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REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS (IAATO) Under Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty

(Agenda item 8)

(Submitted by IAATO)

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS (IAATO) is pleased to present a report of its activities to the S-ATCM, The Haag, Netherlands, 11-15 September 2000 in relation to Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty.

IAATO is dedicated to appropriate, safe and environmentally sound private-sector travel to the Antarctic. Over the last year IAATO has focused its activities in several key areas:

- improved exchange of information among its members
- improved vessel communication methods via the GMDSS system
- emergency response and contingency planning
- cumulative impact of tourist activities
- improved reporting
- Antarctic shipping guidelines
- potential spreading of Antarctic diseases and prevention methods
- the role of IAATO relative to larger cruise vessels in the Antarctic and the possible expansion of IAATO to accommodate the diversification of adventure type tourism
- the creation of the IAATO Observers Reporting Form (Appendix F)
- Proposed development of the whale watching guidelines, boot washing stations, guidelines for the transport of scientists on tour vessels. (All documents are in progress and drafts will be available in October 2000.

Participation in international meetings and liaison with national Antarctic programs and government agencies of the Sub Antarctic Island groups, scientific and environmental organizations, is an important objective of IAATO and its members.

1 Introduction

1.1 Founded by seven private tour operators in 1991, the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators has 31 members and associate member companies in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Falkland Islands, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States. A current Membership Directory is included with this report (Appendix A).

1.2 Antarctic tourism has continued to grow. From November 1999 to March 2000, a total of 14,762 persons traveled to the Antarctic on privately organized expeditions, including 14,402 passengers aboard commercially organized vessels, 221 persons on chartered yachts and 139 land-based visitors. This continues an upward trend, representing an increase over the total of 10,026 visitors and 9,857 ship-borne visitors in the 1998-1999 season. A significant increase in tourism was predicted by IAATO for the 2000-01 season during the last several years. An overview of Antarctic tourism activity is presented as a separate information paper to the S-ATCM-CEP, under agenda item 4.

1.3 IAATO held its 10th general meeting in Hamburg Germany June-July 1, 1999. The meeting was attended by a total of 49 people from 16 member companies of IAATO, non member tour operators (Orient Lines, and Holland America Westours. Representatives from the Alfred Wegener Institute, Umwelt Bundesamt, United States Antarctic Program/National Science Foundation (USA), British Antarctic Survey, Government of South Georgia, Australian Antarctic Division, SCAR, ASOC, U.S. National Ice Center, Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, Jena University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Sheffield Hallam University, World Wildlife Fund/Arctic Program. Several IAATO member expedition team staff members also participated. Denise Landau took over the position of Executive Secretary from Darrel Schoeling in 1999. Darrel resigned in order to be able to dedicate more time to his own business. He had been active in IAATO since the organization was formed in 1991 and IAATO is indebted to him for all his hard work, including his attendance at many Antarctic Treaty Meetings.

1.4 IAATO held its 11th General Meeting in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia June 25-29, 2000. The meeting was attended by over 75 people including 15 IAATO Member companies/Tour Operators. Potential IAATO members and tour operators attending were: Croydon Travel, Arete Polar, Ocean Frontiers, Orient Lines, Holland America Line Westours, and Southeastern Equities. Other participants included expedition staff from several IAATO member companies, representatives from the Australian Antarctic Division, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife, Tourism Tasmania, Tasmanian Government of Antarctic Affairs, City of Hobart/government office, Hobart Ports Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife, New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust, Antarctica New Zealand, Antarctic Policy Unit, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Conservation-New Zealand, COMNAP, CCAMLLR, Government of South Georgia, South Georgia Museum-field staff University of Tasmania (Institute of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies, IASOS), ISO/Illegal Toothfishing-ASOC, University of Queensland, Gateway Antarctica-University of Canterbury, Australian Geographic magazine, The Australian newspaper, the Mercury newspaper, ABC radio, ABC TV

1.5 IAATO will hold its 12th General Meeting in Washington D.C from July 9-12, 2001. Interested parties should contact the IAATO Secretariat.

