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A Catalogue of IAATO Operator Activities

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Summary

IAATO presents this paper and catalogue of activities to aid in discussions around the development of a tourism framework by Parties at ATCM 46 and beyond. All IAATO Operator activities in Antarctica are permitted or authorized by Competent Authorities through Environmental Impact Assessments (or equivalent), Advance Notifications and, where relevant, Waste Management Permits, submitted in advance of the season. IAATO Operators strive for safe and responsible operations in the Antarctic Treaty area and plan activities that will have no more than a minor or transitory environmental impact. Activities are recorded and submitted as part of the ATS Post Visit Reporting system. This paper expands on the previously submitted ATCM XLII (2019) IP145 *A Catalogue of IAATO Operator Activities.*

Background

This paper expands on the previously submitted ATCM XLII (2019) IP145 *A Catalogue of IAATO Operator Activities.* As discussions in the Special Working Group on the Development of a Tourism Framework begin, it was suggested to IAATO that the Special Working Group would benefit from more information to help Parties better understand the range of activities IAATO Operators currently undertake in Antarctica, and what those activities entail. This paper is in response to that suggestion.

Introduction

All IAATO Operators seek the authorization of their Competent Authority for any activities they plan to undertake by submitting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) or equivalent, Advance Notifications and, where relevant, Waste Management Permits, in advance of the season. Because of variations in the requirements between Competent Authorities, IAATO endeavors to ensure that their Operators work to meet industry best practice by requiring them to supply Advance Notifications and EIA to IAATO even if their Competent Authority does not impose those requirements. In line with IAATO's mission, all members subscribe to the principle that their planned activities will have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment. To maintain membership in good standing, activities must be conducted in a safe and environmentally responsible manner, something that IAATO has held as a primary goal since the Association's founding in 1991. Equally, as all IAATO Operators and their field staff share the strong belief that carefully managed firsthand experiences are irreplaceable in creating a group of ambassadors committed to supporting the continued protection of Antarctica. Every tourist's visit, whatever activities they undertake, is designed to promote knowledge and understanding of Antarctica via education.

IAATO maintains an extensive database in order to understand long-term trends to facilitate decision-making about the responsible management of its Operators' activities. Data is collected through Post Visit Report (PVR) forms, adopted by the ATCPs, which are submitted to the IAATO Secretariat and collated into an annual statistics overview. Data are shared with Competent Authorities to inform and assist with their work in managing human activity in the region.

What follows is a catalogue of the IAATO Operator Antarctic activities in the IAATO database for both Deep Field and Marine activities, along with very brief explanations of what the activity entails. All activities described below are documented in Post Visit Report Forms. All activities are described in much greater detail in each Operator's EIA including locations, routes, equipment carried, mitigation measures in place, etc. In response to requests from Parties, IAATO has expanded activity descriptions when appropriate for more accurate reporting (e.g. Skiing has expanded to Cross-Country Skiing and also Downhill Skiing) in Post Visit Reports. Changes are reported annually to the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat so they can update the ATS database appropriately.

IAATO offers this list as a basis for continued dialogue with Competent Authorities, Antarctic Treaty Party representatives, members of the CEP and others working toward a common understanding of human activity in Antarctica.

Catalogue of Activities as documented in the Post Visit Reports filed by IAATO Operators

**Indicates that an ATCM or IAATO Activity Guideline is in existence.*
***Indicates Deep Field Only Activity*

Intracontinental Aircraft Flights:** A deep field fixed-wing flight that may make one or more landings before returning to the original location, or reaching an alternative final destination.

Antarctic Expedition Motorized:** Expeditions that predominately use an electric or internal combustion motor vehicle (wheel or tracked), with or without sleds.

Antarctic Expedition Other**: Expeditions that use wind-craft, specialist large-wheeled trail (fat-tire) bicycles, or other non-motorized vehicles to cross areas of ice, slush and snow.

Antarctic Expedition Ski:** A single person or a team traversing by skis with sleds.

Antarctic Expedition Snowkite:** A single person or a team traversing on skis while being pulled by kites, usually with sleds.

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.

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.

Climbing: Climbing mountains, nunataks or ice features with guides, the length of the trip can range from a few hours to multi-day expeditions.

Commercial Filming: Support and/or transport of professional filmmakers (e.g BBC, Discovery etc).

Cross-country Skiing: Backcountry skiing (often with skins to allow uphill travel) – this can be over short or long distances.

Day Trip: A round trip flight (fixed or rotary wing) where passengers are on the ground for several hours.

Deep Field Camping:** Establishing a small, temporary field camp for more than one night in tents or bivouacs in a location away from an Operator's main operations hub.

Deep Field Experience Skydiving:** Tandem or solo free fall skydiving from an aircraft before landing by parachute.

