

Chapter 6: Tourism and the History of Antarctica Tourism

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At the start of the new millennium, tourism has been stated as the number one industry in many countries and the fastest-growing economic sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings and job creation (WTO, 2005). “International tourism is the world’s largest export earner and an important factor in the balance of payments of most nations” (WTO, 2005). Tourism has grown and become an integral part of the fabric of modern life, its international dimension increased and national governments started to play an increasingly important role-their activities covering the whole spectrum from infrastructure to regulations (WTO, 2005). World Tourism Organization (WTO) plays a major role is to regulate between countries cultures, government and environment. International Association of Antarctic Tourism (IAATO) was established when Antarctic tourism started to grow; IAATO sets standards and rules so that this pristine area can stay beautiful.

Antarctica tourism has become a popular tourism site and although it is still fairly expensive to see the snow land of the south, this fascinating tourist location is a growing attraction.

Tourism

Tourism has not been defined universally because it is hard to define if tourism is an industry and what factors make a person traveling a tourist. “All tourism involves travel, yet not all travel is tourism” (Mill & Morrison, 2002, p. 1). What this is saying that

you need to go somewhere to be a tourist yet you can go somewhere and not be a tourist, simply be visiting family. Travel refers to the act of moving outside of ones usual environment for business or pleasure. Tourism is the term given to the activity that occurs when people travel (Mill & Morrison, 2002). This includes planning the trip, traveling to the destination, the activities the traveler undertakes as part of the trip, the interactions between the visitor and the host destination and the return.

The Tourism Systems Model describes the interactions of all four parts: destination, demand travel and marketing. These are all key parts for tourism.

A destination is first and foremost the important thing for tourism. There needs to be a place for people to go before anything else can happen. A destination must have an attraction and all the needs of a tourist, such as hotels, activities, and transportation, which leads to the demands of tourists. Not only must there be a place to travel but also a place that people will want to visit. Demand is the needs and wants of the travelers such as how they want to spend their leisure time, the amount of money they have to spend, if they have children, and if the host country fits the interests and needs of the tourists. Business and pleasure are the two major classification of travel purpose. Meetings, conventions, and seminars bring business people to a destination. Pleasure or personal travel purposes are thought to be more on the tourism side. People go away to spend money, relax and to just get away. Lastly, marketing needs to be put in place so that tourists know what is available based on their wants and needs. "Marketing is a management philosophy which, in light of tourist demand, makes it possible through research, forecasting and selection to place tourism products on the market most in line

with the organization's purpose for the greatest benefit (World Tourism Organization, 1975).

Under these categories the four As of tourism: accessibility, attraction, accommodation and advertising need to be applied.

Four As for Antarctica

Accessibility: ships being able to get closer and more resilient for the cold long trips, as well as sight seeing planes made it easier to visit the southern of snow.

Antarctica's Peninsula is the closest Antarctica land to any other land mass which makes it's the most frequently visited. The peninsula is also long and skinny so there are many entry points for tourists.

Attraction: the unknown wilderness of ice and snow. Most tourists visit the Antarctic Peninsula and offshore islands to see the scenery, the wildlife and some of the historical sites of the early explorers. Small but increasing minorities are now looking for other activities in Antarctica such as sky diving, climbing, surfing, diving, and telemark skiing.

Accommodation: ships that can act as a hotel to eat and sleep make it easy so that visitors can travel through out the day and come back to a known environment that is more at home, and comfortable.

Advertising: a new place that was mysterious and totally different that people wanted and want to check out. Word of mouth and documentaries on the beautiful destination made Antarctica more popular. Antarctica was seen and is seen as something new and exciting that is not a common place of travel.

Antarctic Tourism History

Past

Commercial tourism in Antarctica began in 1957 but only became a serious activity in 1969. In 1969 Lars-Eric Linblad took his Antarctic tour ship, *Linblad Explorer*, which was purposely built to travel to the Antarctic, for the first time. Activities in the Antarctic are subject to the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and associated legal instruments, referred to collectively as the Antarctic Treaty system (IAATO, Guidelines).

