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Report on IAATO Member use of Antarctic Peninsula Landing Site and ATCM Visitor Site Guidelines - 2008-09 Season

Report on IAATO Member use of Antarctic Peninsula Landing Site and ATCM Visitor Site Guidelines¹

Information Paper submitted by IAATO

Introduction

Due to the timing of ATCM XXXII, IAATO was unable to submit information on IAATO Member landing site and site guideline use for the 2008-09 season. During ATCM XXXII, IAATO did note that it would provide this information during ATCM XXXIII. This information is presented here. For similar timing reasons, IAATO will provide the information for the 2009-10 season at ATCM XXXIV.

IAATO's *Updated Revision (September 15, 2009) Overview of Tourism 2008-2009 Antarctic Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2009-2010 Antarctic Season*, which can be found on the IAATO website under Publications and Papers (see <http://www.iaato.org/info.html>), details Antarctic-wide levels of reported visitor activity of all IAATO members for the 2008-2009 season.

Antarctic tourism continues to be primarily focused on traditional ship-based tourism in the Antarctic Peninsula, representing over ninety-five percent (95%) of landed activity. The data in this information paper targets this sector of IAATO member activity. As all traditional ship-based tourism to the Peninsula during the 2008-09 season was conducted by IAATO member operators, it is believed that this information is reflective of actual levels of this activity.

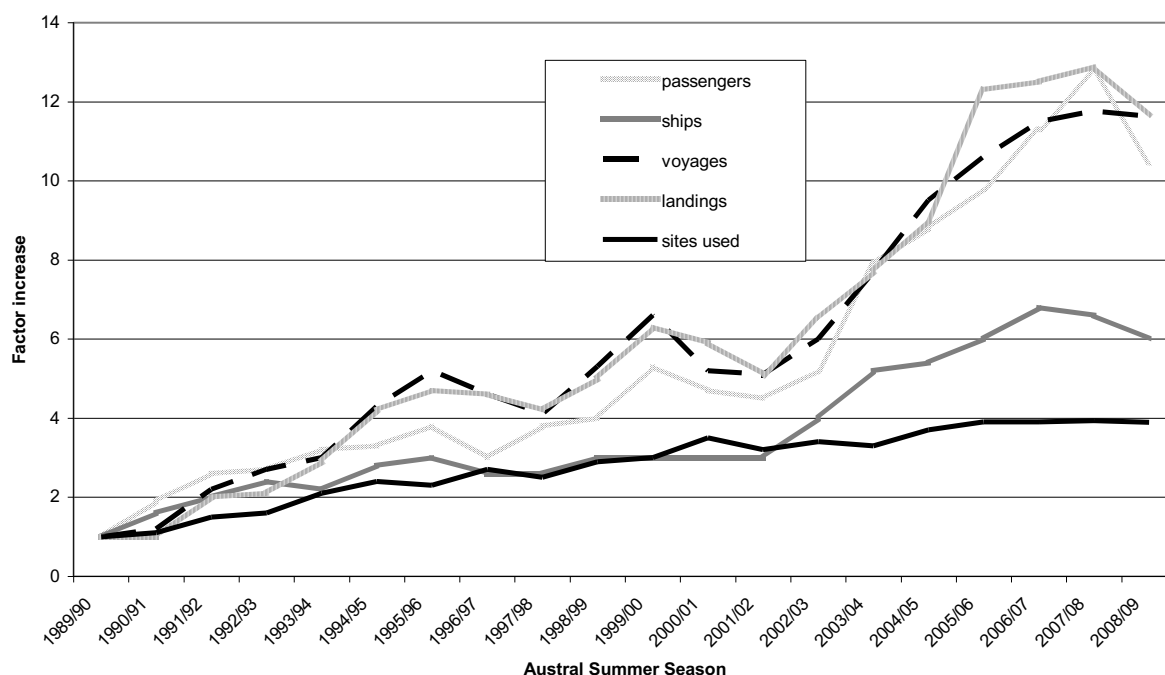
Antarctic Peninsula Landing Site General Activity

Preliminary analysis of the Post Visit Report Forms indicates how the decrease in activity which is reported in IAATO's *Updated Revision (September 15, 2009) Overview of Tourism 2008-2009 Antarctic Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2009-2010 Antarctic Season* has manifested itself in terms of variations in number of ships, voyages, passengers and landings during the 2008-09 season among traditional ship-borne tourism to the Antarctic Peninsula (see Figure 1).

