

International Association of Antarctica Tour Operator (IAATO) Data Set Information

Seasonal data is posted every year on July 1.

The following data sets starting in 2014-2026 can be found on the IAATO Website after submitting a Data Request:

- IAATO Vessel Site Visits by Date – Antarctica Only
- IAATO Visitor Activity by Site – Antarctica Only – Landed and Non-Landed Activities
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality – Antarctica – Vessel
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality – Antarctica – Deep Field
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Landed (pie chart)
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Cruise Only (pie chart)
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Vessel Total (pie chart)
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Deep Field (pie chart)

The following Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) papers can be found on the IAATO website [here](#).

- ATCM IAATO Deep Field and Air Operators Overview of Antarctic Tourism
- ATCM IAATO Overview of Antarctic Vessel Tourism

If the information you are looking for is not found in the above, a secondary request page will be available to you to provide more information and a deadline for your request.

Notes on Data Sets

- Vessel by Site Visit Date – Vessel only data (includes yacht, C1, C2, CO)
- Visitor Activity by Site – Total passengers participating in activities (passengers may participate in more than one activity per site).
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Landed (pie chart) – This chart includes data from yachts, C1, and C2 vessels.
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Cruise Only (pie chart) – This chart includes data only from Cruise Only vessels.
- IAATO Visitors by Nationality Vessel Total (pie chart) – This chart includes data from all vessels; yachts, C1, C2 and CO.
- The 2020-21 data is not included as it is not representative of a full tourism season due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Operators saw fewer clients willing to travel during the 2021-22 season due to COVID-19, resulting in lower occupancy, and had to truncate their season with the emergence of the Omicron variant.
- Until recently, data collation was done manually. Advances in technology and data analysis capability have allowed large data sets to be analysed more effectively and quickly than previously possible. This, and comprehensive

reviews of historical datasets, have identified and resolved certain inaccuracies (e.g. terrestrial landings at marine-only sites). IAATO therefore strongly recommends that all data users contact IAATO directly to obtain the most recent information available prior to conducting analyses, rather than relying on previously downloaded data.

- At this time, Deep Field and Air exports cannot be provided prior to the 2022-2023 season.
- Descriptions of all activities can be found in Appendix 1.

Common Terminology

- Yacht – Vessel carrying 12 or less passengers
- Category 1 (C1) Vessel – Vessel carrying 13-200 passengers
- Category 2 (C2) Vessel – Vessel carrying 201-500 passengers
- Cruise Only (CO) Vessel – Vessel Carrying 501+ passengers
- Pax - Passengers/ Visitor / Client
- Air-Cruise – Vessel based expedition where passengers fly one or both ways to Antarctica and join a ship for their expedition.
- Deep Field – Operations where passengers fly into the continent to a base camp for their expedition.
- Cruise Only or Non Landed – Also refers to vessel operations. Cruise Only refers to vessels that **do not** make landings in Antarctica and does scenic cruising only.
- Landed – Yacht, Category 1, Category 2 vessels that make landings in Antarctica.
- Antarctica – Peninsula, East Antarctica, Ross Sea
- PEN – Antarctic Peninsula
- EAS – East Antarctica
- ROS – Ross Sea
- CONT – Continent (deep field)

IAATO does not collect the following data:

- Non-IAATO Operator data
- Data on passenger gender
- Data on passenger age
- Specific Nationality at landing sites
- Specific Nationality participating in activities
- National Antarctic Program information (For more information visit [COMNAP](#))
- Antarctic Fishing Information (For more information visit [CCAMLR](#))

Please use one of the following methods to cite our data:

- Research citation:
International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators. *Antarctica Tourism Data*. 2026. [Unpublished raw data]. www.iaato.org
- General citation:
information provided by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators, 2026, www.iaato.org
- Short citation:
IAATO, 2026, www.iaato.org

