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## **Education & Outreach by IAATO – an update for 2019**



# Education & Outreach by IAATO – an update for 2019

An Information Paper by IAATO

## Summary

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) works within the framework of the Antarctic Treaty System to help deliver its mission and vision for safe, environmentally responsible private-sector Antarctic travel. Education and outreach, in particular, engaging as many people as possible in the value and importance of Antarctica, is an integral part of IAATO's work. This paper provides a brief summary of activities and decisions during 2018.

## Background

Nearly all visitors to the Antarctic do so with a member of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO). IAATO is an international member association, comprising over 100 companies and organizations from all over the world who support IAATO's mission to advocate and promote safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic. IAATO operators organize and conduct expeditions to Antarctica, operating within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), planning their activities to have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty and notably the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. In the context of education, IAATO upholds article 6.1a of the Environmental Protocol and also plans its activities to meet ATCM Recommendation XVIII-1(1994) and attachments, Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic and those Organizing and Conducting Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic and Resolution 7(2009) General Principles of Antarctic Tourism.

IAATO advocates that visiting Antarctica is a great privilege and that responsibly managed first-hand experience is irreplaceable when it comes to engaging people in the global value and importance of the region. As such, it endeavours to create a task-force of ambassadors amongst the general public to support the long-term conservation of Antarctica. This is achieved both in the field through bespoke education programmes, including briefings, workshops, presentations, visits to research stations and citizen science, and through digital media such as IAATO's Antarctic Ambassador social media platforms, blogging and IAATO's free Polar Guide: Antarctica app.

## IAATO Education & Outreach Activities 2018-2019

Below is a summary of IAATO activities taken in support of education and outreach in the past year:

- **IAATO Polar Guide: Antarctica app.** Version 2.0 of IAATO's free and successful app for Android and iOS was launched in October 2018. The app makes it easy for users on-the-go in the field to access essential IAATO, Antarctic Treaty System and International Maritime Organization information without the need for data connection. This includes operational procedures and guidelines for wildlife watching, visiting specific sites, being a responsible visitor, preventing the introduction of non-native species, supporting science and more. Version 2.0 contains upgraded functionality and an improved user interface. It is intended for use by all Antarctic professionals and visitors.

Download the app for iOS:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/iaato-polar-guide-antarctica/id1295451854?mt=8>

Download the app for Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.softwarethinking.iaato.guideantarctica>

- **Mandatory Observer Scheme.** Building on its current policies for observations, IAATO adopted a mandatory observer scheme at its Annual Meeting in 2018. All member operators, their field camps and vessels will be observed every five years to assess compliance with IAATO requirements for safe, environmentally responsible travel. All new vessels operated by existing member operators are required to be observed once during their first season of operation. The scheme includes observing the effectiveness of programs and activities in educating guests about Antarctica. A Dockside Observer Scheme exists for yacht members and yacht Provisional Operators because of the difficulties in physically accommodating an observer on a voyage due to limited berths on these vessels. All approved Observers will be required to pass a relevant online assessment (see below).
- **IAATO Code of Conduct.** IAATO's Wilderness Etiquette, which established guidelines in 2007 to preserve the Antarctic wilderness aspect as an intrinsic part of the visitor experience, has evolved into a new Code of Conduct which is fit for purpose in the current and future climate of growth. It further reinforces IAATO, ATS and other international requirements for safe and environmentally sound travel.
- **IAATO Online Assessment and Certification Program.** Updated annually, the IAATO Online Assessment and Certification Program strengthens field guide development by testing knowledge of IAATO operational requirements and relevant elements of the Antarctic Treaty System and the International Maritime Organization. During the 2018-2019 season, the assessment was expanded to include bridge officers, office staff, and field staff. Overall, 4,912 assessments, including practice assessments, were taken in 2018-2019.
- **Bylaws Revision:** To reinforce its commitment to education, IAATO revised its Bylaws. The IAATO Objective in Article II, Section H now states: *To create a corps of ambassadors for the continued protection of Antarctica through education and the opportunity to experience the continent first hand.*
- **IAATO Field Operations Manual.** The IAATO Field Operations Manual – the “bible” of Antarctic tourism management - is updated throughout the year and provides the minimum standard for operating procedures and practices for IAATO operators and their field staff. For the 2018-2019 Antarctic season, the Field Operations Manual was revised and rebranded to maximise ease of use. Where required, documents and briefings are translated into multiple languages for visitors and also ship's crew.
- **Creating responsible visitors.** With an expanding association and a growing number of Antarctic visitors, IAATO is implementing a number of internal and external tools to ensure IAATO and ATS core values are communicated across the IAATO community from the point of sale to operations in the field. These tools include slide shows, audits, webinars (in progress) and guidelines in multiple languages that target specific audiences, including new members and marketing and PR staff. As a result, visitor expectations for visiting Antarctica responsibly are better managed ahead of their actual trip. IAATO pre-departure material for visitors includes:
  - Expedition cruising to Antarctica – what to expect from your Antarctic journey (new) (see Attachment 1);*
  - Reducing waste – Guidelines for visitors to Antarctica (new) (see ATCM XLII IP99 Reducing Single-Use Plastic and Waste Generated by Polar Tourism);*
  - IAATO Don't Pack a Pest pamphlet;*
  - Antarctic Visitor Guidelines ATCM Recommendation XVIII-1(1994) and/or ATCM General Guidelines for Visitors ATCM Resolution 3(2011).*

At its 2019 Annual Meeting, IAATO codified its commitment for managing the expectations of visitors by revising its Bylaws in Article II, Section E so that Operator marketing and PR related efforts, and those of their travel partners and promotional agencies, reflect IAATO's mission to manage its activities to have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment.

- **Digital engagement.** IAATO continues to promote the work of the Antarctic Treaty System by including key messages regarding its collaborative work in press and social media output. In the last two

years on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 'Antarctica Day,' IAATO has posted blogs about the importance of the Antarctic Treaty and it continues to be a theme in IAATO's social content. In 2019, to celebrate 60 years of the Treaty, IAATO will again publish a blog and a series of social messaging across LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. IAATO welcomes collaboration across the Antarctic Treaty System to celebrate this important milestone.

- **Creating Antarctic Ambassadors.** IAATO continues to develop its Antarctic Ambassador programme, supported by its social media platforms as outlined above. The association is engaged with ongoing research to explore the concept further in order to help refine its programme. In November 2018, IAATO participated in a workshop, *Antarctic Ambassadors, Fact or Fiction?*, coordinated by the University of Tasmania, University of Canterbury and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies.