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25 YEARS PROTOCOL ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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Patterns of Tourism in the Antarctic Peninsula Region: a 20-year analysis

Patterns of Tourism in the Antarctic Peninsula Region: A 20-year analysis

Introduction

As quantifying spatial and temporal patterns of tour ship traffic may aid efforts to monitor and manage Antarctic ship-borne tourism, the United States and IAATO felt that the attached paper would be of interest to ATCM XXXIX and CEP XIX.

Background

ATCM XXXV WP 22 *Environmental Aspects and Impacts of Tourism and Non-Governmental Activities in Antarctica* outlined eight recommendations that were the outcome of the CEP's Tourism Study, 2012. Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 5 stated the following:

Recommendation 1:

To ensure that the ATCM has readily available to it a complete picture of tourism activities and to facilitate regular assessments of the environmental impacts of Antarctic tourism by the ATCM, the ATCM should develop a centrally managed database of tourism activities, which might be achieved through a redesign and concerted use of the EIES.

Consideration will need to be given as to the data required, though much of the information currently collected through the post-visit reporting process would be of relevance, supplemented with accurate reporting of all authorised tourist activities including yacht visits and land-based expeditions.

Recommendation 5:

Consideration should be given to the regular review of trends in tourist activity at selected tourist sites, particularly those with high levels of visitation or those considered to be particularly sensitive to impact.

Currently through the databases held at the U.S. National Science Foundation (from 1991-2003) and at IAATO (2003 onwards) a number of different reports and trend analysis have been made available to the CEP and ATCM annually. In addition to the annual reports, ATCM XXXIII IP002 *Spatial Patterns of Tour Ship Traffic in the Antarctic Peninsula Region* presented the first trend analysis using Post Visit Reports to assess a five-year trend (2003/04 to 2007/08) on the spatial and temporal distribution of activities from passenger ships in the Peninsula.

In February 2016, [Antarctic Science](#) published an updated and expanded trend analysis of Post Visit Reports covering a 20-year period from 1993/94 to 20012/13 (Bender et al, (2016) *Patterns of tourism in the Antarctic Peninsula region: a 20-year analysis Antarctic Science* doi:10.1017/S0954102016000031), available via this link:

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=10192601&jid=ANS&volumeId=-1&issueId=-1&aid=10192596&fromPage=cupadmin&pdftype=6316268&repository=authInst>

Researchers from Stony Brook University, NY, USA undertook the work, using recently digitized historical records held at NSF and additional information from IAATO.

The analysis indicated:

- While the numbers of visitors has grown significantly over the last 20 years, the activities are focused on a very small number of sites. These sites cover a total area of c. 200 hectares (estimated as representing <0.1% of all the snow and ice free terrain in the Peninsula, South Shetland and South Orkney Islands).
- Antarctic tourism numbers will likely continue to grow as new markets are opening up. For example, previously the majority of visitors came from English speaking countries, however the rapidly growing market in Asia (China specifically), would indicate that there is potential for that growth to continue.
- Antarctica, though seemingly isolated, is strongly influenced by global socioeconomic forces, and any future projects of impact should take into account the global economy, availability of ice strengthened vessels and marine regulations.

While this paper does not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government, the United States and IAATO are pleased to offer this paper to assist with the discussions at both CEP XIX and ATCM XXXIX.