



CCAMLR

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Commission pour la conservation de la faune et la flore marines de l'Antarctique
Комиссия по сохранению морских живых ресурсов Антарктики
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ASOC Report to CCAMLR

Submitted by ASOC



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Abstract

ASOC submitted four background papers to CCAMLR-40, highlighting ongoing challenges to krill fishery management, marine protected areas and climate change. Throughout the intersessional period, ASOC and its member groups conducted a variety of activities supporting Antarctic conservation, including participation in online academic conferences, workshops, symposia and webinars, and making contributions to a range of research projects. CCAMLR must respond to the ongoing climate and biodiversity crisis and take immediate action to achieve the long-term conservation of the Southern Ocean.

Introduction

ASOC is pleased to be attending the 40th annual meeting of CCAMLR. This report briefly describes ASOC's work over the past year. ASOC's Secretariat is in Washington, DC, USA, and its website is <https://www.asoc.org>. ASOC has 23 member groups representing a wide range of ATS countries. ASOC is pleased to report that three new groups have joined since 2019: the Blue Marine Foundation, Global Choices and World Parks Inc. ASOC submitted four background papers highlighting ongoing challenges to krill fishery management, marine protected areas, and climate change, all issues highly relevant to the work of the Scientific Committee and Commission and that require immediate action.¹

Since the last CCAMLR meeting, ASOC and its member groups contributed actively to a number of online academic conferences, symposia and webinars on topics relevant to CCAMLR. ASOC also participated in the 43rd ATCM hosted by France in June 2021, along with pre-meeting intersessional activities, where some issues of interest to CCAMLR were discussed. ASOC also organized educational and outreach activities of different kinds. Such opportunities facilitated important discussions amongst Antarctic stakeholders and served to inform the general public about Antarctic conservation and governance.

The Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund (AWR), to which ASOC is one of founding board members, selected 3 new projects to be supported in the upcoming year. These projects are in line with the priorities selected by AWR's Scientific Advisory Group, composed of key CCAMLR scientists.

¹Other important Southern Ocean conservation issues which are subject of ASOC's ongoing work include Protecting cetaceans in the CCAMLR Area; increasing transparency and access to technical information in the Antarctic Treaty System, extending the IMO's Polar Code to polar fishing vessels, improving regulation of transshipment, and addressing marine plastic pollution.

Climate change

The 2021 IPCC Climate Report² advises that the imminent and ongoing threat of climate change will have important consequences to the loss of biodiversity. As an integral part of the Antarctic Treaty System, CCAMLR must respond and fulfill its special obligation to safeguard the Antarctic environment and ecosystems. We must put protection and conservation first if we are to have any hope of maintaining the many ecosystem services provided by the Southern Ocean.

On 30 March 2021, The Pew Charitable Trusts organized a workshop at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC³. Twenty international experts discussed how changes in the Southern Ocean impact global climate regulation, marine ecosystems and human communities, and the policy responses needed to address climate risks. The report echoed grave concerns about the ongoing climate crisis.

Pew also supported several technical or management focused events throughout the last year including:

- A workshop on U.S. research and monitoring in support of the Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area, results of which were submitted to the 2021 WG-EMM meeting.
- A Global Dialogue on Biodiversity, Law and Governance with University of Colorado, Macquarie University and Wuhan University.
- An international workshop led by Australian Antarctic Division to test a newly developed method to age krill via their eyestalks.
- A Taskforce planning the Second Southern Ocean Decade Workshop to be held online September 20-22, 2021.

Marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean

CCAMLR committed to designate a representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Southern Ocean by 2012 based on the best available science. ASOC and its members have supported the designation of MPAs with a variety of activities throughout the year.

Supported by the Blue Nature Alliance, ASOC launched the #CallOnCCAMLR campaign this year. The campaign has been shared widely on social media and supported by several high-level government leaders. The project also supports five scientific projects, including the development of an MPA in the Bellingshausen Sea (Domain 9), and subsequent MPA proposals for the Sub-Antarctic region (Domains 4, 5, 6).

On 4 June 2021, ASOC together with The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament and Renew Europe co-hosted a webinar on *How the EU is leading on the largest act of ocean protection*. With strong support from the EU membership, President Ursula von der Leyen and EU Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius reiterated their commitment to the securing consensus on MPAs from CCAMLR Members.

