

Blog | Antarctica Day - Celebrating 59 Years of Global Antarctic Ambassadorship

December 1, 2018

At a time when, for many, the world seems uncertain; with political, environmental and equality struggles in the headlines, it is perhaps heartening to be able to celebrate a unique global collaboration which is as strong today as it was at its inception almost 60 years ago.

On December 1, 1959, representatives of 12 nations gathered in Washington D.C., USA, and set aside this part of the Earth "forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes... in the interests of all mankind." This astounding pact is called the Antarctic Treaty, and today the total number of parties committed to this pact numbers 53.

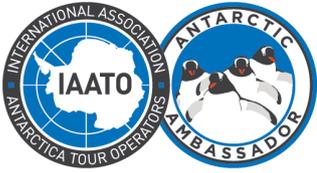
In a lesson which is as true now as it was 59 years ago, the Treaty demonstrates how myriad diverse nations can work together towards a common goal peacefully, and using science as a global language of cooperation for decision making beyond national boundaries.

It is still one of the most remarkable international collaborations ever agreed upon, and as the Treaty's 60th anniversary approaches in 2019, signatories stand hard and fast to support peace and science in this remarkable place.

Antarctica Day is an annual event to build global awareness of this landmark institution, celebrating this milestone of peace with hope and inspiration for future generations.

It was in the spirit of supporting the Treaty's unique mission, that the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) came into being 27 years ago to support man's desire to travel to this far-flung and mysterious landscape while respecting its delicate nature and the wildlife that relies on it to survive.

Founded in 1991 by seven operators to better self-regulate the Antarctic tourism industry for the preservation of the white continent, IAATO, now a member organization of more than 100 companies, advocates safe, and environmentally



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS

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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.

responsible travel to Antarctica. By using an IAATO operator visitors can be sure the company they are travelling with has the well-being of Antarctica at its heart.

First-hand travel experiences to Antarctica foster education and a better understanding of the destination and the need for safe and environmentally responsible tourism. Visitors to Antarctica, representing more than 100 different nationalities on average per season, return home as ambassadors of goodwill guardianship and peace, largely thanks to months of hard work by IAATO member operators and the passion and expertise of their incredible field staff from geologists, photographers, historians and wildlife experts.

We constantly reassess our practices to work within the Antarctic Treaty System, enabling visitors to have an enriching, educational Antarctic experience, while having no more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment.

We are incredibly proud of the education and experiences we provide our guests and Antarctica Day is an opportunity to take stock of the unique and privileged role we play in helping to preserve the most awe-inspiring continent on our planet.

Happy Antarctica Day.

Lisa Kelley

Head of Operations

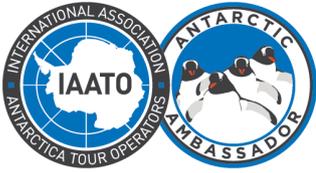
International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators

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About the author

Lisa joined IAATO in 2016 and is responsible for the field operations aspect of IAATO, developing industry best practice and guidelines for field operations.

Lisa began working aboard expedition ships in 2000. Most at home in the polar regions, she has worked as undersea specialist, logistics coordinator, divemaster and expedition leader in the Arctic and the Antarctic. She was also the station manager at Palmer Station for the United States Antarctic Program during the austral winter of 2010.



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Passionate about the future of polar tourism, Lisa began representing operators in 2004 at the annual IAATO conferences, sits on the IAATO Field Operations Committee, and contributes to AECO (Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators). Additionally, Lisa is a member of the board for FOSGI (Friends of South Georgia Island). Her passion and commitment to safe and environmentally friendly travel lead her to the position IAATO Head of Operations.

Lisa's vast experience of diving "the Ice" led to her publishing *Below Freezing: The Antarctic Dive Guide* in 2006, now in its third edition. Her underwater experience and exploration of the Polar Regions led to her acceptance into the Explorers Club.

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.