The decrease in all activity during the 2008-09 season is believed to be a consequence of the global economic downturn. This is borne out by the comparative decreases which took place across the board from the 2007-08 season. Notably, the most substantial decrease was in the number of passengers, down eighteen percent (18%) from 2007-08, while the number of vessels decreased by nine percent (9%), due to a combination of vessels being retired and companies pulling out of the market. Comparatively, there was only a minor level of decrease that took place in the number of voyages, down three percent (3%); landings made, down two percent (2%); and sites used, down one percent (1%).

¹ The information in this paper is based on an analysis of the 2008-09 season Post Visit Reports of all IAATO passenger ships

Figure 1: Factor Increase in Traditional Landing Shipborne Tourism (not including sailing or motor vessels carrying 12 or fewer passengers) in the Antarctic Peninsula 1989-2009.



Specific Landing Site Use

Table 1 illustrates the 20 most-visited sites during the 2008-09 season, in terms of landings made, in the Antarctic. This represents nearly seventy percent (70%) of the total number of landings made and indicates that the tendency for landings to concentrate at a few popular sites continues.

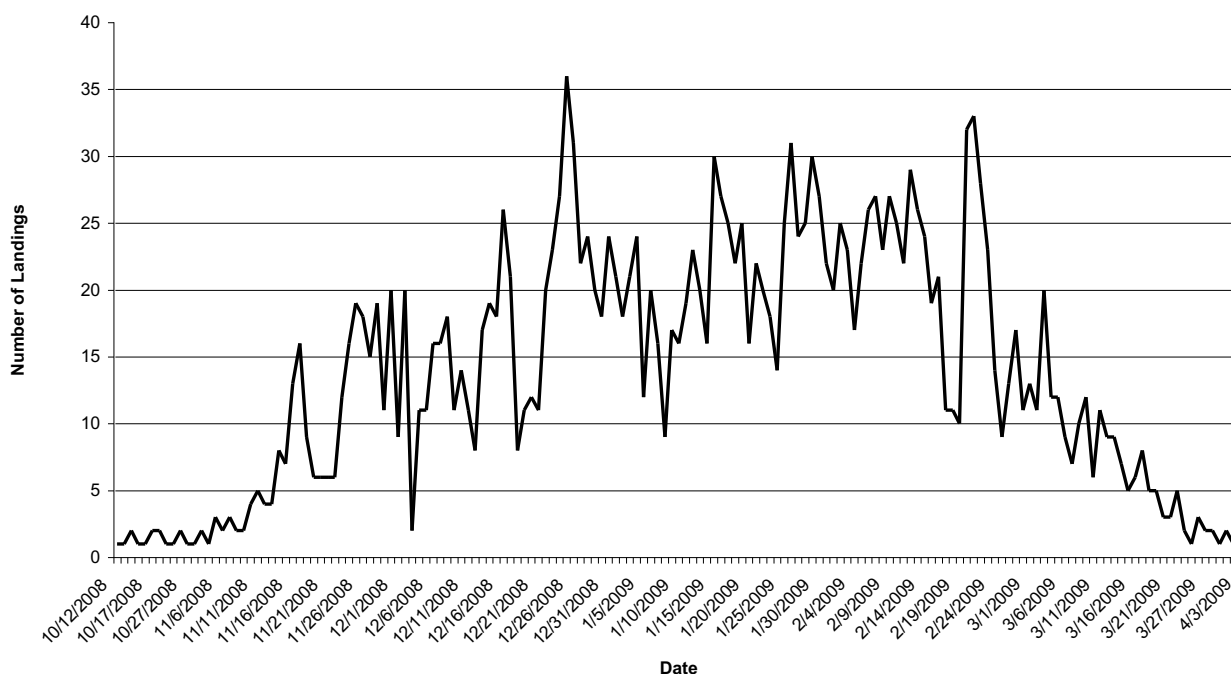
Table 1: Top Twenty Most Visited Sites during the 2008/09 Season

Rank	Landing Site	Number of Landed Visits	Number of Landed Tourists	Site Guidelines / National Programme Management
1	Goudier Island	163	15,178	ATCM Site Guidelines
2	Whalers Bay	143	13,077	ATCM Site Guidelines
3	Neko Harbor	136	13,525	ATCM Site Guidelines
4	Cuerville Island	127	12,688	ATCM Site Guidelines
5	Petermann Island	107	10,078	ATCM Site Guidelines
6	Half Moon Island	102	11,990	ATCM Site Guidelines
7	Jougla Point	95	8,938	ATCM Site Guidelines
8	Brown	93	9,211	National Programme Management
9	Vernadsky Station	77	6,034	National Programme Management
10	Aitcho - Barrientos Island	68	6,247	ATCM Site Guidelines
11	Brown Bluff	66	6,365	ATCM Site Guidelines
12	Paulet Island	49	5,241	ATCM Site Guidelines
13	Telefon Bay	47	3,488	ATCM Site Guidelines
14	Damoy Point/Dorian Bay	42	2,323	
15	Danco Island	39	3,232	
16	Pendulum Cove	38	2,762	ATCM Site Guidelines
17	Pléneau Island	35	2,020	ATCM Site Guidelines
19	Waterboat Point/Gonzalez Videla Station	31	5,207	National Programme Management
20	Hannah Point	29	2,358	ATCM Site Guidelines

