

# IAATO NEWS



Member Newsletter

March 2020

Dear Members,

As we approach the end of the Antarctic season, I had hoped to use this introduction to announce the appointment of the new IAATO Executive Director. You will still find this important – and positive – news below. But with COVID-19 continuing to spread across the globe, it is important to first share with you IAATO's position during these extraordinary times.

The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a moment in history and a defining moment for the responsible travel industry. For some of us, this week and the ones to follow will be the most challenging we have experienced in our professional, as well as personal, lives.

As of this writing, we have 12 ships with guests, either on their way back to port or alongside, including those redirected to Buenos Aires, and one vessel still South. Our season is due to come to an end on April 10 with the last of the IAATO fleet – SY Australis returning from South Georgia. All vessels scheduled to depart for the peninsula and/or the sub-Antarctic islands have ceased, or been postponed due to new regulations imposed at Antarctic Gateways within the last 72 hours.

Our priority now is the wellbeing of guests, staff and crew by supporting Members who are working with governments to ensure their swift repatriation.

Our operations have been interrupted and curtailed right now and we are unable to give our guests the extraordinary educational and enriching experiences they have long looked forward to. But IAATO is a unique and special community; I urge us to use this time to unite, to keep our communities safe, knowing that when this period of uncertainty is over, we will share our passion for Antarctica with our guests again; and we will continue the important work of creating ambassadors for this continent, dear to us all.

Terry

**Dr Terry Shaller**

Acting Executive Director

International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators



## IAATO announces appointment of new Executive Director



The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) has announced the appointment of Gina Greer as Executive Director. Gina will lead the Secretariat and work with IAATO's Executive Committee to further the association's mission of advocating and promoting safe, environmentally responsible private-sector travel to Antarctica.

Previously a partner at global business advisory and consulting firm, Deloitte, Gina brings with her more than 20 years of experience interpreting regulatory and business issues, identifying challenges and developing operational strategies to address them; qualities which will benefit IAATO as it continues to manage the challenges ahead.

Mark Van der Hulst, Chair of IAATO's Executive Committee said: "We are delighted to confirm Gina as the association's Executive Director. She brings to the role a broad range of experience in leadership in regulatory and operational fields, managing growing teams and developing strategy-led solutions to emerging challenges, as well as a passion for environmental issues and conservation.

"With Gina as Executive Director supported by IAATO's Deputy Executive Director and Director of Operations and Government Affairs, Lisa Kelley, our organization will have a strong and proficient senior management team. This combination gives IAATO an exceptional blend of business skills with many years of operational experience with which to lead its members in their commitment to managing for industry growth and enhancing our robust environmental standards."

Find out more about Gina [here](#).

## Gateway update

It is hard to believe the 2019/20 season is almost over. It is our busiest season to date, with all of the gateway cities feeling changes from increased traffic whether it be by air or by sea.

There has been some significant work done on behalf of the Antarctic Gateway Committee (AGC) since October and we would like to share information of the meetings which have taken place below.

The AGC has also appointed an IAATO Ushuaia Gateway Committee Representative on a short-term contract. With the increased vessel calls in Ushuaia as well as the new Argentine government taking office in December, it was identified by the Executive Committee that it would be beneficial for IAATO to have a representative in Argentina to make sure conversations keep moving throughout the year. To accomplish this IAATO has hired Carlos Flesia as IAATO's Ushuaia Gateway Committee Representative.

A. Executive Committee Meeting in Buenos Aires with Introductory Meeting with Key Ushuaia and Buenos Aires Officials – October 25, 2019

B. Participation in the Inaugural Second Flight to the Falkland Island November 20, 2020  
IAATO was invited to participate in the Inaugural Second Flight to the Falkland Islands. This flight departs from and returns to Sao Paulo every Wednesday. The days following the flight were spent visiting stakeholders.

C. Ushuaia Meeting December 18 - 19, 2019

This meeting gave IAATO a chance to meet the new Government Authorities as well as look carefully at the current and proposed tourism infrastructure in Ushuaia.

D. Ushuaia Meeting January 8 – 10, 2020

In addition to continued talks with the Provincial Government, this trip to Ushuaia concentrated on the organization of the working meeting of the Antarctic Gateway Committee, which took place on January 30th (see below).

E. Ushuaia Meeting January 30, 2020

This was a special meeting with the new Provincial Government, Port, Maritime and Customs Authorities, as well as representatives from logistics providers. The aim of the meeting was to introduce the new officials to IAATO and the needs of IAATO Operators, as well as hear about possible developments in the Port of Ushuaia.

The meetings above have created many action points and follow up requirements. Further information will be disseminated to the IAATO Membership through Operational Updates and Newsletters.

## IAATO Members identify tourism industry values and targets during systematic conservation planning (SCP) workshop

IAATO Members identified tourism industry values and targets as part of a systematic conservation planning (SCP) workshop held in Miami last month.

