

Government of South Georgia  
& the South Sandwich Islands



Annual Visitor Report

July 2019 to June 2020

Prepared by  
Emma Jones, Steve Waugh  
Government Officers  
King Edward Point  
South Georgia

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### Summary

This report covers the period from July 2019 to June 2020. We saw a record number of passengers with a total of 12,521 (10,337 in 18/19) cruise ship passengers arriving on 78 cruise ships (last year was also 78). Five cruise ship visits were cancelled; two by *RCGS Resolute* due to the company going into receivership and one each by *Greg Mortimer*, *Scenic Eclipse* and *Plancius* due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Three yachts did not visit: *Bazileus's* application was refused, *Admiral Bellinghausen* cancelled and *Australis* did not show up.

Over this season a total of 22,332 (last year 18,094) individuals visited South Georgia, this figure includes cruise ship passengers, crew and expedition staff and yacht visitors.

### Part 1: Cruise Ships

A total of 30 (same as last year 18/19) different cruise ships made 78 (also same as last year) separate visits.

Season	Voyages	Passengers	Staff	Crew	Others	Total
2011/12	51	5,831 (58.4%)	578 (5.8%)	3,569 (35.7%)	6 (0.1%)	9,984
2012/13	51	5,792 (58.0%)	612 (6.1%)	3,552 (35.6%)	24 (0.2%)	9,980
2013/14	55	7,024 (59.6%)	667 (5.7%)	4,080 (34.6%)	21 (0.2%)	11,792
2014/15	65	8,142 (58.9%)	827 (6.0%)	4,837 (35.0%)	23 (0.2%)	13,829
2015/16	68	8,787 (57.6%)	915 (6.0%)	5,549 (36.4%)	13 (0.1%)	15,264
2016/17	68	8,946 (58.5%)	890 (5.9%)	5,459 (36%)	11 (0.1%)	15,303
2017/18	82	10,109 (57%)	1,089 (6.1%)	6,498 (36.3%)	24 (0.1%)	17,720
2018/19	78	10,337 (57.4%)	1,110 (6.2%)	6,550 (36.3%)	21 (0.1%)	18,018
2019/20	78	12,521 (56.3%)	1,222 (5.5%)	8,468 (38.1%)	33 (0.1%)	22,244