Deep Field Experience Foot:** A single person or team walking in the Antarctic environment.

Deep Field Experience Mountaineering:** A single person or team mountaineering.

Deep Field Experience Pedal-Drive:** A single person or team traversing by pedal driven vehicle.

Deep Field Experience Skiing:** A single person or team traversing by skis.

Deep Field Experience Snowkiting:** A single person or team on skis while being pulled by a kite(s).

Deep Field Flight-Field Landing:** Intracontinental flights utilizing non-traditional landing areas.

Downhill Skiing: Ascending and descending a snow-covered slope on skis.

Emperor Penguin Colony Visits*: Visiting, including camping at relevant distance from, an Emperor Penguin colony.

Expedition Support: Support offered to various types of expeditions, including, communications, meteorological forecasting, SAR support, medical care, etc. by marine, air or deep field Operators.

Extended Walk: A walk which moves beyond the immediate vicinity of a landing (usually over 1km).

Gear Depoting: Caching gear (SAR equipment, fuel, etc.) in strategic locations by vehicle, airdrop or ski traverse for later use.

Helicopter Assisted Ski Touring: Skiing over short or long distance with helicopter assistance in transport between sites and/or base camp/mother ship.

Helicopter Assisted Trekking: Journey on foot with helicopter assistance in transport between sites and/or base camp/mother ship.

Helicopter Flight: A helicopter flight which takes off from and returns to the original location, or may make one or more landings before reaching an alternative final destination.

Helicopter Flight-Seeing*: A flight which takes off from and returns to the same location without landing elsewhere.

Helicopter Landing*: Landing on any form of landing pad.

Hydrographic Work: Measurement and description of features which affect maritime navigation, either from the mother vessel or small boat.

Ice Landing: Landing onto floating ice (whether of sea or land origin), either from a vessel or tender.

Ice Walk: Walking on floating ice (whether of sea or land origin) to a destination away from a vessel, tender or helicopter landing area.

Kayaking*: Moving through the water in a kayak.

Last 1-2 Degree Expeditions:** Using a form of transportation (motor vehicle, skis, kite, etc) to travel the last 1 or 2 degrees to the Pole.

Marathon*: Organising a marathon or other sport foot event in Antarctica over a pre-designated route.

Multi-Night Coastal Camping*: Establishing a small, temporary field camp for more than one night in tents or bivouacs in a location away from an Operator's main operations hub.

Music Event Ashore: event onshore that involves a music element.

Music Event Onboard: event onboard that involves a music element.

Polar Plunge: A short immersion into Antarctic waters, usually done by jumping off a platform or wading in from a beach.

Remote Underwater Vehicle (ROV)*: Exploring underwater using a remotely operated vehicle, which is tethered to a support vessel.

RPAS Commercial Flight (UAV-C)*: Piloting an RPAS for commercial use, usually for documentary or marketing purposes.

RPAS Operational/Navigation Flight (UAV-O)*: Piloting an RPAS to aid a vessel in navigation through Antarctic waters.

RPAS Scientific Flight (UAV-S): Piloting an RPAS for scientific data collection, usually done by scientific researchers.

Science Support: Support functions in the field, usually logistical, to scientific community, including NAPs.

Scuba Diving*: Using a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba), completely independent of surface supply, to explore underwater.

Ship Cruise: Sailing through Antarctic near coastal waters without leaving the principal vessel.

Short Overnight Stays (Coastal Camping)*: Vessels offering a near shore camping experience, using tents or bivouacs, overnight with no meals ashore.

Small Boat Cruising*: Small boat (Zodiacs, RIB, etc.) ride to observe the Antarctic environment.

Small Boat Landing: Small boats (Zodiacs, RIB, etc.) taking guests for a landing in Antarctic coastal areas.

Snorkeling*: Swimming to observe underwater while equipped with a diving mask and snorkel.

Snowboarding: Ascending and descending a snow-covered slope on a snowboard.

Snowshoeing: Hiking with snowshoes so that the person's feet do not sink into the snow.

South Pole Fly-in:** Flight to South Pole for visits to the geographic and ceremonial South Poles.

Sporting Event Multi-Sport: A sporting event that combines more than one activity e.g. run/ski/fatbike.

Stand Up Paddle Boarding: Standing on boards and using a paddle to propel oneself through the water.

Station Visit*: Tour of National Antarctic Program station with permissions arranged in advance.

Submersible (HOV)*: An untethered watercraft designed to operate underwater with occupants inside.

Swimming – Distance: Swimming to travel a distance (usually 500m – 2km).

Vinson Massif Climb:** Climbing part or all of Vinson Massif with mountaineering guides.

Wildlife Watching on Vessel (Whales, Seals, etc.)*: Watching wildlife from onboard the primary vessel.