



*Fifty Years of Peace and Science*

*April 6-17, 2009*

**IP 33 rev.1**

Agenda Item:           ATCM 4,  
                                  ATCM 11  
Presented by:           IAATO  
Original:                 English

# **Report of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators 2008-2009**



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## *Under Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty*

### **Introduction**

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is pleased to present a report of its activities to ATCM XXXII in Baltimore, Maryland, USA from April 6-17, 2009, in relation to Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty.

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

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, IAATO maintained its total membership level at 108 companies and organizations. A Membership Directory, regularly updated, can be found on line at [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org).

As an organization, IAATO provides an online and central office resource for its members. Comprehensive operational guidelines and procedures are stored in the *Members Only* section of the website for reference, research purposes and downloading by its members ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)). Regular updates and information are shared with members throughout the year, both in the field and home offices. The aim is to encourage the highest possible operating standards for IAATO companies by providing them with the information needed for a safe and environmentally responsible operation.

Coinciding with the start of the new 2008-2009 fiscal year, a new Executive Director was appointed to manage the IAATO Secretariat. IAATO Secretariat offices were relocated in July 2008 to 179 Wayland Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island, USA, and a full-time office manager was hired. In addition, the position of IAATO Environmental Operations Manager became full-time. All members of the Antarctic community are welcome to visit the new IAATO offices.

### **Primary Activities & Developments**

IAATO continues to focus its activities in several key areas. The following is a brief synopsis of organizational activities:

1. **Seasonal Instructions:** The Seasonal Instructions to operators provide a comprehensive resource of materials and guidelines adopted by both IAATO and the Antarctic Treaty System. In addition to the annually amended Instructions, current updates are circulated to operators throughout the season as necessary, and are posted to the *Members Only* section of the IAATO website.
2. **Field Operations Manuals:** For the 2008-2009 season, IAATO produced and distributed for the first time to its members a standardized Field Operations Manual (FOM) for use by expedition leaders (ELs) and staff, captains and officers and by staff in members' home offices. A comprehensive, 800-page, two-binder compendium, the FOM is based on the traditional expedition leader's handbook previously created independently by operators for their own vessel or operation. By incorporating guidelines and operating procedures established over the years by experienced ELs into a standard new format, IAATO is taking steps to ensure consistency in the transmittal of the latest information on regulations and guidelines. The FOM will also serve as

the “course manual” in the IAATO Field Staff Training and Certification Scheme (see #19 below).

3. **Ship Scheduler:** The web-based IAATO Ship Scheduler continues to serve a vital management function of the organization, allowing for the pre-scheduling of visits to sites prior to the season. This not only ensures the presence of not more than one ship at one site at one time, but also implements the requirements laid out under the 45 IAATO Site Guidelines and the 18 ATCM Site Guidelines. In addition to noting each vessel’s day-to-day schedule, the Ship Scheduler also stores a named contact for each voyage (the expedition leader, vessel Master or Ice Master) and departure dates and ports.

Member-operators input data into the Ship Scheduler prior to the season (July), with the resulting spreadsheet available as a planning tool in September. Once the Antarctic operating season begins, the Ship Scheduler is “locked” and ELs further coordinate their landings in the field as needed. IAATO members have coordinated their schedules consistently since 1991, and the online database and creation of a master schedule have facilitated this effort in recent years. Prior to and during the season, the master schedule is available to non-IAATO vessel operators on a request basis. The resulting coordination with other non-IAATO vessels helps assure compliance with the intention of only one ship at one site at one time.

Access to the Ship Scheduler during the 2008-2009 season was also made available to RCCs, COMNAP and national programs that interact with IAATO on a regular basis with respect to station visits. The master schedule was circulated to numerous Antarctic Treaty Parties, the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, IHO/HCA, AMVER and others at the beginning of the Antarctic season. This facilitates further scheduling, transport of scientists, and the coordination of logistics and contingency planning.

The Ship Scheduler allows for an effective exchange of information between operators, the coordination of station visits and ship itineraries in advance, and ensures compliance with requirements under adopted Site Guidelines. It also assists the IAATO Secretariat and IAATO members in their pre-planning to address potential cumulative environmental impact issues and site usage at the various landing sites. The tool also has proven useful as a multiyear planning tool for ships’ arrivals and departures in port cities such as Ushuaia, Argentina.

