



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.

June 2020

IAATO Antarctic visitor figures 2019-2020

IAATO’s preliminary visitor figures for the 2019/20 season show that 73,991 visitors traveled with IAATO members to Antarctica between October 2019 and April 2020.

IAATO has been carefully monitoring, analysing and reporting Antarctic tourism trends since 1991 as part of its commitment to the effective self-management of guest activities.

Of the 73,991 visitors who travelled with IAATO members to the region, 18,506 travelled on cruise-only vessels and did not set foot on the continent, while 731 travelled to deep-field destinations by aircraft, 125 by yacht and 4679 by air/cruise - travel programs with at least one flight in or out of King George Island, combined with a Peninsula cruise. Please see Table 1 below for further detail on the different types of tourism in Antarctica.

IAATO maintains one of the most comprehensive databases on any human activity in Antarctica. Data, compiled by IAATO from mandatory Post Visit Reports submitted by its members, is presented each year to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), to facilitate discussions on effective visitor management. IAATO has been an invited expert and representative for the Antarctic tourism industry at ATCMs since 1992.

Table 1: Overview of IAATO activities for the Antarctic season, 2019-2020. Including total number of visitors travelling with IAATO member Operators*

Types of Tourism	Number of IAATO Vessels/Operators	Number of Departures	Total Number of visitors
Traditional Seaborne Tourism Peninsula	39	307	49483
Seaborne Tourism Ross Sea / Continental	4	6	467
Sailing Vessels / Yacht Tourism Peninsula	11	18	125
Air-Cruise Peninsula	12	78	4679
Ships carrying more than 500 passengers/ Cruise - Only Peninsula	6	11	18506
Deep - Field Tourism	6 Operators	N/A	731

*Numbers are correct as of June 4 2020, subject to change



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Antarctica receives relatively few visitors compared to other destinations, but its unique qualities require rigorous safeguards. IAATO's proven success in conscientious visitor management is the result of forward planning based on long-term understanding of the industry

Part of this work involves the annual launch of the IAATO Ship Scheduler, a tool which uses IAATO and Antarctic Treaty System requirements to set limits on time, number of passengers allowed, and number of daily visits to visitor sites around the Antarctic coast for almost two decades.

IAATO works closely with governments, scientists, Antarctic Treaty Parties, environmental groups and other stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for the continent's ongoing protection.

IAATO requires its members to abide by the Antarctic Treaty System. Tour operators refrain from making any landings in Antarctica from vessels carrying more than 500 passengers. They also coordinate with each other so that not more than one vessel is at a landing site at any one time, no more than 100 people are ashore at once and a staff to passenger ratio of up to 1:20 is maintained.

It is a condition of IAATO membership that IAATO operators are operating under a permit or authorization from an Antarctic Treaty Party or relevant government. As part of this process, they must also submit their Environmental Impact Assessment to IAATO. If an IAATO organizer is registered in a country without necessary legislation in place (i.e the country is not a Treaty Party or has not implemented the Environmental Protocol into their national legislation), the organizer must submit the equivalent documentation to the IAATO Secretariat ahead of the Antarctic season.

IAATO Committee and Working Group efforts throughout the year help our organization hone its policies and strategies to protect Antarctica while enabling Antarctic travellers to have an enriching, educational experience.