

IAATO Operational Update 2019.04

IAATO Vessel Operational Considerations

August 15, 2019

Following the 42nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and IAATO 2019, there have been changes and/or updates to aspects of IAATO Field Operations. The below information is a summary of this information. Should further details be needed please contact operations@iaato.org or visit the [IAATO Field Operations Manual](#).

1. Whale Strike Mitigation

For the 2019-20 season, IAATO operators have committed to one of the following:

i. A 10kn speed restriction within geofenced time-areas. (This excludes emergency or other extenuating circumstances).

OR for IAATO operators who have a whale strike mitigation training program in their Ship Management Systems:

ii. An extra watchman on the bridge for the sole purpose of being on whale lookout within the geofenced time-area proposed. Appropriate records of this action must be recorded in the ship's log.

The geofenced time-areas are as follows:

- January 1 through May 30 in the Gerlache Strait and adjacent waters, in the area between 63.65°S and 65.35°S, including Dallmann Bay west to 64.2°W;
- February 1 through May 30 in the Marta Passage entering Crystal Sound, 67.8°W to 67.0°W.

For Operators choosing Option 2, the whale strike mitigation program must be shared with the IAATO Secretariat (operations@iaato.org) before the season. Additionally, a log (which will be supplied by the IAATO Secretariat in due course) of the extra watchman must also be shared with IAATO at the end of the season.

2. Site Guideline Updates

Only changes are highlighted below, for the full set of site guidelines please refer to the [IAATO Field Operations Manual](#) found on the website or through the FOM Sync App v4. All new site rules have also been reflected in the IAATO database.

i. Torgersen Island

Regardless of visit status at Palmer Station, no landings are allowed on Torgersen between October and mid-January. Small boat cruising near Bonaparte Point is permitted during these times, but it is important all are aware of the ASMA 7 management plan and seek coordination with the Palmer Station Manager.

ii. Snow Hill Island – Nordenskjöld's Hut

This site has been changed from a Category 2 site to a Category 1 only site.

iii. Yankee Harbour

No new restrictions. Following recommendations from IAATO Field Staff, the Site guidelines have been enhanced with more details.

iv. Half Moon Island

No new restrictions. The map was updated to better show the pinch point in the trail.

v. Grytviken

To ensure the visitor experience is maintained and the limited infrastructure in Grytviken is maintained, the number of vessels permitted to visit Grytviken is capped at two (2) vessels per day.

vi. Undine Harbour and Elsehul

Undine Harbour will be incorporated into the existing designated visitor landing site of Elsehul. This means small boat landings will be permitted on the southern beach of Undine Harbour as well as from the northern beach of Elsehul. To avoid overbooking, both sites should be treated as one. Continue to book Elsehul as the landing site in the ship scheduler.

vii. Cape Rosa

The gully and saddle of Cape Rosa are now closed due to reports of erosion and possible trampling of seabird burrows. Landing is still permitted on Cape Rosa beach as are visits to the cave.

3. Camping at Brown Station

A reminder, whether occupied or not, camping is not allowed at Brown Station. Skontorp Cove is a separate site and camping is permitted here.

4. Station Visits

i. British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and United States Antarctic Program (USAP)

BAS and USAP have already allocated the seasonal visits to their coastal stations. The full list of USAP allocations can be found [here](#).

ii. Great Wall Station

After speaking with the Chinese officials at ATCM and COMNAP, China would request IAATO Operators follow the visit request procedures implemented during the middle of the 2018-19 season:

1. Vessels should contact the station leader directly to request visits.

NOTE: IAATO Operators have been asked to wait to contact the station until after the incoming station leader has arrived in November. The IAATO Secretariat will send out the contact information when it becomes available.

2. Visits shall only occur on weekends and holidays.

3. Max passengers visiting is 400.

4. Visits will be restricted to the flag pole courtyard, and will not include buildings.

5. Polar Plunging is not allowed near Great Wall Station.

iii. For further station visit etiquette, please refer to the [FOM: Section 7/Area and Site Specific Guidelines/Research Station Guidelines](#)

5. A word from UKAHT regarding Port Lockroy visits

The rise in the number of visitors to the Antarctic Peninsula has increased the pressures on wildlife, heritage and staff at Port Lockroy. To mitigate some of the pressures, this season we will be trialling a number of changes ahead of a review of the site guidelines. We ask for your support and understanding during this process.

Planning a visit:

- All new bookings and cancellations will need to be confirmed with an email to the Base Leader prior to being announced to/booked with the fleet.
- Please note and respect our new shorter visiting time periods, 09:01 to 13:00 and 14:01 to 18:00.
- Please be aware with an increase in the number of Category 1 ships with higher passenger capacities, there are potentials to be days when the number of visitors cumulatively exceeds 350 a day. Operators should review their Port Lockroy booked visits now to see if there is a possible clash. Operator's with clashes should liaise with each other to find a solution.
- The Boatshed landing site will be closed to visitor landings throughout the season.
- We would strongly encourage you to make time for one of the Lockroy team to come onboard and give a pre-landing briefing to your guests. Please communicate with us if you would prefer a shorter or longer briefing, focus on heritage etc. We feel that visitors have a much better understanding and experience when they have heard from one of the team.
- To allow your guests to make the most of their time at Port Lockroy we encourage you to promote the writing of postcards prior to or after their visit on the ship, and if applicable, highlight your ability to deliver their mail on your next visit.

Starting a visit:

- Please allow 15 mins for your expedition staff to come ashore prior to the arrival of your guests. This is to allow your expedition team and the Port Lockroy team to meet and discuss the layout for the landing, the restrictions in place and where expedition staff will be positioned etc.
- When applicable and possible, we ask you to have 5-6 expedition members at Port Lockroy for your landing, 2-3 positioned at the chains landing site and the start of the path to Bransfield House, 1 at the door of Bransfield House monitoring the numbers of people inside the building, 1 inside the building and 1 on the path outside Bransfield House.

During a visit:

- Using data collected regarding the main penguin and human pathways we are going to concentrate visitor activities to defined pathways. Specifically:
 1. the pathway from the Chains landing site to Bransfield House and
 2. the area in front of Bransfield House, including the wooden decking and ramp.

We will monitor this closely for the coming season, particularly with regards to potential congestion on the path leading up to Bransfield

House. We are aware that this may, in time, necessitate a review of the total number of visitors ashore.

- This season all shop prices and credit card transactions will be in £ sterling and we strongly encourage visitors to use credit cards. USD and Euro's cash will be accepted at a fixed exchange rate, but please note that change will be very limited. We plan to be cash free the following season 2020/21.
- We will no longer be providing bags in the shop, although we will be selling reusable bags.
- On a number of occasions last season in the museum visitors were seen touching, holding and moving artefacts. We ask for your assistance in reminding your guests not to touch the museum artefacts.

Finishing a visit:

- We ask you to please finish your morning landing by 13:00 and your afternoon landing by 18:00.

We look forward to working with you as we make these changes and appreciate your feedback. Together, we can ensure that all visitors to Port Lockroy enjoy the experience to the full, while treading softly at this small, historic site.

From all of us at the IAATO Secretariat:

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