4. **Vessel and Member Database:** IAATO’s Vessel Database is a comprehensive web-based data program that maintains detailed information on all member-operated vessels and the companies who operate them. Each IAATO member is responsible for uploading detailed vessel and company information. This online program was created primarily as an aid to the management of the IAATO Emergency Contingency Plan, and to maintain an accurate, up-to-date database on company and vessel specifications. For example, a contact information sheet for IAATO’s fleet of vessels is generated through the database each season. Components of this database and contingency plan were tabled at ATCM XXIX IP 29 *IAATO Vessel Emergency Contingency Plan-An Update* (2006). MRCCs and COMNAP have full access to the vessel database; this enables them to assess the assets they have available should an emergency occur.
5. **Vessel Tracking:** it was agreed during IAATO 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting (2008, Punta del Este, Uruguay) that it would be desirable for all IAATO member vessels to be tracked on a single website. This would assist in both contingency response but also, in due course, become an additional management tool for day-to-day operations. During 2008-2009 season, sixty percent of IAATO vessels took part in the scheme, and its usefulness was proven during both the *MV Ushuaia* and the *MV Ocean Nova* incidents. Efforts are underway to bring the remainder of IAATO vessels onboard with the satellite tracking initiative. Full information on the tracking scheme can be found on the IAATO website.
6. **Post-Visit Report Database:** IAATO continues to maintain a single electronic database to store information downloaded from all members’ Post Visit Reports (PVRs), using the PVR template

approved at ATCM XXVIII Resolution 6 (2005) *Antarctic Post Visit Report Form*. Established in 2003, this database provides a detailed digital record of all member activities. Reports from the database, plus tourism statistics compiled by the US National Science Foundation since 1989, are openly available under *Tourism Statistics* on the IAATO website at [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org). The 2008-2009 data is estimated to be available in May 2009.

IAATO welcomes submission of non-IAATO member PVRs for inclusion in the database. A blank PVR form is posted on *Operational Procedures* on the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).

7. **Site Guidelines and Field Staff Interviews:** During the 2008-2009 intersessional period, the IAATO Site Guidelines Committee assisted in the development of seven additional site guidelines with several Antarctic Treaty Parties. In addition, field staff were interviewed through the season to discuss operational issues and provide an opportunity for practical feedback on the effectiveness of the ATCM endorsed Site Guidelines. This feedback will be discussed within the IAATO Site Guidelines Committee, and at IAATO's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island (June 2009).
8. **IAATO Observers:** IAATO requires new member-operators to carry an appointed observer on one cruise during their initial season of operation as an IAATO member. Guided by a detailed checklist, the observer reports on critical aspects of an operation and provides an unabridged report to the IAATO Membership Committee for analysis and approval. These reports are then presented at the next IAATO Annual Meeting, where they are instrumental in providing information for Members on which to base their voting decisions to accept or reject a new member into IAATO. During the 2008-2009 season, five new members carried IAATO observers. For further information on the IAATO Observer program, see Section 12 of this Annual Report.
9. **Safety and Conservation Briefing:** IAATO continues to rely on the use of its *Safety and Conservation Briefing*. This is a PowerPoint presentation based on Recommendation XVIII-1 (1994) and is mandatory for all passengers and crew landing in Antarctica. A Quicktime slide show version of this can be found on [iaato@iaato.org](mailto:iaato@iaato.org) under *Guidelines*.
10. **Introduced Species or "Aliens":** Operational procedures were updated to continue to support all methods necessary to eliminate the potential spreading of Antarctic diseases and translocation of non-native species. During the 2008-2009 season, an IAATO member field staff person reported the discovery of a non-native plant species at Whalers Bay, Deception Island.
11. **Discovery of High Mortality Events:** IAATO High Mortality Procedures were followed on two occasions as members remain vigilant regarding the potential discovery and reporting of high mortality events in both the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic Islands. During the 2008-2009 season, IAATO members alerted British Antarctic Survey (BAS), the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and sub-Antarctic island groups to two possible high mortality events. In each instance, evidence indicates that these were due to low food supplies rather than pathogen-related mortalities. Nonetheless, full High Mortality Procedures were followed as a precaution. *IAATO Procedures for the Discovery of a High Mortality Event* is in the IAATO Field Operations Manual (section 6b), and posted on the *Members Only* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).
12. **Station Visits:** IAATO continued to closely coordinate schedules for station visits and landings with the United States Antarctic Program (Palmer, McMurdo and South Pole Stations), British Antarctic Survey (Rothera, Halley and Signy Stations) and Port Lockroy. "IAATO Standard Procedures for Station Visits" is in the IAATO Field Operations Manual (section 12b) and posted on the *Members Only* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).
13. **Science News Sheet:** During the IPY, IAATO has provided its field staff with information on various research projects that are of interest to both tourists and field personnel. The Science