Dr Jasmine Lee, post-doctoral researcher at Monash University in Melbourne, led participants at IAATO's Managing for Growth Workshop in Miami last month through a structured process to identify tourism industry values and targets as part of the ongoing SCP project.



The Antarctic Peninsula is rapidly changing with climate changes becoming more pronounced and human activity, both science and tourism, growing each year. Antarctic Treaty Parties have identified this growth and are increasing pressure for further regulations to be put in place. The SCP will assist by developing a spatial zoning plan that can be used by IAATO and the Antarctic Treaty to identify sites important to the three primary stakeholders – biodiversity, tourism, and science.

An important aspect of the SCP process is identifying stakeholder values in the region and then setting targets for each of these values. Jasmine first led workshop participants in identifying values/important features related to landing sites, e.g. penguin colonies, suitability for camping, historic sites etc. A total of 37 values were identified as important to the industry.

Next, workshop participants identified the ten most important landing sites for their operations over the course of a season, estimating the number of times they expect to land at those sites now, and how many times if the number of visitors and vessels in the peninsula were to increase in the future. Operators then filled in an online survey that will be used to assist in setting 'targets' for each of the identified values. Targets are the number of each value/feature that are required to maintain successful operations. For example, how many historic sites are required. We concluded the SCP session with discussions on aspects of the SCP process, including how it is expected to be utilised.

Next steps for the project include collating and aggregating the data collected from this workshop and repeating the process with scientists and policymakers to identify parallel values and targets for science and biodiversity. Additional spatial data (e.g. locations of all values) is also required to ensure the values can be adequately represented in the prioritisation process. Once data collection is complete, Jasmine can incorporate the targets and spatial data into the prioritisation software to produce the final zoning plans. The prioritisation will be run multiple times using various scenarios (e.g. differing levels of growth) and incorporating different aspects (e.g. locking current protected areas into the biodiversity zone).

If you are unable to attend the workshop, but would like to contribute towards the SCP process, please get in touch with [Amanda Lynnes](#).

It's also not too late to join the SCAR/IAATO liaison group, the aim of which is to provide the SCO with input and advice. Ask Amanda if interested.

## IAATO joins Polar Partners to announce 2020 Fellowship opportunities

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP), The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) have announced opportunities for early-career professionals, including the second IAATO Antarctic Fellowship.

The fellowships, funded by IAATO and now in their second year, are an investment in the professional development of talented early career researchers and aim to further the understanding of human presence in Antarctica.

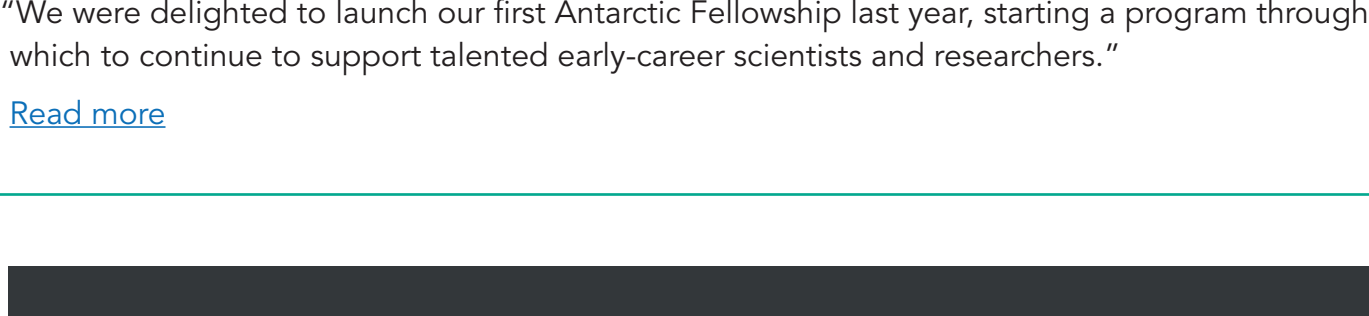
Amanda Lynnes, Director of Environment and Science Coordination for IAATO, said:

"Supporting scientific endeavour is at IAATO's core, with IAATO vessels transporting scientists and researchers into the field to gather data from which to learn more about a region of such global scientific importance.

"We were delighted to launch our first Antarctic Fellowship last year, starting a program through which to continue to support talented early-career scientists and researchers."

[Read more](#)

## On the IAATO Blog this month...



International Women's Day | As with science itself, the role of women in polar sciences has evolved – and we should ensure it continues to do so, writes Glaciologist Evelyn Dowdeswell

Today, being a woman and taking a hands-on approach to research is not the rarity it once was and I am heartened to be joined by increasing numbers of female scientists on polar expeditions with every year that goes by.

[Read more](#)



International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators

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IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic.