

Overview of Antarctic Tourism Activities, 1999

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is pleased to provide this summary of Antarctic tourism for the 1998-1999 season and brief overview of Antarctic tourism trends. A detailed overview of Antarctic tourism and IAATO is available online at iaato.org, including the statistics compiled annually by the Office of Polar Programs at the U.S. National Science Foundation.

1. Overview

In 1998-99 approximately 10,026 people traveled to the Antarctic on private sector expeditions, exceeding for the first time 10,000 travelers. A brief summary of the season, "IAATO Overview of Actual Antarctic Tourism, 1998-99," is appended. Of these Antarctic visitors, 79 participated in land-based expeditions, 90 traveled aboard commercial yachts and 9,857 traveled aboard commercially organized tour vessels.

2. Seaborne Tourism

2.1 9,857 people traveled to the Antarctic on 15 commercially organized tour vessels from November 1998 to March 1999, a slight increase over the 1997-98 season total of 9,473 ship-based visitors.

2.2 IAATO members operated all but one of the Antarctic tour vessels that sailed in 1998-99. Seven of the 15 vessels were of Russian registry.

2.3 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. Of 102 ship voyages in 1998-99: 96 were to the Antarctic Peninsula Region; one to East Antarctica; three to the Ross Sea; and two voyages including both the Ross Sea Sector and Antarctic Peninsula (*Marco Polo*, *Kapitan Khlebnikov*).

2.4 Commercial Antarctic Tour Vessels, 1998-99

Ship	Registry	Capacity	Since
<i>Explorer</i>	Liberia	96	1970
<i>World Discoverer</i>	Liberia	38	1977
<i>Bremen (ex Frontier Spirit)</i>	Bahamas	164	1989
<i>Professor Molchanov</i>	Russia	48	1991
<i>Kapitan Khlebnikov</i>	Russia	114	1992
<i>Akademik Sergei Vavilov</i>	Russia	80	1992
<i>Akademik Ioffe</i>	Russia	115	1993
<i>Hanseatic</i>	Bahamas	180	1993
* <i>Marco Polo</i>	Bahamas	800	1993
* <i>Clipper Adventurer</i>	Bahamas	120	1994
<i>Akademik Shokalskiy</i>	Russia	38	1995
<i>Professor Multanovskiy</i>	Russia	48	1995
<i>Akademik Shuleykin</i>	Russia	48	1996
<i>Disko</i>	Denmark	120	1997
<i>Caledonian Star</i>	Bahamas	110	1998

* Not a Member of IAATO. Capacity limited by Orient Lines to 500-600

** Clipper Adventurer is the ex Alla Tarasova

3. Commercial Antarctic Yachts

3.1 Based on information received by the IAATO Secretariat, a total of 90 passengers were reported to have traveled to

Antarctica aboard 11 commercial yachts in the 1998-99 season. This includes yachts reported at Arthur Harbor by the U.S. National Science Foundation, reports made directly to the IAATO Secretariat and information gathered by In.Fue.Tur in Ushuaia. Yacht activity – which may be incomplete – is included in the statistical summaries and projections appended to this report.

3.2 According to Hamish Laird, captain of the *Pelagic*, some 225 passengers and crew sailed to Antarctica in the 1997-98 season on 25 voyages, 16 of them commercial charters. Antarctic yacht activity is compiled annually by Robert Headland at Scott Polar Research Institute as part of the ongoing "Chronological List of Antarctic Expeditions and Related Historical Events "(extract tabled as XXII ATCM/IP1).

3.3 Regular Commercial yachts with fare paying passengers include the *Pelagic* (IAATO Member Skip Novak), *Damien II* (Sally and Jerome Poncet), *Croix St. Paul II* (Alex Foucard), *S. W. Vorwerk*, *Golden Fleece*, and yachts organized through Croisieres Australes in France (*Baltazar*, *Boulard*, *Fernande*, *Kekilistrion*, *Kotick I*, *Valhalla*)

3.4 The IAATO Secretariat is in regular correspondence with yacht operators and other interested parties regarding Antarctic yacht activity and outreach to the yachting community has improved with several yacht captains and owners participating at the IAATO annual meeting. Yacht operator Pelagic Expeditions is an IAATO member.

4. Land-based Tourism

4.1 IAATO charter member Adventure Network International (ANI) operated out of Punta Arenas, Chile for the fourteenth consecutive season. It operated one Lockheed L-382 G Hercules and two DHC-6 Twin Otters. The ANI camp at Patriot Hills blue icefield in the Heritage Range (80° 18'S, 81° 21' W) was reopened on 01 November 1998 and closed on 15 February 1999.

4.2 There were a total of 12 Hercules flights this season, five of which were used to carry passengers with the remaining flights used for the transportation of fuel for the company's operations. The total number of passengers carried was 79, including 15 visitors to Patriot Hills, 9 to the Emperor Penguin colony at the Dawson-Lambton Glacier, 11 to the South Pole, 31 mountaineers on Vinson Massif and 3 others climbing peaks in the Ellsworth Mountains.