News Sheets provide a dedicated channel for this information and aim to support the IPY, promoting relations between the scientific and tourist community. Recently published Science News Sheets can be found on the *Information Papers* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)). IAATO welcomes input from national programs in order to provide education and outreach to tourists travelling to Antarctica and the general public who visit IAATO's website.

14. **Seabird Landings Poster and Report Form:** Prior to the 2008-2009 Antarctic season, IAATO coordinated efforts with one of its members to develop and distribute a new poster/flyer on seabird landings at sea. The poster outlines measures designed to reduce the likelihood of nocturnal bird landings resulting from unnecessary or overly bright lights on vessels. A report form was also distributed to members for use in the field. The poster and additional information can be downloaded from the *Information Papers* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).
15. **Education and Outreach:** IAATO member-operators continue to use four large format size posters for display aboard vessels and in member company offices as educational tools entitled:
  - Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic, Recommendation XVIII-1 (1994) [http://www.iaato.org/docs/Visitor\\_Guidelines-1.pdf](http://www.iaato.org/docs/Visitor_Guidelines-1.pdf)
  - Marine Wildlife Watching Guidelines (Parts 1&2) <http://www.iaato.org/wildlife.html>
  - IAATO Boot and Clothing Decontamination Guidelines for Small Boat Operations [http://www.iaato.org/docs/Boot\\_Washing07.pdf](http://www.iaato.org/docs/Boot_Washing07.pdf)
16. **Yacht Package:** In an effort to promote understanding of safe and environmentally responsible private sector travel to the Antarctic, the one-off Yacht Package, which includes comprehensive operating information, continues to be made available for private one-off yacht visitors who are not IAATO members. This package was detailed in *IP 110 IAATO Information Outreach to Private One-Off Non-Member Expeditions*, ATCM XXX (2007), and is available on the *Information Papers* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).
17. **Emergency Response:** Continued use was made of the IAATO Member Emergency Medical Evacuation Response (EMER) action plan. Information on the number of IAATO medevacs during the 2008-2009 season will be available once end-of-season reports are finalized and tabulated. *IAATO Emergency and Medical Evacuation Response (EMER)* is in the IAATO Field Operations Manual (section 4c) and is posted on the *Members Only* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).
18. **IAATO Exchange of Information:** In addition to distributing the IAATO Field Operations Manual, coordination with all new members in their start-up operations was provided. Support and advice is offered on an ongoing basis to all member companies. In recent years, an introductory information session has been added to the IAATO Annual Meeting for new members to assist in this effort.
19. **IAATO Field Staff Training and Certification Scheme:** The pilot phase of a new field staff training and certification program has begun. Using the new IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM) as a course book, expedition leaders and staff can be assessed online at their convenience, with assessment results available to IAATO, the field staff and their operating company. A new IAATO Field Staff Logbook is also being developed, enabling field staff to record their work histories and credentials into a standardized, recognized format that will facilitate their employment opportunities with IAATO member-operators. It will also assist member-operators to hire the most qualified personnel available, in their goal of ensuring safe and environmentally responsible travel to Antarctica.

## 1 IAATO Membership and Activities

- 1.1 IAATO member offices are located worldwide, including in the following Antarctic Treaty Parties:

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States. A full Membership Directory can be found on the IAATO website at [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org).

## 1.2 Membership during the 2008-2009 Season:

IAATO's total membership numbers for the 2008-2009 season remain unchanged at 108 from the previous season, with one new member and one member dropping out due to lack of any cruise operations in Antarctic waters during the season just ended. Several new applications for membership are currently under review.

The breakdown of the 108 IAATO companies that are members from July 1, 2008-through March 6, 2009 includes the following categories of membership:

**Members:** 44 Member companies. These included one land-based operator, ship operators, companies that charter ships and/or organize groups to Antarctica and companies that reserve space from other ship operators.

