



**Antarctic Treaty
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Report of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators 2011-12

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Under Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty

Introduction

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is pleased to report its activities to ATCM XXXV, under Article III (2) of the Antarctic Treaty.

IAATO continues to focus activities in support of its mission statement to ensure:

- Effective day-to-day management of Member activities in Antarctica;
- Educational outreach, including scientific collaboration; and
- Development and promotion of Antarctic tourism industry best practices.

A detailed description of IAATO, its mission statement, primary activities and recent developments can be found in the *2012-13 Fact Sheet*, and on the IAATO website: www.iaato.org.

IAATO Membership and Visitor Levels during 2011-12

IAATO comprises 111 Members, Associates and Affiliates. Member offices are located worldwide, representing 57% of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party countries, and carrying nationals from nearly all Treaty Parties annually to Antarctica.

During the 2011-12 Antarctic tourism season, the overall number of visitors decreased nearly 22% to 26,519 from the previous season (33,824 visitors in 2010-2011). These numbers reflect only those travelling with IAATO member companies. Details on tourism statistics can be found in ATCM XXXIV IP39 *IAATO Overview of Antarctic Tourism: 2011-12 Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2012-13*. The Membership Directory and additional statistics on IAATO member activities can be found at www.iaato.org.

Recent Work and Activities

In line with IAATO's Strategic Plan, progress was made on a number of initiatives. These included:

- Strengthening the Secretariat through a reorganisation of Director's roles and responsibilities and the creation of an additional half-time position.
- Launch of a new interactive website and web-based content management system to facilitate access for both Members and Public. Unique access to the field operations areas of the website is available to Treaty Party representatives on request.
- The Yacht Outreach Campaign continued during the season, with IAATO yacht operators dedicating considerable effort at departure gateways to inform non-IAATO yacht operators.
- All IAATO SOLAS Passenger ships participated in the web-based satellite tracking system, which is shared with Rescue Coordination Centres. This effort continues to be useful not only for enhancing contingency response but also for day-to-day management.
- Trials of the three-step IAATO Enhanced Observer Scheme (See ATCM XXXIV/IP107 for additional details) were conducted, providing useful feedback on the scheme and also on the various

competent authority authorisation processes. The scheme will continue to be trialled, on a voluntary basis, for the next three seasons.

- Field Staff Online Assessment and Certification was further developed to include different activities, staff levels, and geographic areas. To date, 77 Field Staff have been certified.

IAATO Meeting and Participation at Other Meetings during 2011-12

IAATO Secretariat staff and member representatives participated in internal and external meetings, liaising with National Antarctic Programs, governmental, scientific, environmental and industry organisations.

- The IAATO 23rd Meeting (May 1-3, 2012, Providence, USA) hosted over 100 participants. Treaty Party representatives from Canada, Chile, Germany, Norway, UK and USA and COMNAP attended. In addition to reporting the progress listed above, notable outcomes included:
 - Adoption of Rules of Procedure for Compliance and Dispute Resolution;
 - Establishing IAATO Safety Advisories (See ATCMXXXV/IP38)
 - Establishing a Hydrographic Working Group;
 - Developing a generic IAATO lecture on climate change for all IAATO operators by the Climate Change Working Group (see ATCM XXXIV/IP103). Additionally, further steps to assess and mitigate Members CO2 footprint were tabled, and the commitment to continue this work renewed.
- As before, IAATO Members and representatives from Treaty Parties participated in an informal round table discussion following IAATO 23rd Meeting. This annual discussion is held under Chatham House rules and provides an invaluable opportunity to have a free-flowing discussion on issues relating to Antarctic tourism. A summary report will be forthcoming.
- IAATO welcomed the opportunity to participate at COMNAPXXIII in Stockholm, Sweden (August, 2012). The meeting also provided a forum for IAATO and their deep field operators to meet with NSF to ensure good communication and collaboration at South Pole Station in anticipation of the high profile Centenary season. IAATO places great merit in good cooperation and collaboration between its Members and National Antarctic Programs.
- IAATO representatives attended the 11th International Hydrographic Organization / Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (IHO/HCA) Meeting in Hobart, Australia. In addition to supporting the ongoing work of the HCA, IAATO was pleased to start working with the UKHO and HCA in the development of a crowd-sourcing scheme, using technological advances, to improve the viability of IAATO vessels as ships of opportunity.
- As an advisor to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), IAATO continues to be active in the development of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) mandatory Polar Code. This included participation in the Norwegian-sponsored workshop on Environmental Aspects of the Polar Code; the dedicated working group during the 56th session of the IMO's Design and Equipment (DE) Subcommittee meeting; and the intercessional correspondence group discussions. Additionally, IAATO has continued to work with an independent maritime safety consultant on an in-depth risk assessment study, and is now commencing development of a voyage risk assessment framework to assist Members in applying the code once adopted.
- IAATO 24th Meeting is scheduled for April 22-25, 2013 either in Punta Arenas, Chile or Providence, Rhode Island, USA. Interested Treaty Parties are welcome to attend and should contact IAATO at iaato@iaato.org.

