



# Blog | A Year in The Life of Responsible Tourism

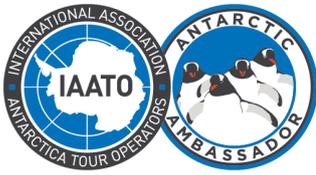
**October 18, 2018**

I can't believe it has been a year since I stood amidst the hubbub of Keflavik Airport's baggage claim looking for IAATO Head of Communications and Environment, Amanda Lynnes – or “the turquoise shirt with the huge suitcase,” as she described herself on the phone over the throng of equally unfamiliar faces.

As first days on the job go, it was an unusual start. Just a few days before, when I was offered the role of digital media assistant with the IAATO secretariat, I had been asked, somewhat casually, whether I was free to fly to Iceland at the weekend for the Polar Field Guides bi-annual Conference. There, I learned about all the enthusiasm, talent and experience that goes into delivering safe and responsible polar operations – and yes, heard the word Phytoplankton for the very first time too. It was a far cry from my previous career in police communications, which while as equally thrilling, relied almost exclusively on bad things happening to good people for me to stay busy, and where ‘travel’ meant an overnight stay in Milton Keynes.

Fast forward 12 months, one incredible familiarization trip South with one of our member operators, Hurtigruten, and both an Executive Committee and IAATO annual meeting survived, I think I can say it's been as big a year for me as it has been for the association – and I could not be more proud to have been part of it.

In the last year we have developed not one, but two incarnations of the *IAATO Polar Guide – Antarctica* app, an invaluable tool for expedition staff in the field. We have introduced IAATO's first Care and Concern Policy, a framework designed to make our unique organization stronger in its self-regulation and its processes more transparent; We have begun work on modernizing our data-rich but visually outdated website, making it work harder for its users without making them have to; we have fully digitized the Field Operations Manual to reduce paper wastage and enhance ease of use, and we're exploring ways to make the ship scheduling process better, stronger and faster. As if that was not enough, we have been diligently discussing and planning for



*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.*

tourism growth; ensuring heightened curiosity surrounding the white continent does not have any greater impact on it.

What I have seen in my short time within IAATO is an organization welcoming evolution with open arms; recognizing that to realize our mission of promoting safe and environmentally private-sector travel to the Antarctic, we need to explore new methods and tools for delivery. Our members are embracing plastic-free operations and enhanced citizen science programs as well as promoting Antarctic Ambassadorship among their guests.

To say the last year has been a Mt Vinson-sized learning curve for me would be an understatement, but my Antarctic education has been the result of speaking with those who live and breathe the white continent, defend its fragility and embody what ambassadorship really means.

## **Hayley Court**

Digital Media

International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators

ENDS –

## **About the Author**

Hayley joined IAATO in October 2017 and supports the IAATO Secretariat's digital communications.

A former newspaper journalist, Hayley moved into communications and PR in 2010, supporting Hampshire Constabulary's road traffic, major incident, and serious and organised crime teams, before moving to London where she became acting director of communications for the Association of Chief Police Officers; managing crisis and reputational issues within the UK Police Service and working with 10 Downing Street, The Home Office, COBRA and 44 police forces across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS

---

320 Thames Street, Suite 264 +1 401 841 9700 OFFICE  
Newport, RI 02840 USA +1 401 841 9704 FAX

[iaato@iaato.org](mailto:iaato@iaato.org) | [www.iaato.org](http://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.*

A member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and an advocate for ethical practice and transparency, Hayley joined IAATO to support and strengthen the association's mission and vision of facilitating appropriate, safe and environmentally sound private-sector travel to the Antarctic.

### **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 Members work together to develop, adopt and implement operational standards that mitigate potential environmental impacts. These standards have proved to be successful including but are not limited to: Antarctic 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, ship scheduling and vessel communication procedures, emergency medical evacuation procedures, emergency contingency plans, reporting procedures, marine wildlife watching guidelines, station visitation policies and much more. IAATO has a global network of over 100 members.