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Overview of Antarctic Tourism Activities

A summary of 1996-1998 and Six-year Projection, 1997-2002
(Agenda Item 9)
(Submitted by IAATO)

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is pleased to provide this summary of Antarctic tourism for the 1996-97 as well as an overview of the estimated number of passengers for the 1997-98 season and preliminary five-year projection.

1. **Seaborne Tourism**

- a. Approximately 7,322 people traveled to the Antarctic on 13 commercially-organized tour vessels from November 1996 to March 1997 — a significant decrease from the previous year's total of 9,212. A summary is appended.
- b. The Office of Polar Programs at the U.S. National Science Foundation distributes an annual summary of Antarctic tourism, compiled with the IAATO Secretariat.
- c. All 13 Antarctic tour vessels that sailed in 1996-97 were operated by IAATO members. Again this season, nine were of Russian registry.
- d. 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. The Tourism Board of Tierra del Fuego has compiled statistics over the last several years. Only 7 of the 114 departures announced for 1997-98 will be outside of the Peninsula region.
- e. The icebreaker *Kapitan Khlebnikov* successfully completed the first-ever circumnavigation of Antarctica for expedition tourism this season, November 24, 1996 - January 27, 1997, visiting 11 research stations all around the continent. A complete report on the voyage is available from the IAATO Secretariat.
- f. Commercial Antarctic Tour Vessels, 1996-97

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>Alla Tarasova</i>	120	1994
<i>Professor Khromov</i>	38	1994
<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	36	1994
<i>Professor Multanovskiy</i>	45	1995

Akademik Shuleykin 45 1996

- g. The average number of passengers per voyage in 1996-97 was 70 (ranging from 23 to 162) with an average carrying capacity of 91. The average carrying capacity for 1997-98 will be 133 passengers (38 to 500).
- h. Antarctic yacht activity was addressed at the July 1996 meeting for Antarctic tour operators organized by NSF. Some 150 yacht visits have been made to Antarctica over the past 30 years. According to statistics provided by Sally Poncet, 17 yachts made 22 expeditions to Antarctica during the 1995-96 season, carrying 150 people, including 123 fare-paying passengers.
- i. According to information provided by tour operators to the IAATO Secretariat, 114 voyages are planned for 1997-98, which will carry an estimated 10,590 travelers on 15 vessels. Much of the increase in numbers over the 1996-97 season is due to the return of the *Marco Polo*, a tour vessel with a carrying capacity of 800 passengers. Its Florida-based operator, Orient Lines, has said that they will limit the number of passengers to 400-500 per voyage. A summary is appended.

2. **Land-based Tourism**

- a. Founding IAATO-member Adventure Network International, which operates a seasonal facility at Patriot Hills, Ellsworth Mountains, brought 91 travelers and 15 staff to the Antarctic in 1996-97, its 11th Antarctic season. The camp was open from 15 October 1996 to 30 January 1997. Its expeditioners included a group of eight children from the United States, Poland and Norway as invited guests. In addition to its regular climbing programs to Vinson Massif (43), flights were made to the South Pole (16), and Emperor penguin camp (6).
- b. ANI continued its logistical and emergency support for all private-expeditions, four this season. All were provided with search-and-rescue coverage by ANI. The expeditions traveled by ski from Berkner Island (Weddell Sea) via the South Pole to the Ross Sea. Borge Ousland from Norway was the first person to cross the continent not only alone but also on skis and unsupported once he began the trek. Other ski expeditions included two from Hercules Inlet to the South Pole (U.K. and France), and another from the South Pole to Berkner Island (U.K.).
- c. Total flying time south of Punta Arenas: 192 hours for the Lockheed L-382 Hercules, 190 hours for the two DHC-6 Twin Otters and 60 hours for the Cessna 185.
- d. ANI also served as the Emergency Contact Station for IAATO-member tour vessels in the Antarctic Peninsula. In this pilot program, ANI coordinated medical evacuation of IAATO-member passenger vessels in the Antarctic Peninsula with critically-injured or sick passengers (see IAATO Medical Emergency Contingency Plan, XX ATCM INF 76 for details). This function by ANI will continue in the 1997-98 season.
- e. This season Polar Logistics, the logistical arm of Adventure Network International, made site surveys of a blue-ice runway near Novolazarevskaya Station (Russia) in Dronning Maud Land. Three flights were made from Cape Town in December 1996 and January 1997 employing a Lockheed Hercules L-382G aircraft. A preliminary Assessment of Environmental Impact was conducted for this activity.
- f. The objective of the survey was to establish whether an air route to support Antarctic Treaty Parties active in this sector is a feasible and commercially viable prospect. Germany, India, South Africa, Norway, Russia and Japan all maintain research facilities in Dronning Maud Land, five of them year-round. In its first season, Polar Logistics assisted the governments of India, Norway and Russia by carrying cargo, mail or passengers. Two private expeditions were also supported.
- g. The ice runway is near Holtedahlfjella, 200 km inland at an elevation of 1000 m above sea level. A temporary camp was established for weather reporting and reception of visitors, with a Twin Otter on standby for ongoing flights and a doctor on call. In addition, three alternate runways were surveyed.

3. **Overflights**

- a. Croydon Travel of Victoria, Australia operated *Qantas Antarctic Day Sightseeing* flights from Melbourne aboard Qantas Airlines Boeing 747 aircraft for the third consecutive season. A total of 3,448 passengers participated on 10 flights from 1 December 1996 to 16 February 1997 with approximately 23 crew per flight.

- b. The activity is expected to continue at approximately the same level for next season.
- c. In addition, Aerolineas Argentinas operates commercially scheduled "transpolar" flights between Argentina and New Zealand aboard its Boeing 747 aircraft.

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