**Associate B1 members:** Formerly known as Provisional, this category includes 12 ship operators, small vessel/yacht operators, and companies that charter vessels from existing members. Following a season of operation as an IAATO Associate B1 member, these companies are eligible to be approved as Members, contingent upon meeting certain requirements.

**Associate B2 members:** This category includes 35 tour operators, travel agents or organizers that do not operate Antarctic tour programs themselves, but book into other members' programs.

**Affiliate members:** This category includes 17 companies, organizations or individuals with an interest in supporting Antarctic tourism and the IAATO objectives.

## 1.3 Membership by Operational Activities:

During the 2008-2009 period (July 1, 2008 – June 7, 2009) IAATO members were categorized by the following types of operational activities:

1. Organizers of expedition ships that carry less than 200 passengers or small sailing vessels that carry less than 12 passengers. The limit of 100 passengers ashore at one site at one time applies. (40 Members or Associate B1 members.)
2. Organizers of vessels carrying 200-500 passengers who are making passenger landings. Stringent restrictions on landing activities of time and place apply. The limit of 100 passengers on shore at one site at one time also applies. (Nine Members or Associate B1 Members.)
3. Organizers of cruise ships making no landings (cruise-only). Cruise ships carrying more than 500 passengers are not permitted to make any landings. (Five Members or Associate B1 members.)
4. Organizers of land-based operations. (One Member.)
5. Organizers of air operations with over-flights only. (One Associate B2 member)
6. Organizers of air/cruise operations. (One Member.)

## 1.4 IAATO Bylaws: IAATO Bylaws and Objectives can be found on line at [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org) under *About IAATO*.

## 2 2008-2009 Statistics

## 2.1 Overview of Tourist Numbers

Because of the early timing of ATCM XXXII, it has not been possible to compile or analyze the statistical data for the just-concluded 2008-2009 season. It is expected that this information will be available in June 2009, and will be posted on the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)) under *Information Pages*.

It is, however, possible to give an estimated general picture of the 2008-2009 Antarctic tourism season relative to the previous season and to earlier estimates for the season just ended. Overall, total visitors in all categories of operational activities for the 2007-2008 season were previously reported by IAATO to be 46,265 (ATCM XXXI IP 85 *IAATO Overview of Antarctic Tourism 2007-2008 Antarctic Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2008-2009 Antarctic Season*). For the season just ended, this number is expected to drop 16 per cent to approximately 38,900 including over-flights and cruise-only visitors (counting IAATO member passengers only). It is worthwhile noting that this number is eight per cent below the 42,298 that IAATO members had projected in June 2008 for the 2008-2009 season. Estimates for the 2009-2010 season can be found in ATCM XXXII IP 86 *IAATO Overview of Antarctic Tourism 2008-2009 Antarctic Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2009-2010 Season*.

## 3 Participation in Organized Meetings during 2008-2009 and IAATO 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

During the year, IAATO members participated in several internal IAATO and external international meetings, liaised with National Antarctic Programs, government agencies of the sub-Antarctic island groups, and scientific and environmental organizations.

- 3.1 IAATO's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 8-11, 2009 in Providence, Rhode Island. Interested parties that would like to attend or participate should contact IAATO at [iaato@iaato.org](mailto:iaato@iaato.org).
- 3.2 IAATO sent a representative to the COMNAP XX Meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia in late June, 2008. IAATO appreciates the opportunity to work cooperatively with COMNAP where mutual interests lie in both air and ship operations. IAATO supports further cooperation between its operators to ensure there is little or no disruption to science or station activities.
- 3.3 IAATO was pleased to send two representatives to the International Hydrographic Organization/Hydrographic Committee on Antarctica (IHO/HCA) Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in October 2008. IAATO strongly supports and encourages the work of the HCA. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> year where IAATO has sent a representative to this meeting and appreciates the cooperative working relationship with the HCA. At the meeting, IAATO representatives invited officials of Treaty Party Hydrographic Offices (HO) to visit IAATO "ships of opportunity" to look at equipment onboard and advise masters and navigators on best practices in collecting hydrographic data in Antarctic waters. IAATO was appreciative of Argentina and Chile's expression of willingness to make information available on their respective Ice Navigation training courses.
- 3.4 IAATO sent two representatives to the *Workshop Towards Improved Search and Rescue (SAR) Coordination and Response in the Antarctic*, held in Valparaiso / Vina del Mar, Chile, August 12-14, 2008. The workshop was hosted by the Chilean Navy's Directorate General of the Maritime Territory and Merchant Marine (DIRECTEMAR) in collaboration with COMNAP. As a result of the meeting, significant improvements have been made in the coordination and communication between the relevant Regional Control Centers (RCCs), COMNAP and IAATO.
- 3.5 IAATO and several of its UK-based vessel operators participated in an Antarctic Shipping Workshop, September 11, 2008 at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, UK. This workshop was designed to review the tasks sent to IMO's Design and Equipment (D&E) Sub-Committee Correspondence Group, which is considering amendments to the guidelines for ships