Since, then, the industry has grown considerably both in numbers and diversity because of marketing techniques and the construction of ice-strengthened ships for passenger travel in Polar Regions (National Environment Research Council, 2004). This made the region more accessible and, slowly, in time with technology boats became more advanced and traveling began less expensive. In 1977 half-day flights, about eight hours that flew over Eastern Antarctica from Australia and New Zealand were developing into a new part of Antarctica tourism. Because of a plane crashing in 1979 with the loss of 257 lives half day flights were discontinued. Half-day over flights began again from Australia in the 1994-95 seasons and continue today with over 2,000 passengers participating in Antarctic over flights each year (Australian Antarctica Division, 2004). According to the Australian Antarctic Division (2004), a total of 3,146 passengers participated on 9 flights from December 1997 to February 1998. In addition, the plane carried 23 crew per flight.

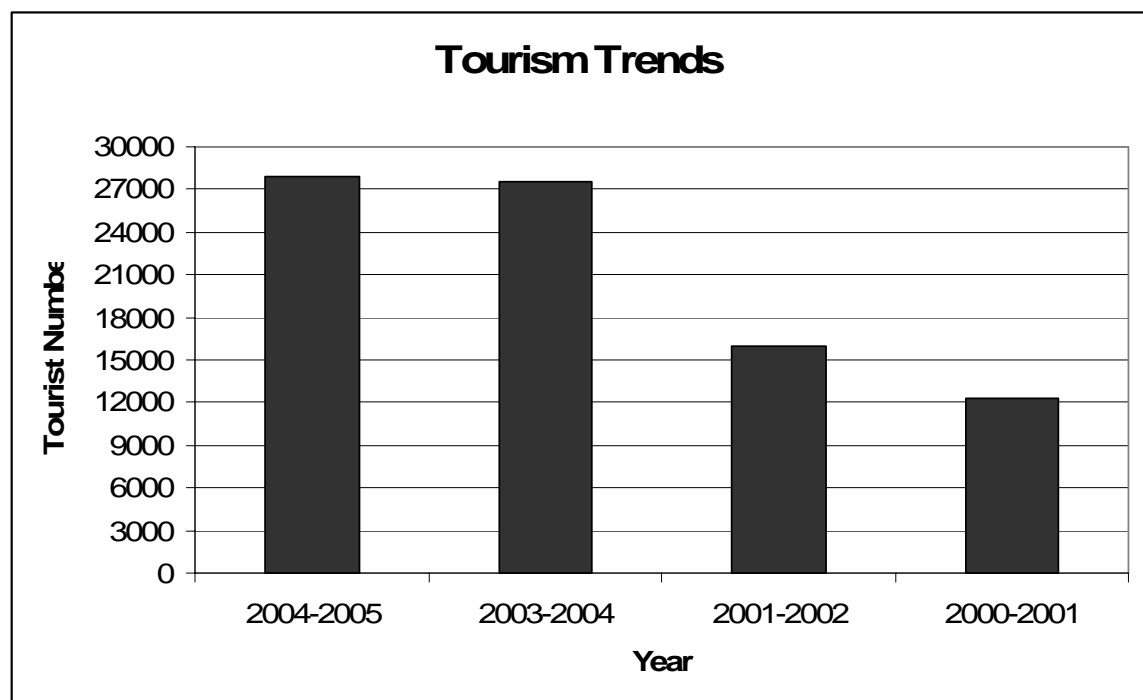
Since the beginning of modern Antarctica tourism industry in 1969, the number of tourist in Antarctica has grown from a few hundred to more than 20,000 each year. Recognizing the potential environmental impacts that such growing numbers of tourism could cause, seven private tour operators conducting excursion in Antarctica joined in

1991 to set up International Association of Antarctica Tourism Operators (IAATO).

IAATO addresses issues between the Antarctic tourism operators. It derived regulations and by-laws by which all members must follow (Kershaw, 1998).

Approximately 9,378 people traveled to the Antarctic on 14 commercially-organized tour vessels from November 1997 to March 1998 (IAATO).

The following diagram illustrates the comparison of the number of people who landed on Antarctica in the years 2004-2005: 27, 950, 2003-2004: 27, 537, 2001-2002: 16, 023, and 2000-2001: 12, 248. These figures are the total passengers, does not include staff or crew, whom landed on Antarctica, cruises only, and overflights.