Environmental Monitoring

IAATO continues to provide ATCM and CEP with detailed information on member activities in Antarctica. For details see ATCM XXXV/IP39 *IAATO Overview of Antarctic Tourism: 2011-12 Season and Preliminary Estimates for 2012-13 Antarctic Season* and ATCM XXXV IP37 *Report on IAATO Operator use of Antarctic Peninsula Landing Sites and ATCM Visitor Site Guides, 2011-12 Season*.

IAATO continues to work collaboratively with scientific institutions to address specific issues on environmental monitoring. This includes working with Oceanites, Antarctic Site Inventory, London Zoological Society and the IPY Aliens in Antarctica study.

Additionally, effort continues to be made to ensure educational outreach through both educational media and institutions (e.g BBC Frozen Planet / Open University, UK and University of Edinburgh, UK)

IAATO welcomes opportunities for future collaboration with other organisations.

Tourism Incidents 2011-12; Update on Tourism Incidents 2008-09

IAATO continues to follow a policy of disclosing incidents to ensure risks are understood and appropriate lessons are learned for all Antarctic operators. Incidents during the 2011-12 season included:

- *MV Sea Spirit* temporarily grounded in Whalers Bay, Deception Island on 9 Dec. 2011, floating free at the next high water. Reports indicated no threat to human life and no damage to the environment. A subsequent diving inspection indicated no damage to the vessel. The incident was reported to the Deception Island Management Group (DIMG), and subsequently the IAATO Marine Committee issued an IAATO Safety Advisory on Whalers Bay (See ATCMXXXV/IP38).
- Despite having attended the mandatory code of conduct briefing, two members of a gospel group on board *MS Expedition* were seen dispersing barley seeds on a hike at Telefon Bay on 14 Dec. 2011. The dispersed seeds were collected and the severity of the offense explained to the passengers. Additional seeds were confiscated. The group was carefully monitored during future landings. The DIMG was informed.
- During an Antarctic Logistics and Expeditions staff crevasse rescue exercise on 17 Jan. 2012, a Piston-Bully Tractor broke through a snow bridge into a crevasse. Two personnel received minor abrasions. Analysis of the incident is being undertaken by the operator to see what lessons can be learned.
- During a visit to Neko Harbour 11 Feb. 2012, a Gentoo penguin chick that had approached a passenger was injured when a tripod was knocked over. After monitoring the chick for some time during which the chick could no longer walk and was being repeatedly attacked by conspecifics, the field staff euthanised the chick. As a USA authorised expedition, the incident is under investigation in the USA.

Updates on previous season incidents:

IAATO Marine Committee reviewed the 2011 flag state summary report from Bahamas on the *MV Ocean Nova* grounding in 2009. On the basis of the report and the subsequent mitigation actions that were enacted by the operator, the Marine Committee issued additional Recommendations to Enhance Marine Safety.

Scientific and Conservation Support

During the 2011-12 season, IAATO Members cost-effectively or on *pro bono* basis transported more than 150 scientific, support and heritage conservation staff, as well as equipment and supplies used by these personnel, to and from stations, field sites and gateway ports.

In addition, IAATO Members and their passengers contributed US\$478,848 to scientific and conservation organisations active in Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic (e.g. Save the Albatross, Antarctic Heritage Trust, Last Ocean, Mawson's Huts Foundation, Oceanites and World Wildlife Fund). Over the past eight years, these donations have totalled more than US\$2.5 million in cash donations.

With Thanks

IAATO appreciates the opportunity to work cooperatively with Antarctic Treaty Parties, COMNAP, SCAR, CCAMLR, IHO/HCA, ASOC and others toward the long-term protection of Antarctica.