operating in Arctic ice-covered waters to make them applicable to ships operating in similar conditions in the Antarctic Treaty Area.

- 3.6** IAATO and several of its UK-based members took part in a workshop sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Polar Regions Unit, January 29, 2009 in London, UK. The workshop furthered the intersessional discussion on a *Strategic Vision for Tourism and Non-Governmental Activities in Antarctica over the Next Decade*. IAATO appreciates the opportunity to have shared in the process that resulted in the submission by the UK of ATCM XXXII WP 10, *Strategic Vision of Antarctic Tourism for the Next Decade*.
- 3.7** IAATO's Marine Committee co-sponsored with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) a two-day workshop to discuss vessel operations, safety and related issues, February 10-12, 2009 in Arlington, VA, USA. Twenty-four participants attended, including IAATO vessel operators and invited experts. The outcomes of the meeting will be presented to IAATO members at the IAATO Annual Meeting, Providence June 8-11, 2009. These outcomes will include proposed: advice on forward-looking echo-sounders; advice on vessel operations in the vicinity of ice cliffs, icebergs and bergy bits; and advice on shore-stranding equipment. In addition, a detailed proposal will be tabled for the IAATO Marine Committee and invited experts to launch the second phase of development of a geographical and seasonal approach to management of ship-based tourism. This geographical and seasonal approach would be based on a tiered-risk assessment, a concept that received considerable support and sympathy at the recent IMO D&E Sub-Committee Meeting (see 3.8 below), relative to the proposed amendments of the Guidelines for Ships Operating in Arctic Ice-Covered Waters.
- 3.8** IAATO sent a representative to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Design and Equipment Subcommittee 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting in March 2009, in London, UK, participating as a member of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) delegation.
- 3.9** Numerous other meetings took place between IAATO members, IAATO Committees and their representative governments throughout the year. IAATO continues to maintain a policy of availability for discussions on topics of tourism with Treaty Parties and others.

#### **4 Field Coordination**

- 4.1** IAATO compiles seasonal documents including vessel call data, a comprehensive ship scheduler, emergency contact information, expedition leader schedules, and important instructional procedures for responsible operations. This information is included in the IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM). In addition IAATO maintains for its members an archive of relevant guidelines, standard operating procedures, past papers and articles relating to Antarctic Tourism.
- 4.2** IAATO's comprehensive directory of Vessel Call Data and the Master Ship Schedules are shared with COMNAP, MRCCs and other government offices to encourage improved communication and operational coordination. COMNAP's MINIATOM is an extremely useful tool for tour operators trying to contact stations or government vessels. As IAATO vessels transport numerous scientists and support personnel to Antarctica each year, in addition to requesting tourist visits to stations, it is important that station contact information be kept current for communication, planning and emergency purposes.
- 4.3** Expedition leaders and ship's officers on member vessels circulate advance day-to-day itineraries and maintain regular contact throughout the season to coordinate site visits and exchange general information such as ice conditions, weather, landing recommendations, and note concerns about potential environmental impacts, etc. At 1930 hrs local time, expedition staff monitor agreed-on radio frequencies to change itineraries if needed or report on ice conditions, weather or wildlife sensitivities. This constant cooperation and coordination between members is a key part of the IAATO Emergency Contingency Plan.

- 4.4 IAATO's Emergency Medical Evacuation Response plan (EMER), in place since 1998, continues to underpin medical evacuations.

