

*Memorandum 2/11/2018*

## **IAB9: Arctic biodiversity goals in the transboundary and cross-cultural Beringian region: positive lessons for success**

This memo provides a summary of reports submitted on the session IAB9 organized at the Arctic Biodiversity Session in Rovaniemi, Finland, October 9-12 organized by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

**Attendance:** 16

**Arctic Biodiversity Assessment recommendation themes most prominently addressed in the session:**

- Ecosystem-based Management
- Identifying and safeguarding important areas
- Improving knowledge and public awareness

**Key points raised in the session that were important to note:**

- Need to work better cooperatively across the border in particular to leverage US knowledge and techniques.
- There is good cooperation on Berengia Heritage Program but looking for opportunities to leverage broad international work to improve/expand program.
- Russia creating a 1.4M ha nature park in Chukotka for spoon-billed sandpiper and other values, and is trying hard to deal with the old conflict between park establishment and local people by better understanding their issues and addressing them - part of the park will be for subsistence hunting to ensure the local people can continue their traditional way of life.
- Re-establishing reindeer husbandry, this only place in Russia where this is occurring.
- An increase in temperature of 1.5 degrees and increase in ppt has resulting in increase in rain on snow, mid-winter thaws, increase in fire, permafrost thaw leading to impacts on vegetation changes, tree line, hydrology, erosion and wildlife distribution.
- People are adapting to the changes, i.e. by starting to hunt moose.
- Sub-populations of polar bears and seals are endemic to this region however they are poorly documented. Coordinated aerial surveys using infrared technology are being used to try to address this and have showed big population declines.
- Much of coast is covered by lagoons and there is a need to focus on how to protect it in case of oil spill. Indigenous communities will be the first responders and need to be trained and have equipment. There is a need to identify the most important areas, develop a response plan and monitoring.
- Consider using deflection booms instead of traditional exclusion booms to push any oil away from lagoons.

**Recommendations/actions identified for how to deal with the issues raised in the session:**

- There is an urgent need to catalogue archaeological sites before they wash into the ocean

- It would be beneficial to have similar regulations in both countries for consistency (e.g. on hunting)
- There is a need for science exchange to learn from each other
- Response to oil spill needs to be a transboundary response

**Take home message from the session:**

- Conservation depends upon working cooperatively across borders