Organizing Science for the Central Arctic Ocean

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The Law of the Sea Convention and marine scientific research (MSR)

• The constitution of the oceans - provides the legal framework for all activities globally, including science.

• A specific regime for MSR, including:

  • MSR in the EEZ/on the continental shelf: Requires the consent of the coastal state

  • MSR one of the freedoms of the High Seas beyond 200 nmi
Existing **regional** bodies and processes
The International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)

• Established 1990, to…

• “… encouraging and facilitating cooperation in all aspects of Arctic research, in all countries engaged in Arctic research, and in all areas of the Arctic Region”

• Five working groups

• 23 member nations

• Technically an NGO - representatives usually from the national research councils
The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

- Est. 1902, 1964 treaty makes ICES an intergovernmental organization

- “… Our goal is to advance and share scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and the services they provide and to use this knowledge to generate state-of-the-art advice for meeting conservation, management, and sustainability goals.”

- Arctic Fisheries WG, Integrated ecosystem assessment of central Arctic Ocean (WGICA), advice on Arctic fisheries management
The Arctic Council agreement on international scientific cooperation

• In force 2018, first meeting of the eight parties March 2019

• “The purpose of this agreement is to enhance cooperation in Scientific Activities in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency in developing scientific knowledge about the Arctic”

• Basically about facilitating science, eg access to areas, data, and infrastructure
Arctic Council Working Groups

• The Arctic Council (1996): “A high level intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States…”

• WGs: Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme

• Assessments: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA), Arctic Ocean Review
The agreement to prevent unregulated fishing

• Agreement signed by the five coastal states and five other states/the EU in 2018, not yet in force

• Provisions for the establishment of a Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring

• Science will be the main activity under the agreement for the foreseeable future - establishment of mapping and monitoring programs
The Arctic Science Ministerials

- 2016, 2018 and 2020 ministerials with 26 countries participating in 2018

- Aims to “… shape the course of future Arctic research”

- Outcomes are ministerial declarations, setting out priorities - three themes:
  - Observations and data
  - Regional and global dynamics
  - Vulnerability and resilience
Other

• European Polar Board

• Global instruments and processes also relevant;

  • The MSR provisions of the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement

  • The on-going negotiation of an agreement on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)

  • The Regular Process on a Global Marine Assessment, second phase
Need for stronger coordination and cooperation?

- A growing number of global and regional initiatives and bodies, some intergovernmental, some not.

- What needs are not covered by the existing agreements and bodies?

- EA and IEA – Provides a mechanism for using knowledge and identify knowledge gaps
The science - policy relationship