## **5 Environmental Impact Assessment and Advance Notification**

- 5.1 IAATO members are required to submit Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Advance Notification and/or operational documents that substitute for EIAs to their national authorities pending each countries legal processes. Not all governments require EIAs or yearly updates.
- 5.2 A comparison of the various EIAs and the level of EIAs that individual operators are required to submit to their respective national authorities reflect some notable variations among documents and requirements. IAATO endeavors to bridge these variations in required documentation for ship-based members, in particular to ensure that mitigation measures and procedures are in place to avoid environmental impacts.

## **6 Procedures to Prevent the Introduction of Non-Native Species**

- 6.1 For the past nine seasons, IAATO's Boot and Clothing Decontamination Recommended Guidelines and Translocation of Diseases Protocol have been in place and have been shown to be very effective. These guidelines can be found in the IAATO Field Operations Manual (FOM) and also on the *Members Only* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)).

## **7 Reporting of Tourism and Non-governmental Activities and Database**

- 7.1 As noted previously in this paper, IAATO requires its members to submit to IAATO the ATCM approved Post-Visit Reports (PVRs) on the conclusion of their activities.
- 7.2 IAATO continues to support the use of this single form, which reduces the burden of paperwork and facilitates the study of the scope, frequency and intensity of tourist activities. Should any Parties wish to send IAATO a copy of Post Visit Report forms received from non-IAATO operators in order for the data to be incorporated into the electronic database, IAATO would be pleased to include this data and believes this will further the ability by all to address cumulative impact issues, monitor site guidelines compliance and assess trends in use.

## **8 Implementation of Recommendation XVIII-1 (1994) Guidance for Those Organising and Conducting Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic and Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic, and Other Guidelines**

Recommendation XVIII-1 (1994) *Guidance for Those Organising and Conducting Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic*, is provided to all members in order to inform them of key obligations and procedures to be followed.

IAATO urges Parties to consider formally adopting Recommendation XVIII-1 for Visitors and Tour Organizers.

- 8.1 IAATO remains concerned about tourists traveling on non-IAATO operated yachts visiting the Antarctic who may not be aware of the Environmental Protocol and its obligations. Every visitor and operator must be ever vigilant regarding their responsibilities for landing sites and the marine environment.
- 8.2 IAATO's standard operating procedures for implementing Recommendation XVIII-1 include the following:
- Mandatory briefings on each tour ship prior to arrival in the Antarctic, a presentation

consisting of the IAATO PowerPoint presentation. This presentation can be viewed on line at [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org) under *Guidance for Visitors* on the home page. Most expedition leaders will enhance the presentation with additional slides and commentary.

- Passengers, ships' command, crew and expedition staff receive paper copies of Recommendation XVIII-1 *Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic*. Some companies distribute this document in pre-season materials in advance of departure, some on board the ship. In addition to receiving copies of the Recommendation, all passengers and ship's personnel (crew) are required to attend the briefing.
- The Recommendation document is available on the *Guides & Resources* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)) in English, Chinese (Mandarin), Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish.

**8.3** In addition, IAATO members continue to use IAATO and/or company adopted guidelines which include: marine wildlife watching, site specific information, assessment checklist for visiting 'new' sites, kayak, mountain climbing, camping, scuba, helicopter, Zodiac, Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV), and boot and clothing decontamination and more. See ATCM XXV IP 72 *Guidelines for Tourist Operations in Antarctica* and ATCM XXXI IP 83 *Regulation of Antarctic Tourism—A Marine Perspective*.

## **9 Update on Marine Incidents 2007-2008, and Marine Incidents 2008-2009**

**9.1 Marine Incidents 2007-2008 – Final Report on *MS Explorer* Incident:** With respect to the loss of the *MS Explorer* in November, 2007 and analysis of the final report from the Republic of Liberia, Bureau of Maritime Affairs, IAATO has not seen the report at the time that this Information Paper was submitted. Consequently, IAATO has confined its discussions to issues related to the IAATO-wide response and consideration of potential enhancements to current management practices. Once the final investigative report is made public, IAATO's Marine Committee will analyze it in detail, with the intention of assessing any further steps that can be taken to enhance vessel safety.