1.6 IAATO representatives and members attended the following international meetings:

- Antarctic Treaty Meeting of Experts, London, April 2000
- Cumulative Environmental Impacts Workshop San Diego June 2000
- Tourism in the Ross Sea, Christchurch, New Zealand, June 2000,
- Yearly meetings with the German Department of the Environment (Umwelt Bundesamt)
- World Wildlife Fund conference on Arctic tourism, Germany, 2000

2 Membership

IAATO currently has 14 Full Members, 5 Provisional Members, 1 Probational Member and 11 Associate Members. (Appendix A)

2.1 At its Hobart 2000 meeting, IAATO reviewed the membership status of Peregrine Adventures and consequently were elected as full members after one year as provisional member of IAATO. Elected Provisional Members are: Cheeseman Ecology Safaris, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Oceanwide

Expeditions, Golden Fleece Expeditions (yacht operator). Marine Expeditions were changed from Full Member to Probational Member. The new Associate Members include: Antarctica Expeditions, Cruise Tasmania, Expeditions Inc., Galapagos Travel.

No new tour operators applied for membership at the June 2000 annual meeting although Ocean Frontiers a new Australian operator provided an overview of their proposed operations for 2000/01. To date they have not applied for membership. The South Australian Shipping Company was also invited to attend but no response was received. Southeastern Antiquities (Australian Company) advised that they were planning on starting up operations for the 2000-01 season but no further information has been received.

The issue of companies operating ships carrying more than 400 passengers was again discussed in Hobart. According to the 1991 IAATO Bylaws, IAATO member companies agree to carry no more than 400 passengers per voyage.

- It was decided by the membership that a research study would be conducted to look at the potential number and size of larger ships that may include Antarctica in future cruises
- to look at the possible changes in the industry with a view to IAATO considering whether to open IAATO up to all ships of any size
- to consider looking at changing categories of membership to include all types of Antarctic tourism including large ships, land based and adventure tourism.

There will be a paper produced in the next few months that will address the proposed new structure to the membership.

2.2 As a matter of principle and in practice, all tour operators - whether or not associated with IAATO - are included in emergency contact information, exchange of information and other activities of the IAATO Secretariat. (Appendix B)

3 Field Coordination

3.1 As part of its annual exchange of operational information, IAATO compiles and distributes Vessel Call Data (Appendix B). In addition, contact information for private camps (ANI), tour vessels and yachts is included in the Antarctic Communications Directory (MINIATOM) compiled and distributed by the COMNAP Secretariat

3.2 In addition, preliminary cruise itineraries are compiled by the IAATO Secretariat and distributed to Antarctic tour operators and national Antarctic programs and CONMAP.

3.3 Expedition leaders and ship's officers circulate advance itineraries and maintain regular contact throughout the season to coordinate site visits and exchange general information, a key factor in managing Antarctic tourism and mitigating potential environmental impact. An example of the annual instructions to ships' captains, radio officers and expedition leaders is included here. (Appendix C).

3.4 This ongoing and routine contact between vessels and with the Adventure Network Emergency and Medical Evacuation Response office in Punta Arenas (EMER) is also a key component of effective emergency response.

4 Environmental Impact Assessment

4.1 According to information received by the IAATO Secretariat, all IAATO members (except one, see below) submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment of planned activities for the 1999-2000 season to appropriate national authorities in accordance with national procedures. Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, Germany and Canada all received EIA's from IAATO members. However, Netherlands based IAATO member, Oceanwide Expeditions produced a draft Environmental Impact Assessment but as there is still no agreed process in The Netherlands for EIA submissions, no EIA has yet been submitted by Oceanwide as of yet.

5 Procedures to Prevent the Introduction of Alien Organisms

5.1 Included in the Hobart IAATO Agenda, IAATO members and visitors received three presentations on the subject of Antarctic Diseases by Dr. Chris Curry, Dr. Martin Riddle, Dr. Knowles Kerry. IAATO is continuing work to develop better practices to prevent the accidental introduction of alien organisms to Antarctica and the translocation of organisms between Antarctic sites.

5.2 IAATO has adopted a standard protocol to report any high mortality incidents and to avoid the introduction and translocation of alien diseases. (Appendix D) IAATO members to better understand the issues involved and operational strategies to further this work are currently being discussed and implemented.

6 Reporting of Tourism and Non-Governmental Activities

6.1 Antarctic tour operators made use of a standard reporting form as noted by ATCM XXII (Final Report, Annex J).

6.2 IAATO continues to support the continued use of this single form, which reduces the burden of paperwork and facilitates studies of the scope, frequency and intensity of tourist activities. As part of its ongoing work, IAATO is investigating the development of a database version of the form that will facilitate compilation and analysis of tour data. It is worth noting that when visiting South Georgia IAATO members are also required by the local authorities to complete a form reporting their activities at each site, which is to be submitted to the Government of South Georgia following each visit. This form is somewhat similar to the IAATO form.

