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www.iaato.org

IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic.

NEWS RELEASE

Latest Antarctic Tourism Figures Released by IAATO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1 May 2017, 0900 UTC

Edinburgh, Scotland, UK: The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) announced its tourism figures for the 2016-2017 Antarctic season at the start of its annual meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. Members are gathered to discuss safe, environmentally responsible Antarctic tourism, including a multi-dimensional approach to managing for growth that will keep activities both safe and sustainable.

The total number of visitors travelling to Antarctica with IAATO members was 44,367, an increase of 15% compared to the previous season. Overall, levels of visitation, particularly in the cruise sector of the industry, has been increasing steadily since 2011-2012. IAATO's estimate for next season, 2017-2018, shows continued growth in line with global trends with 46,385 visitors expected, an increase of 5% that would see visitation reaching the peak of 46,265 reported by IAATO in 2007-08.

By tourism sector, most (98%) travelers depart from South America to visit the Antarctic Peninsula. The majority of these Peninsula visitors traveled the traditional route from Chile or Argentina on vessels that carry fewer than 500 passengers and offer excursions ashore. This sector grew by 20% compared to the previous season, principally due to the entering into the market of two vessels with a carrying capacity of 390 and just under 500 passengers respectively. Of the remainder, 3202 (7%) visitors flew to the Peninsula where they immediately joined a vessel for onward cruising. This 'air-cruise' sector of tourism continued to show the most growth at 36%, comparable to recent years. 'Cruise only' tourism, vessels carrying more than 500 passengers that do not make landings, declined by 8%.

Deep field tourism, when visitors fly to Antarctica's interior from South America or South Africa, accounts for only 1% of overall Antarctic tourism. It grew by 10% compared to the previous season.

American visitors remained the most numerous, increasing by 7% in 2016-2017 and accounting for 33% of the total number. The number of Chinese visitors increased by 25% compared to the previous year, moving them up to second



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place behind the USA. Australian, German and British visitors were the next most abundant nationalities, increasing by 5%, 45% and 19% respectively.

Bob Simpson, Chair of IAATO's Executive Committee, said, "Visiting Antarctica is a great privilege for anyone. Our goal is to provide our guests with a safe, enriching experience while leaving no discernable evidence of our visit. With demand for Antarctic tourism staying robust, our members' experience in developing and delivering sustainable operations over the past 25 years will be of huge benefit in supporting the long-term conservation of Antarctica. We're ready to address any challenges that may arise."

ENDS

Issued by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators.

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Notes for Editors:

- Images are available.
- IAATO's annual meeting runs from 2 – 4 May 2017. It is not open to the public or press, but enquiries are welcome.
- The vast majority of tourism voyages operate in the Antarctic Peninsula region during the five-month austral summer season (from November to March), departing from Ushuaia or, to a lesser extent, from other ports north of the Antarctic Treaty Area.
- Air-land tourism includes those IAATO member operators who provide flights to the Antarctic interior for deep field excursions.
- The air/cruise tourism category describes travel programs with at least one flight in or out of King George Island, combined with a Peninsula cruise.
- IAATO requires its members to abide by the Antarctic Treaty System. Therefore, tour operators refrain from making any landings in Antarctica from vessels carrying more than 500 passengers. They must also coordinate with each other so that not more than one vessel is at a landing site at any one time.



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- IAATO maintains the most comprehensive database on any human activity in Antarctica. Data are submitted annually to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) to facilitate discussions on tourism management and are publically available on www.iaato.org/tourism-statistics.

Table I. Passenger numbers for 2016-17, and estimates for 2017-2018, as of April 18, 2017, subject to change. See also www.iaato.org/tourism-statistics.

	2017-2018 (Estimate ³)	2016-2017 Season	2015-2016 Season	2014-2015 Season	2013-2014 Season	2012-2013 Season
Seaborne tourism with landings ¹	35,973	33237	27,607	25,341	25,526	23,305
Seaborne tourism, no landings ²	6430	7475	8,109	9459	9670	9070
Air & cruise combination, with landings	3405	3203	2,353	1471	1848	1587
Air & land tourism, Antarctic interior	577	452	409	431	361	354
Total	46385	44367	38,478	36,702	37,405	34,316

¹ 'Landings' are excursions ashore.

² These ships carry more than 500 passengers and cannot make landings.

³ Includes seven companies with pending IAATO membership applications that will be voted upon at the Annual Meeting.



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Table II. Percentage of Known Passenger Nationalities for the 2016-2017 Season

Nationality	Percentage (%) of Total
United States	33
China	12
Australia	10
Germany	9
United Kingdom	9
Canada	4
France	4
Switzerland	2
Netherlands	2
Other	15

About IAATO

IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic. IAATO currently has 115 members. IAATO Members work together to develop, adopt and implement operational standards that mitigate potential environmental impacts. Numerous guidelines have been adopted over the last 25 years that have proven to be successful methods in avoiding such impacts. These include but are not limited to: site specific guidelines, site selection criteria, passenger to staff ratios, limiting numbers of passengers ashore, boot washing guidelines and the prevention of the transmission of alien organisms, wilderness etiquette, garbage policy, ship scheduling and vessel communication procedures, emergency medical evacuation procedures, emergency contingency plans, reporting procedures, marine wildlife watching guidelines, station visitation policies and more.