



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS

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A member organization founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic

NEWS RELEASE

IAATO Releases Antarctic Tourism Figures for 2014-2015 and Estimates for 2015-2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 28 April 2015

Rotterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) today announced its tourism figures for the 2014-2015 season on the first day of its 26th Annual Meeting in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

The total numbers of visitors travelling to Antarctica, with IAATO members, was 36,702, a slight decrease of 2% compared to the previous season. Overall, since 2011-2012, levels of visitation have been increasing modestly, but are still considerably less than the peak of 46,265 during the 2007-2008 austral summer.

There was a small decrease across all sectors of Antarctic tourism, except for trips to the interior of the continent, which increased by 19% (70 people) but accounts for only 1% of the total number of visitors. Visiting the coastal regions of the Antarctic Peninsula, on ships carrying fewer than 500 passengers, remains the most popular form of tourism, accounting for 73% of visitors. A quarter (26%) of tourists did not set foot ashore in Antarctica because they were travelling on 'cruise only' vessels, which do not make landings.

American and Australian visitors remained the most numerous, accounting for 34% and 11% of the total number respectively, almost unchanged from last year. British (9%), Chinese (8%) and German (8%) visitors were the next most abundant nationalities in Antarctica last season.

IAATO also released estimated numbers of visitors for next season, 2015-2016. Total numbers of visitors are expected to rise to 40,029 with the main increase expected in the sector of seaborne tourism with landings (28,304) due to the introduction of two new ships to the IAATO fleet.

IAATO's Annual Meeting brings together the associations 124 members who are committed to advocating and promoting the practice of safe and environmentally responsible tourism to the Antarctic.



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Marlynda Elstgeest, Chair of the IAATO Executive Committee and from the Netherlands said, "IAATO's members come together every year to determine and examine procedures, policies, emerging challenges and tasks. Representatives from Antarctic Treaty Parties, and other organizations with an interest in Antarctica's future, are also invited. Given that we're in Rotterdam this year, we're particularly delighted that representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands are able to attend and are generously sponsoring our annual dinner."

ENDS

Issued by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators.

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Notes for Editors:

- Images are available
- The meeting runs from 28 – 30 April 2015. It is not open to the public or press, but enquiries are welcome.
- Following the meeting, on 1 May 2015, there will be a half-day facilitated workshop on the principles and best practices for training emergency responders.
- 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 or trips to Emperor penguin colonies.
- 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



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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.

Table I. Passenger numbers for 2014-15, and estimates for 2015-2016, as of April 10, 2015, subject to change. See also www.iaato.org/tourism-statistics.

	2015-2016 <i>Estimate</i>	2014-2015 Season	2013-2014 Season	2012-2013 Season	2011-2012 Season	2010-2011 Season
Seaborne tourism with landings	28,304	25,341	25,526	23,305	20,271	18,534
Seaborne tourism, no landings	8900	9459	9670	9070	4872	14,373
Air & cruise combination, with landings	2294	1471	1848	1587	860	531
Air & land tourism, Antarctic interior	531	431	361	354	516	386
Over-flights, no landings	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	40,029	36,702	37,405	34,316	26,519	33,824

Table II. Percentage of Known Passenger Nationalities for the 2014-2015 season

Nationality	Percentage (%) of Total
United States	34
Australia	11
United Kingdom	9
China	8
Germany	8
Canada	5
France	3
Switzerland	3
Japan	2
Other	17



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About IAATO

IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic. IAATO currently has 124 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 20 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.