6.3 Antarctic tourism trends as compiled by the U.S. National Science Foundation since 1989 are presented to this meeting as part of the Information Paper "IAATO Overview of Tourism Activities".

7 Implementation of Recommendation XVIII-1

7.1 In consultation with COMNAP, individual national Antarctic programs and consultants, IAATO continues to research, develop and use industry-wide programs and standards wherever necessary to ensure self-sufficiency and proper conduct in the Antarctic. IAATO is currently working on the development of Whale Watching Guidelines and Guidelines for Scientists being transported by Tourist Vessels and will submit a draft to interested parties prior to the commencement of the 2000-01 season.

7.2 IAATO initiatives include a medical evacuation contingency plan, standard medical information, slide presentation on "Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic," and a standardized table of contents for training materials and handbooks. IAATO values its growing and constructive dialogue with COMNAP on these operational issues.

7.3 An IAATO pre-season checklist is appended to this report, indicating the kind of educational materials prepared and distributed by IAATO each Antarctic season. (Appendix E).

7.4 Recommendation XVIII-1, "Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic" has been translated and made available by IAATO to tour operators in English, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish.

8. Emergency Response Action and Contingency Planning

8.1 IAATO completed a survey of the types and quantities of fuel carried by Antarctic tour vessels (Appendix G) for assistance in determining appropriate response in the event of a catastrophic marine pollution emergency. Unlike national supply vessels, Antarctic tour vessels do not carry quantities of bulk diesel fuel for shore-based generators and no refueling is carried out in the Antarctic Treaty Area. Furthermore, most Antarctic tour vessels use light diesel fuels.

8.2 IAATO has compiled data of member tour vessels' specifications and other information that would contribute to risk assessment of Antarctic tourism activities. (Appendix G).

8.3 All IAATO member companies have Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (SOPEP) in place that satisfy regulation 26 of Annex I of MARPOL. A "Special Antarctic Addendum" to the SOPEP was developed by IAATO and distributed to Antarctic tour operators for implementation and comment in 1998.

While the addendum has no legal status, it includes notice to contact Antarctic stations in the vicinity of any marine pollution incident along with appropriate national authorities.

9. 1999-2000 Scientific and Environmental Research Initiatives

9.1 Specific consideration of the issue of cumulative impacts has been given by all IAATO members this year. During June 7,8,9, 2000 IAATO jointly hosted with the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Science Foundation a workshop entitled "Assessment of the Possible Cumulative Environmental Impacts of Commercial Ship-Based Tourism in the Antarctic Peninsula Area." (Appendix H). The proceedings from this workshop should be published sometime in December 2000. The workshop was very successful and will hopefully be a first step in the process of beginning to understand the future direction for both the tourism and scientific communities in order to better understand, minimise and mitigate cumulative impact from tourist activities in Antarctica

9.1 IAATO member companies continued to provide logistic and scientific support to national Antarctic programs and Antarctic organizations. Tour vessels provide a cost-effective resource for the scientific community. During the 1999-2000 season more than 100 scientists and other personnel from five Antarctic Treaty Parties along with their equipment were supported, mainly in transport to and from stations and field areas. IAATO continued its support of the Oceanites Antarctic Site Inventory Project whose personnel were again provided with accommodations, transport and access to visitor sites. At least two IAATO member vessels on three occasions were chartered by Antarctic Treaty Parties for station resupply during the 1999-2000 season.

9.2 Specific requests for logistic or other support should be made to individual members or the IAATO Secretariat. A current IAATO Membership directory is attached to this report. (Appendix A).

9.3 IAATO members also provided transport for researchers, personnel and material in the sub-Antarctic, including the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Macquarie Island and the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands.

9.4 Antarctic tour operators and passengers continued their tradition of direct financial contributions to many organizations active in Antarctica including the Scott Polar Research Institute, UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, Antarctic Heritage Trust and the Humpback Whale Identification Project. It is noteworthy for instance that according to the annual report of the Antarctic Heritage Trust, 38% of their annual income was provided by Antarctic tour operators whose itineraries included the historic huts.

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