All but two of these most-visited sites – Damoy Point/ Dorian Bay and Danco Island – are covered by site specific management plans, either through ATCM Site Guidelines or through National Program management through their proximity to stations. While visits by IAATO member operators to these sites follow standard codes of conduct for visits to Antarctic landing sites, IAATO is pleased to note that Site Guidelines for both Damoy Point / Dorian Bay and Danco Island are being tabled at ATCM XXXIII/CEP XIII (ATCM XXXIII WP39 and WP56).

Figure 2 illustrates the total number of landings made per day at all sites within the Antarctic Peninsula. The full season extended over 173 days, from the first departure of an ice breaker for an early voyage to visit an Emperor Penguin colony on 9 October, to the last vessel leaving the area on April 4. The main season ran for 140 days, from the beginning of November through to mid-March. On the basis of the full season dates, no site received an average of one visit per day and on the basis of the main season only two sites received an average of more than one visit per day (Goudier Island with an average of 1.16 visits per day and Whalers Bay with 1.02 visits per day).

Figure 2: Total number of landings made per day at all sites within the Antarctic Peninsula.



Additional tourism statistics are posted on the IAATO website (www.iaato.org).

Use of ATCM Endorsed Site Guidelines

An assessment of the use of the 14 sites covered by the ATCM Site Guidelines was conducted through feedback directly from field staff and analysis of the Post Visit Report Forms.

The total number of known landings made at sites covered by the ATCM Site Guidelines, including a listing of the number of occasions the daily visitation limits were met, is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Recorded Site Use at ATCM Site Guideline Sites.

Landing Site	Total Number of Landings	Number of days where maximum visit limitation was met.
Goudier Island	163	15
Whalers Bay	143	
Neko Harbor	136	6
Cuverville Island	127	8
Petermann Island	107	4
Half Moon Island	102	1
Jougla Point	95	1
Aitcho - Barrientos Island	68	8
Brown Bluff	66	
Paulet Island	49	7
Pléneau Island	35	
Hannah Point	29	29
Devil Island	27	
Yankee Harbor	20	
Penguin Island	17	
Snow Hill -- Nordenskjöld's Hut	9	
Shingle Cove	6	
Walker Bay (by Hannah Point)	6	
Turret Point	4	

Co-ordination among field staff remains very effective. However, analysis of the Post Visit Report Forms noted that on one occasion during the 2008-09 season, the number of visits per day exceeded the limits set by the guidelines. When followed up with the operator and expedition leader involved, the mistake was acknowledged as an unintended oversight.

Field staff continue to raise the issue of seasonal appropriateness on the limitations of the site guidelines. For example, once the breeding birds have left a site towards the end of the season, it would seem unnecessary to maintain visitation limits.

During two instances IAATO field staff reported non-IAATO visitation taking place simultaneously to their visit at sites covered by Site Guidelines. In both cases the Guidelines were not followed by the non-IAATO visitation.

Wider Policy Issues

In ATCM XXXI IP 82 *Update on the Antarctic Peninsula Landing Site Use and Site Guidelines*, IAATO identified four issues which should be addressed to ensure the continued success of the ATCM Site Guidelines:

- An efficient systematic review process needs to be developed for the ATCM Site Guidelines already established. To this end, IAATO would recommend that the CEP and ATCM may wish to consider developing a review process in conjunction with IAATO;
- Awareness of the seasonal applicability of Site Guidelines, noting that there may be certain sites where the restrictions are no longer valid once the breeding season is completed;
- Assurance that all tourist activities are included in a single detailed tourism database. On this basis, IAATO would recommend that the ATCM may wish to consider encouraging all authorized tourist activities to submit Post Visit Reports Forms (on the standard excel form) to IAATO for inclusion in the IAATO tourism database. This will enable IAATO to continue to provide the ATCM with the most complete picture of tourist-related and

non-governmental activities at all sites each season, in particular those which have limits applied.

- A mechanism should be considered to coordinate landings of non-IAATO operators to ensure the Site Guideline requirements are met where appropriate.

IAATO is pleased that through the work of the CEP Tourism Study, consideration is being given on how to make progress on some of these issues.