

## IAATO Overview of Antarctic Tourism Activities

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is pleased to provide this summary of Antarctic tourism for the 1997-98 season as well as an overview of the estimated number of passengers for the 1998-99 season to ATCM XXII. This information along with additional detail on the frequency and scope of Antarctic tourism will be posted on the IAATO website: [iaato.org](http://iaato.org)

### 1. Seaborne Tourism

(a) Approximately 9,378 people traveled to the Antarctic on 14 commercially-organized tour vessels from November 1997 to March 1998. A summary is appended to this report, "Overview of Actual Antarctic Tourism, 1997-98."

(b) All but one of the Antarctic tour vessels that sailed in 1996-97 were operated by IAATO members. Six of the 14 vessels were of Russian registry.

(c) The vast majority of Antarctic voyages are to the Peninsula region during the four-month Austral summer, departing from Ushuaia or, in fewer numbers, from Punta Arenas or Stanley. Eight of 106 voyages in 1997-98 were outside the Peninsula.

(d) Commercial Antarctic Tour Vessels, 1998-99

Ship	Capacity	Since
<i>Explorer</i>	100	1970
<i>World Discoverer</i>	138	1977
<i>Bremen</i>	164	1989
<i>Professor Molchanov</i>	38	1991
<i>Kapitan Khlebnikov</i>	114	1992
<i>Akademik Sergei Vavilov</i>	80	1992
<i>Akademik Ioffe</i>	80	1993
<i>Hanseatic</i>	180	1993
* <i>Marco Polo</i>	800	1993
** <i>Clipper Adventurer</i>	120	1994
<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	36	1994
<i>Professor Multanovskiy</i>	45	1995
<i>Akademik Shuleykin</i>	45	1996
<i>Maria Yermalova</i>	120	1998
<i>Caledonian Star</i>	120	1998

\* *Not a Member of IAATO. Capacity restricted by Orient Lines to approx. 500*

\*\* *Clipper Adventurer is the ex Alla Tarasova*

(e) A total of 95 passengers and crew were reported to have traveled to Antarctica aboard 11 yachts in the 1997-98 season. This includes yachts reported at Arthur Harbor by the U.S. National Science Foundation. The UK has tabled a very useful summary of yacht activities in Antarctica compiled by Robert Headland at the Scott Polar Research Institute. ( XXII ATCM/IP1)

(f) According to information provided by tour operators to the IAATO, an estimated 11,048 travelers will travel on 113 voyages in 1998-1999 and 130 land-based tourists will travel to the interior. Should this estimate prove accurate, the 1998-1999 season will be the largest ever for Antarctic tourism. A summary is appended to this report.

(g) A graph prepared by the National Science Foundation, "Antarctic Tourist Trends" is also appended to this report. The 1997-98 numbers include yachts (95) and land-based expeditions (131).

(h) IAATO notes that Antarctic tour operators are experienced with many of the operators active in the Antarctic for five or more years. Several have been operating in the Antarctic for decades. Much of the expected 2,000 passenger increase in 1998-99 is due to the addition of three experienced, smaller vessels: The *Akademik S. Vavilov* (75 passengers on each of 8 voyages), *Clipper Adventurer* (110 passengers on each of 5 voyages) and *Caledonian Star* (100 passengers on each of 5 voyages).

(i) Two operators will return to the Antarctic market in 1998-99, Clipper Cruise Line (St. Louis, USA) and Special Expeditions (New York, USA). Both joined IAATO already last season. Clipper will operate the 120-passenger *Clipper Adventurer*. Special Expeditions will operate the 120-passenger *Caledonian Star*. Clipper previously operated the *World Discoverer* in the Antarctic and both companies have established reputations as educational cruise companies focusing on natural history destinations.

## **2. Land-based Tourism**

(a) Founding IAATO-member Adventure Network International, which operates a seasonal facility at Patriot Hills, Ellsworth Mountains, completed their 13<sup>th</sup> Antarctic season. The company transported 131 passengers to the interior.

(b) ANI continued its logistical and emergency support for all private-expeditions. This season two Belgian expeditioners completed the longest manhaul journey across Antarctica, three Australians successfully skied from Berkner Island to the South Pole and an Icelandic team skied from Patriot Hills to the South Pole.

(c) For the first time in its 13-year history Adventure Network experienced tragedy when three skydivers died when their parachutes failed to open on a jump over the South Pole. Chilean authorities and ANI are preparing an incident report.

## **3. Overflights**

(a) Croydon Travel of Victoria, Australia operated *Qantas Antarctic Day Sightseeing* flights from Melbourne aboard Qantas Airlines Boeing 747 aircraft for the fourth consecutive season. According to the Australian Antarctic Division, a total of 3,146 passengers participated on 9 flights from December 1997 to February 1998. In addition, the plane carried 23 crew per flight.

(b) Over 10,000 persons have taken part in the overflights since they recommenced in 1994-1995.