

XXIII ATCM/IP, May, 1999

Original: English

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

(Agenda item 5b)

(Submitted by IAATO)

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**THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS (IAATO)** is pleased to present a report of its activities to the XXIII ATCM, Lima, Peru, 24 May - 4 June 1999 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, including improved exchange of information among its members, emergency response and contingency planning, and the role of IAATO relative to larger cruise vessels in the Antarctic. Liaison with national Antarctic programs, 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 grown to include 30 member and associate member companies in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States. A current Membership Directory is included with this report (ATTACHMENT A).

1.2 Antarctic tourism has grown along with IAATO. From November 1998 to March 1999, a total of 10,013 persons traveled to the Antarctic on privately organized expeditions, including 9,844 passengers aboard commercially organized ships, 90 persons on chartered yachts and 79 land-based visitors. This continues a trend, representing a slight increase over the total of 9,604 visitors and 9,378 ship-borne visitors in the 1997-98 season. An overview of Antarctic tourism activity is presented as a separate information paper to the XXIII ATCM under agenda item 13.

1.3 IAATO held a general meeting on 15-17 July 1998 in Arlington, Virginia, USA, attended by 19 IAATO members representing 14 Antarctic tour operators. In addition observers and experts participated from the U.S. National Science Foundation, COMNAP, International Hydrographic Office (IHO), Australian

National Antarctic program (ANARE), British Antarctic Survey (BAS), Government of South Georgia, and the German Federal Environment Agency and other organizations.

1.4 IAATO will hold its 10<sup>th</sup> general meeting in Hamburg at the offices of IAATO-Member Hapag Lloyd Seetouristik, 27 June — 01 July 1999. This will be the first time IAATO will hold its annual meeting outside the United States, marking the growing international nature of Antarctic tourism and IAATO. The meeting will include a visit to the Antarctic expedition vessel *M/S Hanseatic*, which will be in port, and a visit to the Alfred Wegener Institute. Interested parties should contact the IAATO Secretariat.

5. IAATO representatives and members attended the July 1998 COMNAP meeting, a meeting on visitor management in the Ross Sea, a public meeting with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, meetings with the German Department of the Environment, a World Wildlife Fund conference on Arctic tourism and other international meetings.

## 2. Membership

2.1 At its July 1998 meeting, IAATO reviewed the membership status of Adventure Associates (AUS), Clipper Cruise Line (USA), Pelagic Expeditions (UK) and Special Expeditions (USA), all of whom were elected as full members after one year as provisional members of IAATO, a category reserved for new members.

2. No new tour operators applied for membership at the July 1998 annual meeting although incentives for membership by yacht owners, the status of associate members and the issue of companies operating ships carrying more than 400 passengers was discussed at length. According to the 1991 IAATO Bylaws, IAATO member companies agree to carry no more than 400 passengers per voyage. The role of IAATO in relation to larger vessels and the 400-passenger limit will be discussed at the Hamburg general meeting of IAATO members.

2.3 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.

## 3. Field Coordination

1. As part of its annual exchange of operational information, IAATO compiles and distributes Vessel Call Data (ATTACHMENT B). 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 via COMNAP.

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 any potential environmental impact. An example of the annual instructions to ships' captains, radio officers and expedition leaders is included here. (ATTACHMENT 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

1. According to information received by the IAATO Secretariat, all IAATO members prepared an Environmental Impact Assessment of planned activities for the 1998-99 season, which were submitted to appropriate national authorities in accordance with national procedures, including documents submitted to authorities in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and United States.

4.2 IAATO, its members and particularly Toronto-based Marine Expeditions urge non-Consultative parties to the Antarctic Treaty such as Canada to ratify the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty.

## **5. Procedures to Prevent the Introduction of Alien Species**

5.1 IAATO participated in the Diseases of Antarctic Wildlife workshop hosted by the Australian Antarctic Division (Hobart, Oct 1998), a report of which was distributed to Antarctic tour operators along with the poster produced by the workshop.

2. Recognizing that tourists are a highly mobile population in the Antarctic, visiting a number of sites within a short time, IAATO looks forward to continuing advice from SCAR and experts on the best practices to avoid transfer of exotic organisms to Antarctica and translocation of organisms between sites.

5.3 Pending further research, IAATO intends to adopt a standard protocol to report any high mortality incidents and to avoid the introduction and translocation of alien diseases. Comments on the draft procedures (ATTACHMENT D) should be directed to the IAATO Secretariat.

## **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 strongly supports 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.

6.3 Antarctic tourism trends as compiled by the U.S. National Science Foundation since 1989 presented to this meeting as part of the Information paper, "IAATO Overview of Tourism Activities." This information is also posted online at iaato.org.

## **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.

2. These 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 A pre-season checklist is appended to this report, indicating the kind of educational materials prepared and distributed by IAATO each Antarctic season. (ATTACHMENT E).