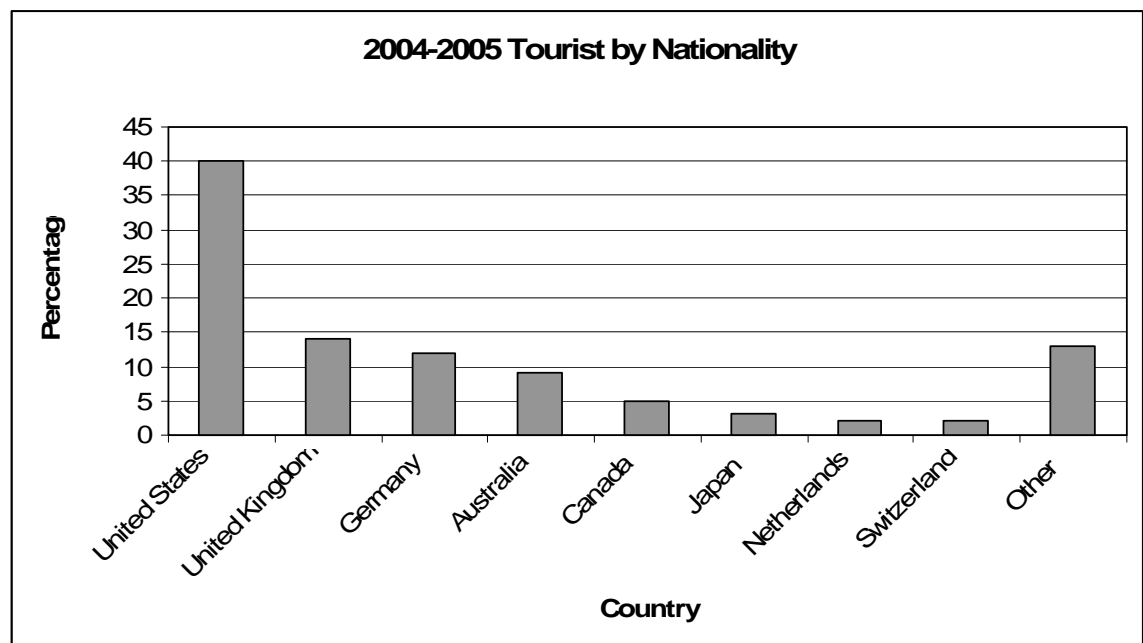
(IAATO)

Present

Most tourists still visit on ship-borne cruises; others fly in to a blue ice airfield and climb mountains or ski to the South Pole. More recently there have been sky diving attempts and SCUBA diving holidays. On average most tourists trips last about two weeks (DeFazio, 2000).

In 2004/2005 Antarctic tourism season 20,790 passengers traveled aboard operated vessels and landed in the Antarctic Peninsula area. 16,702 passengers were on board an IAATO operated boat and 4,088 were on a non-IAATO operated boat (IAATO).