Appendix 1: Activity Definitions

AI - Avian Influenza Pre-Activity Assessment - Pre Client-Visitation evaluation of site by qualified staff, crew, or for signs and symptoms of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.
CS - Citizen Science- Participating in a project classified as citizen science where scientific data collection is undertaken by amateur (non-professional) scientists, for use by science professionals.
CL - Climbing- Climbing mountains, nunataks or ice features with guides, the length of the trip can range from a few hours to multi-day expeditions.
CC - Cross-Country Skiing- Backcountry skiing (often with skins to allow uphill travel) - this can be over short or long distances.
DH - Downhill Skiing- Skiing down snow covered slopes.
EW - Extended Walk- A walk which moves beyond the immediate vicinity of a landing (usually over 1km).
FL - Filming- Film-makers capturing the Antarctic environmental on film for educational, entertainment, or other commercial purposes.
HT - Helicopter Assisted Ski Touring- Skiing over short or long distance with helicopter assistance.
HH - Helicopter Assisted Trekking- Journey on foot with helicopter assistance.
HF - Helicopter Flight- A flight which takes off from and returns to the same location without landing elsewhere.
FS - Helicopter Flight- Seeing- Sight seeing flight in a helicopter.
HL - Helicopter Landing- Landing on any form of landing pad.
HC - Hovercraft- An amphibious craft capable of and used to travel over land, water, ice, and other surfaces.
HY - Hydrographic Work - The mapping of the ocean floor, either from the mother vessel or small boat.
IL - Ice Landing- Landing onto ice (whether of sea or land origin) either from a vessel, tender or helicopter.
IW - Ice Walk- Walking on ice (whether of sea or land origin) to a destination away from a vessel, tender or helicopter landing area.
KY - Kayaking- Moving through water in a kayak
MR - Marathons- Running a marathon in Antarctica over a pre- designated route.
MC - Multi-Night Coastal Camping- Camping at a site for more than one night.
MA - Music Event Ashore- Event on shore that involves a music element.
MO - Music Event Onboard- Event onboard the vessel that involves a music element.

OT - Other- An activity that cannot be categorized by other activities listed. A description of this activity should be entered in cell Q11 in Part 2 of the PVR
PP - Polar Plunge- A short immersion into Antarctic waters, usually done by jumping off a platform or wading in from a beach.
RV - Remote Underwater Vehicle(ROV)- Exploring underwater using a remotely operated vehicle, which is tethered to a support vessel.
UC - RPAS Commercial Flight (UAV-C) - Piloting an RPAS for commercial use, usually for documentary or marketing purposes.
UO - RPAS Operational / Navigation Flight (UAV-O) - Piloting an RPAS to aid a vessel in navigation through Antarctic waters.
US - RPAS Scientific Flight (UAV-S) - Piloting an RPAS for scientific data collection, usually done by scientific researchers who are operating off the vessel.
SS - Science Support- Support functions in the field, usually logistical, to scientific community.
SD - Scuba Diving - Using a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba), completely independent of surface supply, to explore underwater.
SC - Ship Cruise - Sailing through Antarctic near coastal waters without leaving the principal vessel.
ON - Short Overnight Stays - Establishing a near shore small temporary camp, using tents or bivouacs, overnight with no meals ashore in a location away from an Operator's main operations hub.
ZC - Small Boat Cruising- Small boat (Zodiacs, Polar cirkels, etc.) ride to observe the Antarctic environment.
BL - Small Boat Landing- Small boats (Zodiacs, Polar cirkels, etc.) taking guests for a landing in Antarctic coastal areas.
SN - Snorkeling- Swimming to observe underwater while equipped with a diving mask and snorkel.
SB - Snowboarding - Ascending and descending a snow- covered slope on a snowboard
SH - Snowshoeing- Hiking with snowshoes so that the person's feet do not sink into the snow.
SP - Stand Up Paddle Boarding- Standing on boards and using a paddle to propel oneself through the water.
SV - Station Visit- Tour of National Antarctic Program station with permissions arranged in advance.
HV - Submersible- Human Occupied Vehicle (HOV)*- An untethered watercraft designed to operate underwater with occupants inside.
SW - Swimming- Distance- Swimming to travel a distance (usually 500m-2km).
WW - Wildlife Watching on Vessel (Whales, Seals, etc.) - Watching wildlife from onboard the primary vessel.