4.3 ANI supported 4 separate private expeditions: a team of two Dutch (Ronald Naar and Coen Hofstede), who attempted a crossing of the Antarctic continent from Dronning Maud Land to McMurdo. Due to weather and equipment problems their journey was terminated just past the South Pole; the Groupe Militaire de Haute Montagne (a five-man French army expedition) skied unsupported to the South Pole from Berkner Island; Ola Skinnarmo, a Swede, successfully skied solo and unsupported to the South Pole from Hercules Inlet, becoming the youngest person to do so; and Mitsuro Ohba, a Japanese citizen, skied/sailed solo from Dronning Maud Land through the South Pole to 76.37°S, 96.78°W near the Fletcher Peninsula.

5. Overflights

5.1 Croydon Travel of Victoria, Australia, operated Qantas Antarctic Day Sightseeing flights from Melbourne aboard Qantas Airlines Boeing 747-400 aircraft for the fifth consecutive season. According to the Australian Antarctic Division, a total of 3,127 passengers participated on 9 flights from November 1998 to February 1999. In addition, the plane carried 23 crew per flight.

5.2 The aircraft operate mainly to the north Victoria Land coast region, and occasionally to Wilkes Land and as far west as Princess Elizabeth Land (Ingrid Christensen Coast)

5.3 Over 13,000 persons have taken part in the overflights since they re-commenced in 1994-1995. Croydon Travel expects to operate 10 flights in the 1999-2000 season to the same areas detailed above.

5.4 In addition, overflights of the Antarctic Peninsula from Punta Arenas, Chile have been offered for several seasons. According to Destination Management, a Chilean agency that provides ground services to cruise vessels and other tour companies, at least 22 flights took place between November 1998 and March 1999, each carrying 40-60 passengers and staff including an Antarctic lecturer. The flights have been offered aboard Boeing 737 aircraft operated by Avant, a Chilean carrier. The flights are offered as an optional excursion to cruise ship passengers calling at Punta Arenas.

6. Preliminary Estimate of Planned Activities for the 1999-2000 Season

6.1 According to information provided by tour operators to IAATO, 13,906 people may visit Antarctic on commercially organized tour vessels, 200 on land-based expeditions and 192 on commercial yachts in the 1999-00 season. As many as an additional 1,000 passengers may visit Antarctica on a 72-hour cruise only transit of the Antarctic Treaty Area on an around the world voyage aboard the *Rotterdam*. This will be the biggest season ever for Antarctic tourism, as forecast by IAATO (XXI ATCM/IP25), and attributable in part to the overall surge in travel related to the Millennium. The "IAATO Preliminary Estimate of Antarctic Tourism, 1999-00" is appended.

6.2 As a matter of interest, Holland America Line has submitted an Initial Environmental Evaluation for its planned activities aboard the *Rotterdam* to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which was determined to meet obligations under the Environmental Protocol and U.S. Law. The World Cruise Company, based in Toronto, is preparing an Environmental Impact Assessment for its activities aboard the *Ocean Explorer I* and *Aegean I* to be submitted to appropriate national authorities.

6.3 The *Rotterdam* is registered in the Netherlands. According the Initial Environmental Evaluation submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the ship will spend approximately 72 hours in the Antarctic Treaty Area on a cruise-only program with no small boat cruising or landings.

6.4 The *Ocean Explorer I* and *Aegean I* are both Greek registered vessels. Each vessel will visit the South Shetland Islands as one stop on an around-the-world voyage. During these voyages, the *Aegean I* is expected to carry approximately 500 passengers and the *Ocean Explorer I* approximately 600 passengers. Each vessel will be in the Antarctic Treaty Area for approximately 36 hours. Both vessels will also participate in a 7-day millennium cruise, with approximately 48 hours scheduled in the South Shetland Islands. On these voyages, the *Aegean I* is expected to carry approximately 450 passengers and the *Ocean Explorer I* approximately 250 passengers. Planned activities will be provided in more detail in the Environmental Impact Assessment under preparation by the tour organizer.

6.5 Marine Expeditions, an experienced Antarctic tour operator and IAATO member, will assist in coordinating staffing and marine operations for the two vessels. According to information received by the IAATO Secretariat, the Antarctic cruises aboard the *Ocean Explorer I* and *Aegean I* are a one-time event in celebration of the Millennium. In future years, The World Cruise Company has announced that it plans one visit per year on one vessel.