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

## **8. Emergency Response Action and Contingency Planning**

8.1 Following Resolution 1 (1997), IAATO presented a report on emergency response and contingency planning (ATCM XXII/IP104). At the July 1998 meeting, the Maritime Committee identified several areas that may not be already covered in detail by the provisions of the ISM Code (International Safety Management), including notification of shore authorities, specialized containment equipment that may be

required, and specialized training for ship's officers and crew.

8.2 IAATO is seeking advice from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and ship operators to examine existing international regulations as they apply to Antarctic shipping and to determine where any further work may be needed given the special operating conditions and nature of the Antarctic.

8.3 Several IAATO members participated in the "Antarctic Oil Pollution Control Course sponsored by the British Antarctic Survey and Oil Spill Response Limited (Southampton, August 20-21, 1998) and the International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC, Seattle, March 8-11, 1999).

4. IAATO is completing a survey of the types and quantities of fuel carried by Antarctic tour vessels, which preliminary research indicates may be a significant factor 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. Most Antarctic tour vessels use light diesel fuels.
5. In addition to the survey of fuels, IAATO is completing a survey of tour vessels and specifications and other information that would contribute to a risk assessment of Antarctic tourism activities.

8.6 IAATO is also seeking advice from experts in the field regarding recommended oil spill containment equipment and collecting the results of a survey of the spill kits currently being carried by tour vessels operating in the Antarctic. In addition, IAATO is seeking advice regarding appropriate specialized oil spill response training.

8.7 Following Resolution 1 (1997), IAATO supports emergency drills and exercises, an example of which is a two-day emergency response exercise for cruise vessels operating in Glacier Bay, Alaska (March 22-23, 1999). IAATO members who also operate in Alaska participated in these exercises. Adventure Network International (ANI) which provides Search and Rescue and Emergency Medical Evacuation for IAATO members, participated in an emergency response drill this season with the British Antarctic Survey. IAATO looks forward to joint exercises, both practical and theoretical, involving national and private operators.

8.8 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. 1998-99 Scientific and Environmental Research Initiatives

9.1 IAATO member companies continued to provide logistic and scientific support to national Antarctic programs and Antarctic organizations in 1998-99. Tour vessels have provided a cost-effective resource for science and IAATO members the opportunity to assist. More than 100 scientists and others from five Antarctic Treaty Parties and their gear were supported, mainly in transport to and from stations and field areas, in the 1998-99 season. 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. (ATTACHMENT A).

9.2 Support offered this season included major transfer of personnel for Australian Antarctic program as a result of problems with their supply ship, *Aurora Australis*. Four personnel and gear were transported from Fremantle to Davis Station, and four from Auster Station to Davis Station, 12 scientists were transported from Davis to Hobart, (including two personnel from the United States Antarctic Program who had worked at Zhongshan Station) to Hobart, and 22 scientists, support personnel, and their gear were transported from Casey Station to Hobart.

9.3 IAATO members also transported one German scientist from Argentina to Bellingshausen Station; two personnel to Jubany Station; four to Great Wall Station; seven plus gear to Bellingshausen for station clean-up, and nine from that station afterwards. Provisions were also donated to the Bellingshausen. Two U.S. scientists were transported from Ushuaia to Palmer Station. Logistical and planning assistance were provided to the Argentine Antarctic Program as part of preparations for operating Almirante Brown

Station. Support was provided to the Bulgarian Antarctic Program in transporting four personnel and gear to and from Livingston Island. Other tour vessels in various capacities of support transported an additional 30 personnel.

4. Members of the Antarctic Site Inventory Project were provided with accommodations, transport and access to visitor sites. Transportation was also provided to members of Project Antarctic Conservation.

9.5 In addition to support for Antarctic science and logistics, IAATO members 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.

9.6 Antarctic tour operators and passengers continued their tradition of direct financial contributions to organizations active in Antarctica, including the Scott Polar Research Institute, UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, Antarctic Heritage Trust, South Georgia Whaling Museum and Humpback Whale Identification Project.

7. According to the annual report of the Antarctic Heritage Trust (31 March 1998), \$17,368 or 13% of the annual income was provided by per person donations by tour operators with itineraries including the historic huts. An additional contribution of \$16,259 was made through the raffle of a donated Antarctic cruise.

Appendices:

- A. IAATO Membership Directory, May-99
- B. IAATO Call Data 1998-99
- C. IAATO Annual Instructions
- D. IAATO Disease Protocol
- E. IAATO Pre-Season Checklist

[TOP OF THE PAGE](#)

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[TOP OF THE PAGE](#)

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[Membership Directory](#) • [Members Only](#) • [About IAATO](#) • [Guidelines & Resources](#) • [Operational Procedures](#)  
[Publications & Papers](#) • [Gallery](#) • [Press Releases](#) • [Site Map](#) • [Contact Us](#) • [Home](#)