In the meantime, IAATO marine operators have held two multi-day meetings since the incident to deliberate critical issues pertaining to vessel operations and safety. The results of the first meeting, in February, 2008, were detailed in ATCM XXXI IP081 *Summary Report and Outcomes of IAATO's Marine Committee Meeting on Vessel Operations, Safety and Related Issues*, which summarized the immediate steps which were taken as well as longer term strategies. These strategies were revisited and refined in a recent joint meeting in February 2009 of IAATO and CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association) vessel operators. Central to the discussion of the 2009 meeting was the proposal to develop a tiered-risk assessment proposal based on a geographical and seasonal sector to aid both regulation and management of polar vessel operations.

**9.2 Marine Incidents 2008-2009:** Two separate vessel incidents occurred during the recently concluded Antarctic season. The first involved the *MV Ushuaia*, which grounded at the entrance of Wilhelmina Bay, near Cape Anna, on December 4, 2008 with 82 passengers and 40 crew. The operator of the vessel, Antarpplly Expeditions, immediately notified the relevant MRCCs. Another IAATO vessel, the *MV Antarctic Dream*, was seven nautical miles away at the time of the incident, and quickly came to the assistance of the *MV Ushuaia*. The Chilean Navy vessel *AP Aquiles* and Chilean naval tug *ATF Lautaro* were also on the scene within hours. As a precautionary measure requested by Chile, the passengers of the *MV Ushuaia* were transferred the following morning using Zodiac landing craft of the *MV Ushuaia* and *MV Antarctic Dream* to the *AP Aquiles*, which then proceeded to Eduardo Frei Station, King George Island. Passengers were flown from King George Island by Argentine aircraft to Ushuaia on December 6, 2008. Two days later, the *MV Ushuaia* was floated free with the assistance of the *ATF Lautaro*. IAATO would like to thank Chile for this effort, which made unnecessary the alternative response arrangements that had been planned using other IAATO vessels.

Despite the puncture of two fuel tanks of Marine Gas Oil (MGO), leakage was minimal and dissipated quickly. The *MV Ushuaia* proceeded under her own power to an anchorage in the South

Shetland Islands to await good weather for the northbound crossing of the Drake Passage. The Drake Passage crossing occurred in close proximity and frequent communications with two other IAATO vessels. Following repairs in dry dock in Punta Arenas, the *MV Ushuaia* returned to scheduled service on January 27, 2009.

- 9.3** A second grounding incident, on February 17, 2009, involved the Quark Expeditions' vessel, *MV Ocean Nova* in Marguerite Bay, west of Debenham Island and approximately two kilometers from the Argentine research station San Martin. The captain of the vessel contacted the Argentine MRCC to notify them of the incident. As a result, the Spanish naval vessel *B.I.O. Hesperides* was soon on the scene. Onboard *MV Ocean Nova* were 64 passengers and 41 crew. When initial attempts that evening failed to refloat the vessel, all passengers were transferred the following afternoon to another Quark vessel, the *MV Clipper Adventurer*. The Spanish naval vessel *B.I.O. Hesperides* continued to stand by, ready to assist if needed.

On February 18, the *MV Ocean Nova* was freed of her position. There was no serious damage to the hull and no leakage of fuel. Following an underwater inspection by divers from *B.I.O. Hesperides*, the *MV Ocean Nova* headed north, crossing the Drake Passage in close proximity to the *MV Clipper Adventurer*. Both vessels arrived in Ushuaia on February 22. The *MV Ocean Nova* cancelled her last voyage of the season, in order to undergo further inspections and repairs in Ushuaia before returning to Europe.

At the time of both incidents, frequent updates were forwarded to the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat and posted on the IAATO website, [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org). Additional details regarding both incidents can still be viewed on the website.

During both incidents, the IAATO Emergency Contingency Plan and Incident Report template, which had been reviewed following the *MV Explorer* incident, was used to underpin the response.

## **10 Scientific and Information Support**

Members continue to provide logistic and scientific support to National Antarctic Programs and to the sub-Antarctic Islands facilities providing a cost-effective resource for the scientific community. During the 2008-2009 season, scientists, support personnel and equipment for various National Antarctic and sub-Antarctic Programs were provided transport to and from stations, field sites and gateway ports. Because of the timing of ATCM XXXII, prior to the submission of most IAATO operator End of Season Reports, a detailed listing of scientific support provided by IAATO members is not yet available. This information will be available in May, and will be posted on the *Information Papers* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)), adjacent to this Annual Report. It will also be forwarded to the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat for further distribution to Treaty Parties.

