ATCM agenda item 14)

The SCAR Executive Director presented IP 44 “*Communicating the Science of Climate Change*” and IP 45 “*Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment: An Update*” to the ATCM. See Section 3.2 for details.

Under this agenda item Australia presented WP 32 “*ATCM interests in international climate change discussions – options for enhanced engagement*” in which it was proposed that the ATCM should be involved as an Observer to the UNFCCC. Although the discussions were not in favour of such a move the Parties suggested that SCAR could be the body that interacts with the UNFCCC. The SCAR ED replied that although SCAR was already an observer to the UNFCCC it focussed its efforts on interaction with the IPCC and did not have the resources to engage more with the UNFCCC. Norway asked if it could support SCAR to become more engaged with this body.

AGREEMENT: SCAR to consider Norway’s offer to provide funding for SCAR to engage more with the UNFCCC.

4.5 The SCAR Lecture

A Terauds presented the SCAR lecture on research associated with the SCAR IPY Aliens in Antarctica project and links of this research with other, related studies coordinated by SCAR. The lecture was very well received by the Treaty and received much press coverage.

5. Side Meetings

The opportunity was taken to hold several side meetings during the breaks associated with the Treaty Meeting: (i) S L Chown convened a meeting of the representatives of SC-ATS that were at the meeting; (ii) The SCAR ED and SOOS Executive Officer met with representatives from Australia and New Zealand to discuss possible co-sponsorship of the SOOS by New Zealand; (iii) A meeting was held between representatives of SCAR and CCAMLR to discuss future partnerships and the establishment of an Action Group to meet prior to the CCAMLR meeting this year; (iv) The SCAR ED also met with a representative of APECS Oceania.