6.6 In other noteworthy changes for the coming season, an Australian company, Peregrine Expeditions plans nine voyage aboard the *Boris Petrov*, a 52-passenger Russian-flagged vessel that had previously sailed in the Antarctic. Peregrine Expeditions, which has applied for IATO membership, has sponsored voyages in the Antarctic since 1996. IAATO-member Marine Expeditions will replace the *Disko*, a 120-passenger Danish-flagged vessel, with the *Lyubov Orlova*, a 120 passenger Russian operated vessel with a Malta registry. The *Lyubov Orlova* is a sister ship of the Antarctic tour vessel *Clipper Adventurer* (ex *Alla Tarasova*). The 110-passenger Russian-flagged icebreaker, *Kapitan Dranitsyn*, operated by Quark Expeditions will also return to the Antarctic after an absence of several seasons.

7. Antarctic Tourism Trends

7.1 For the past decade, the U.S. National Science Foundation has compiled and distributed detailed information on Antarctic tour activity. IAATO collaborates with NSF to ensure that all Antarctic tourism is represented, not just that of U.S. organizers. The United States has submitted this information on tourism trends at a previous consultative meeting (XXI ATCM/INF 90). Appendices include the following eight tables and charts compiled by NSF and revised by IAATO to reflect the 1998-99 season wherever possible. Updated charts and tables reflecting the 1998-99 season are currently in preparation by NSF. This data is an invaluable resource, showing tourism activity at individual landing sites over time.

C. Antarctic Tourist Trends

D. Antarctic Tourism, Ship vs. Land Based

E. Future Trends in Antarctic Tourism

F. Comparison of Nationalities (1994/95 – 1997/98)

G. 1997-98 Summary of Peninsula Sites Visited by Tour Ships

H. Nine Season (1989-98) Overview of Sites Visited in the Antarctic Peninsula

I. 1997-98 Summary of Continental Sites Visited by Tour Ships

J. Overview of Sites Visited – Continental Side of Antarctica (1992/93 – 1997/98)

7.2 In addition, an analysis of tourism trends at specific landing sites is included in the 1997 report to the governments of

the United States and the United Kingdom by Ron Naveen, "Compendium of Antarctic Peninsula Visitor Sites." This report is the result of the ongoing Antarctic Site Inventory Project. In addition, the Tourism Board of Tierra del Fuego (In.Fue.Tur) publishes an annual report on "Antarctic Tourism Numbers through the Port of Ushuaia."

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7.3 Traditional cruise liners have not regularly visited the Antarctic since the 1970s when the *Regina Prima*, *Cabo San Roque* and *Cabo San Vicente* made a number of voyages, each with more than 800 passengers. The *Europa* sailed to Antarctica in 1994-95 with 841 passengers and the *Sagaflord* included a cruise-only visit to the South Shetlands on an around the world voyage in 1992-93. The 1999-00 season marks the first visit in a number of years by a larger cruise vessel, the *Rotterdam*, in addition to the announced voyages aboard *Aegean I* and *Ocean Explorer I*, both expected to carry more than 400 passengers.

7.4 Experienced Antarctic tour operators believe that operational realities and economic considerations will discourage traditional cruise companies from including Antarctica on their itineraries; Antarctica is too remote, across potentially stormy seas and of limited interest to the mass market. While IAATO will monitor developments in the tour industry, it is predicted that Antarctica will remain a specialized and expensive niche destination offered by a limited number of experienced operators focusing on educational voyages top areas of exceptional natural history and wilderness value.

8. IAATO Statement on Larger Cruise Vessels

8.1 As adopted in 1991, the IAATO Bylaws include a pledge by members not to carry more than 400 passengers per trip. The 400-passenger limit was determined, in part, by the fact that the seven founding members of IAATO included Paquet/Ocean cruise Lines which operated the 400-passenger *Ocean Princess* at the time. The question of larger vessels has been under active discussion by members since 1991 and the issue remains high on the IAATO agenda. Orient Line, which has operated the *Marco Polo* in the Antarctic since 1993-94, and is not currently a member of IAATO due the size of the vessel, voluntarily limits the number of passengers carried to 500-600.

8.2 The July 1998 IAATO general Meeting voted by a 2/3 majority to remove the numerical limit of 400 passengers per voyage and replace it with a general statement on meeting the obligations of the Antarctic Treaty System. No appropriate language has been agreed upon and any further action on the 400-passenger limit is pending discussion at the 1999 IAATO general meeting in Hamburg (June 27 – July 1).

8.3 The significance of the size of the vessel as it relates to potential impact, contingency planning and emergency response is complex, and factors such as choice of landing site, number of landings, type of fuel carried may be of equal or greater importance than the size of the vessel. These are not issues that are easily resolved. In particular, IAATO members are concerned that potential cumulative environmental impacts and emergency response requirements of very large vessels could adversely impact on the principles of safe and environmentally responsible travel to Antarctica.

8.4 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. Non-members, prospective members and other interested parties participate in the annual general meeting of IAATO, where obligations of the Antarctic Treaty System are discussed and policies developed.

Appendices

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