Specific requests for logistic or other support can be made directly with members or via the IAATO Secretariat.

## **11 Conservation Research, Academic and Scientific Support**

Members and their passengers continued the tradition of direct financial contributions to many organizations active in Antarctica. Because of the timing of ATCM XXXII, prior to the submission of most IAATO operator End of Season Reports, a detailed listing of financial contributions by IAATO members and their passengers is not yet available. This information will be available in May, and will be posted on the *Information Papers* page of the IAATO website ([www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org)), adjacent to this Annual Report. It will also be forwarded to the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat for further distribution to Treaty Parties.

## 12 Observers On Board Member Vessels

As noted in point 8 under Primary Activities & Developments, IAATO requires B1 Associate and Probationary members to carry an appointed observer before they are eligible to apply for Member status. There were no Probationary members during the past season.

IAATO considers using a qualified National Program observer from the country in which the company is registered. When not available, IAATO will appoint an appropriate person with broad experience in Antarctic and/or related matters. IAATO's *Checklist for Observers* form (version October 2007) is used by all observers, providing for a consistent reporting of all operations. In addition, ATCM XIX Resolution 5 (1995), *Antarctic Treaty Inspection Checklist B – Vessels Within the Antarctic Treaty Area* is also provided to the appointed observer. IAATO-operated vessels have been carrying observers since 1991.

Furthermore, IAATO members operating from New Zealand to the Ross Sea region carry New Zealand-assigned observers on all voyages, as per New Zealand requirements.

## 13 With Thanks – Cooperation with National Programs, the Antarctic Treaty Parties and all Stakeholders

IAATO appreciates the opportunity to work cooperatively with Antarctic Treaty Parties, COMNAP, SCAR, CCAMLR, IHO/HCA, ASOC and others towards the long term protection of Antarctica. In particular we appreciate being able to contribute towards the ATCM-agreed ICGs, discussion groups, other intersessional meetings etc.

The following provided assistance and operational guidelines to IAATO during the 2008-2009 season for which members are grateful:

- To all Stations in the Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic who welcomed tourists and broadened their views on the value of science and provided friendly, educational and rewarding experiences for tourists.
- United Kingdom: United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British Antarctic Survey, U.K. Antarctic Heritage Trust, Port Lockroy staff, sub-Antarctic Islands' personnel and others for making visits an extremely educational and enjoyable experience and for providing members with comprehensive guidelines for visits to BAS stations and their process for arranging visit applications.
- New Zealand: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, Antarctic New Zealand, and Department of Conservation for assistance with Scott Base and the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands. And to New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust for their assistance with visits to Ross Sea Huts.
- Chile and Russia: For the use of the runway at Marsh/Frei for medical emergencies in conjunction with Aerovias DAP and to Bellingshausen Station for accommodation and taking last minute requests during medevacs.
- United States: Palmer, McMurdo and South Pole Station personnel for hosting organized visits throughout the season and providing operational guidelines to operators in advance of the season
- Chile, Argentina and Spain: for assisting by air, land and sea with regard to the *MV Ushuaia* and *MV Ocean Nova* groundings.

## 14 Update: IMO Heavy Fuel Oil Discussion

After the initial submission of this IAATO Annual Report, information has been brought to IAATO's attention about which we would like to ask the ATCM for clarification. This is in regards to recent discussions within the IMO to Decision 8 (2005, Stockholm) *Use of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO)*

*in Antarctica*. Since this Decision was adopted in 2005, there has not been, to our knowledge, any update from IMO to ATCM as to progress within the IMO on this matter.

We have recently learned that the IMO sub-committee that deliberated this issue (Bulk Liquids & Gases) has put forward in March 2009 an amendment to MARPOL that will ban not only HFO, but will also ban Intermediate Fuel Oil (IFO). In addition, the amendment bans not only the use of these fuel oils, including IFOs, but also their carriage in Antarctic Treaty waters. Reference to banning “the use and carriage of heavy grade oil in Antarctic waters” was noted by ASOC in IP034 *Managing Antarctic Vessels – Avoiding Future Disasters*, submitted to this Meeting.

It appears to IAATO that the Decision taken in 2005 by ATCM and sent to IMO has now been expanded to a much broader set of issues, with wide-ranging implications.