WWF hosted a workshop in Shanghai in collaboration with Greenovation Hub, Shanghai Jiaotong

²IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Chapter_09.pdf

³Capurro A., F. Colleoni, R. Downey, E. Pakhomov, R. Roura & A. Christianson 2021. Climate Change and Southern Ocean Resilience. Report from an interdisciplinary scientific workshop, March 30, 2021. *Polar Perspectives* No.5, June 2021.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/polar-perspectives-no-5-climate-change-and-southern-ocean-resilience>

University, and Zhejiang University. Experts on polar law and policies from various institutes discussed climate change and MPAs in the workshop. The role of science in designating MPAs was highlighted in the presentations and discussion.

Polar Code

ASOC's work to improve the safety of vessels operating in the Southern Ocean, and therefore reduce the risk to both lives and to the environment, continues to focus on the development of measures for so-called non-SOLAS ships including fishing vessels of 24m in length and over. Mandatory measures addressing navigation and voyage planning in polar waters including all waters south of 60°S remain in development and are anticipated to be adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2022. While IMO Guidelines addressing all aspects of the Polar Code – from ships' structure to fire safety, navigation, communications and training, were adopted in May 2021. CCAMLR Member States should now require all fishing vessels operating south of 60°S to follow the new IMO *Guidelines for safety measures for fishing vessels of 24m length and over operating in polar waters*.

Outreach and Education

To promote the protection of marine and terrestrial polar environments, ASOC presented papers at the 13th International Polar Law Symposium hosted by the Kobe University Polar Cooperation Research Centre in November 2020.

On 29 April 2021, ASOC and the Citizens' Institute for Environmental Studies co-hosted a trilateral Youth Ocean Policy Panel webinar on Antarctic protection. Youth participants from China, Japan, and Korea participated and discussed the international efforts needed to ensure future Antarctic protection. Participants expressed the view that Antarctica is a common heritage of all humankind, noting that future benefits of Antarctic MPAs far exceed the benefits claimed by individual countries and the fishing industry.

On 23-25 August 2021, ASOC co-organized the series Ocean and Climate Science Events jointly with the Lomonosov Moscow State University Marine Research Center, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo).

Research support

ASOC and its member organizations regularly support a diversity of independent research to address critical knowledge gaps identified by the CCAMLR Scientific Committee while growing the field of CCAMLR scientists by providing opportunities for early career and underrepresented researchers. The following are highlights of recent publications or papers submitted to the Scientific Committee and its working groups:

- [A survey](#) for Antarctic krill and predators in East Antarctica led by the Australian Antarctic Division (supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts).
- Advancement of the krill predator risk assessment framework by British Antarctic Survey scientists, as agreed in the CCAMLR 2019 krill work plan (supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts).
- An [analysis](#) showing that krill populations are projected to lose about 30% of their suitable habitat this century due to widespread negative effects from human-driven climate change (supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts).
- [A study](#) on killer whale trends in the Antarctic Peninsula region showing that Type B1 killer whale population size is declining at a rate of close to 5% per year due to reduced survival or possibly movement to find ice closer to the pole (supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts).

WWF supported conservation-based research over the last 12 months, including co-sponsoring a virtual workshop with the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Krill Action Group (SKAG) to evaluate change in Antarctic krill populations and develop solutions for the future sampling of krill. Outcomes from this workshop include peer-reviewed publications to answer key questions posed by the main CCAMLR working group supporting Southern Ocean krill fishery management, and to inform management of the krill fishery in the medium to long term. WWF also supported the RAADT (Retrospective Analysis of Antarctic Tracking Data) project, which identified key foraging areas by 17 Antarctic species in the Southern Ocean since the 1990s, which was submitted and discussed at the 2021 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting.

ASOC strongly recommends that the unusual circumstances of a global pandemic must not stall progress to designate meaningful MPAs and make progress on krill and climate change issues. ASOC appreciates being able to continue to work with CCAMLR Members, as well as Observers such as ARK, COLTO, IAATO and SCAR on CCAMLR issues despite the challenges.

ASOC believes CCAMLR Members should be able to adopt the East Antarctic, the Western Weddell Sea, and the Antarctic Peninsula MPAs at CCAMLR-40. ASOC also encourages further development of proposals for other planning domains.