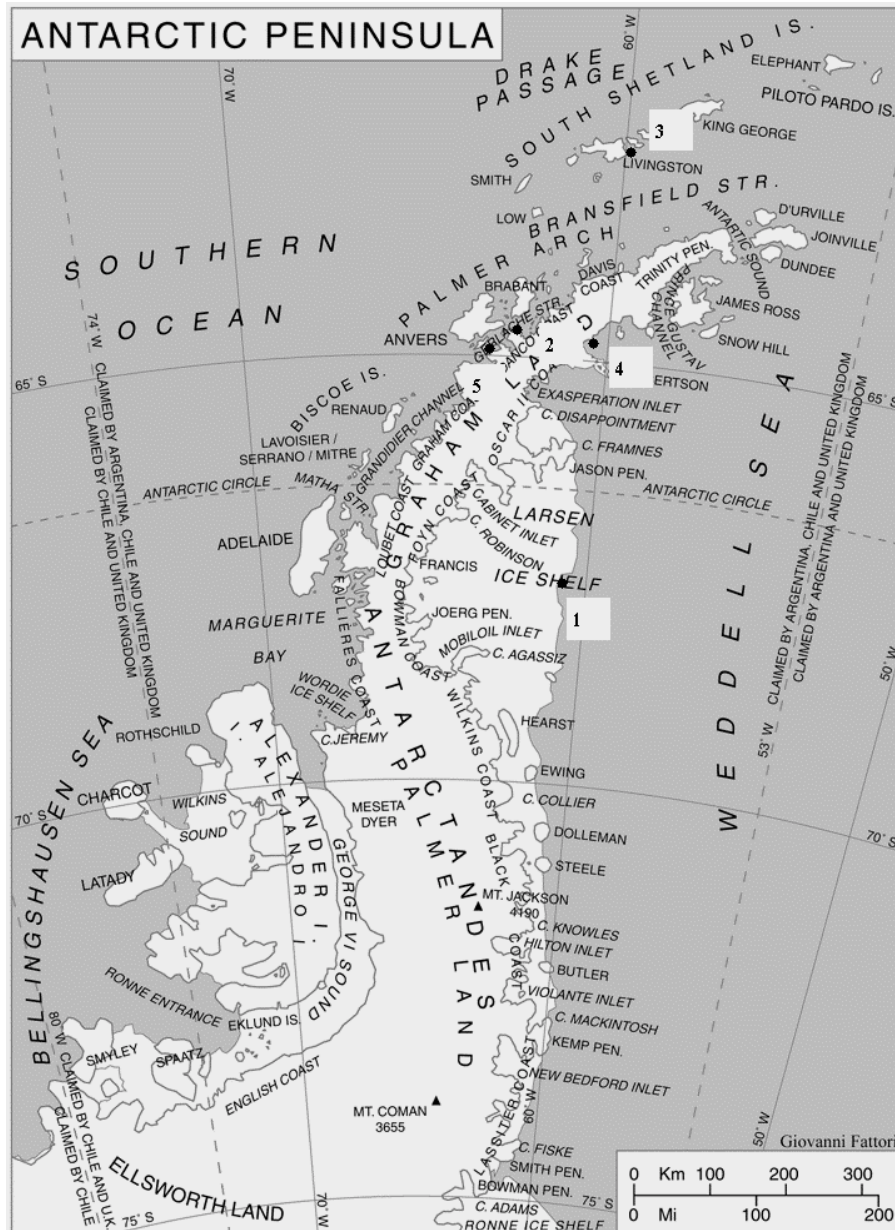
This diagram illustrates the total number of tourists land-based boats, non-land-based boats and half day overflights from 2004-2005.



(IAATO, 2004-2005)

Popular Visiting sites

The top five most popular visiting sites in Antarctica in 2004-2005 year were all located on the Peninsula. In order of popularity is 1. Whalers Bay, 2. Cuverville Island, 3. Half Moon Island, 4. Neko Harbor and 5. Goudier Island.



Future

The trend of today for tourism in the Antarctica seems to be heading into more adventurous and extreme activities such as scuba diving, kayaking, skiing, ice climbing, snowboarding, and skydiving.

Cruise based tours are increasing in numbers because it has become more affordable and easier to travel, plus people want to see the beauty of an untouched area before its too late. A working figure of one point five million is predicted for tourists to visit Antarctica in the year 2010, a twenty-five percent increase (Coughlan, 1998). Coughlan (1998) states that consumer demand will not be an issue but managing a sustainable supply of what the tourist what will be a problem. Eco-tourism needs to be put in place for Antarctica to stay pristine, mass amounts of tourists will not help this. Other trends in consumer demand that Coughlan (1998) predicts is that the hi-tech world will force a counter-trend for the consumer to be in touch with nature and self. Thus values (especially environmental) will be considered by the consumer when she or he decides to travel. Antarctic tourism suppliers need to figure out various questions such as: “what do we want the Antarctic Brand to stand for? What are we willing to sell? Which markets are we targeting?” (Coughlan, 1998, pp. 11)

IAATO estimates the visitors for 2005-2006 season to be a total of 34, 713 tourists. 26, 587 of that will be ships that land, 4, 700 tourists on boats that do not land, 1,100 tourists will fly in and a predicted 2,350 will take half day overflights.

Coughlan (1998) says “We are running out of new frontiers and new experiences. Antarctica is one of the last frontiers” (pp.11). This should indicate that we need to preserve this untouched environment.

Antarctic tour operators provide little benefit to the region, affecting the environment around them. Impacts at present are limited by the small size, but the industry continues to grow, with new, cheaper tours being offered each year. IAATO statistically shows that tourism numbers are increasing significantly. From the beginning of Antarctica tourism in 1959 to the year 2010, not only have numbers increased and are predicted to continue a climb, but also the different trends in tourist activities have grown my extreme. Half day overflights, and ship based tourism will continue but in hope of people being aware of their impacts and sharing the unique experience and knowledge they learn when they are in Antarctica.

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