Table 1. Summary of cruise ship visitor numbers

### Cruise Ship Voyage and Passenger Number Trends

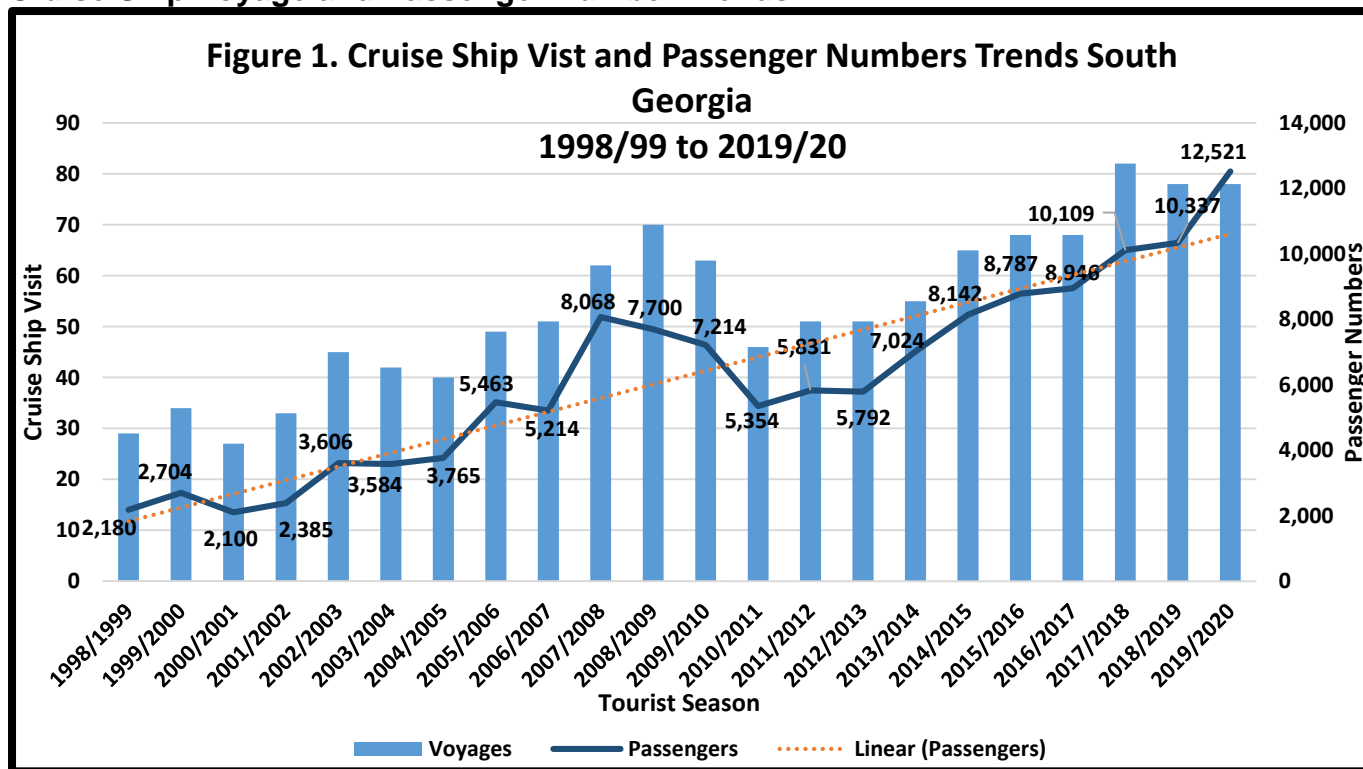


Figure 1: Cruise Ship Visits and Passenger Number Trends

## Passenger Numbers and Cruise Ship Visits

*Hanseatic Nature* carried the most passengers over the season with 1165. *Seabourn Quest* carried the largest number of passengers with 409.

*Fram* and *Hanseatic Nature* made 6 visits, all other ships visited between 1 and 5 times.

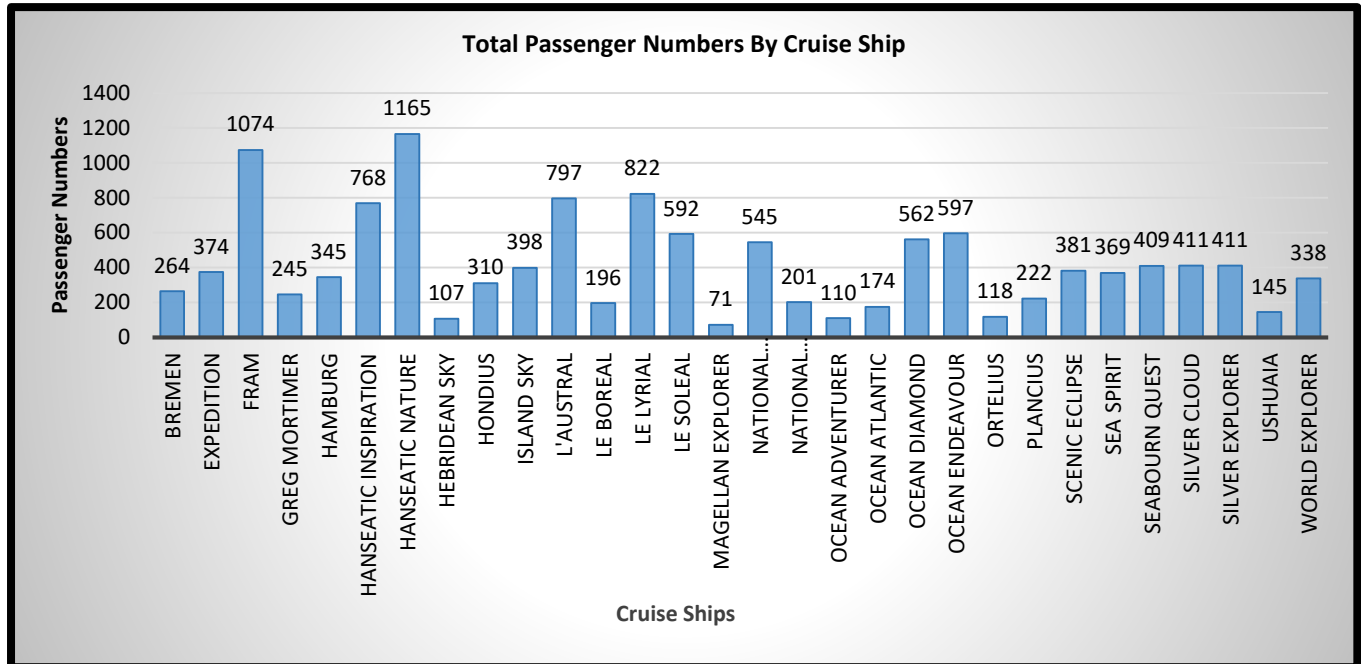


Figure 2: Total Passenger Numbers by Cruise Ship

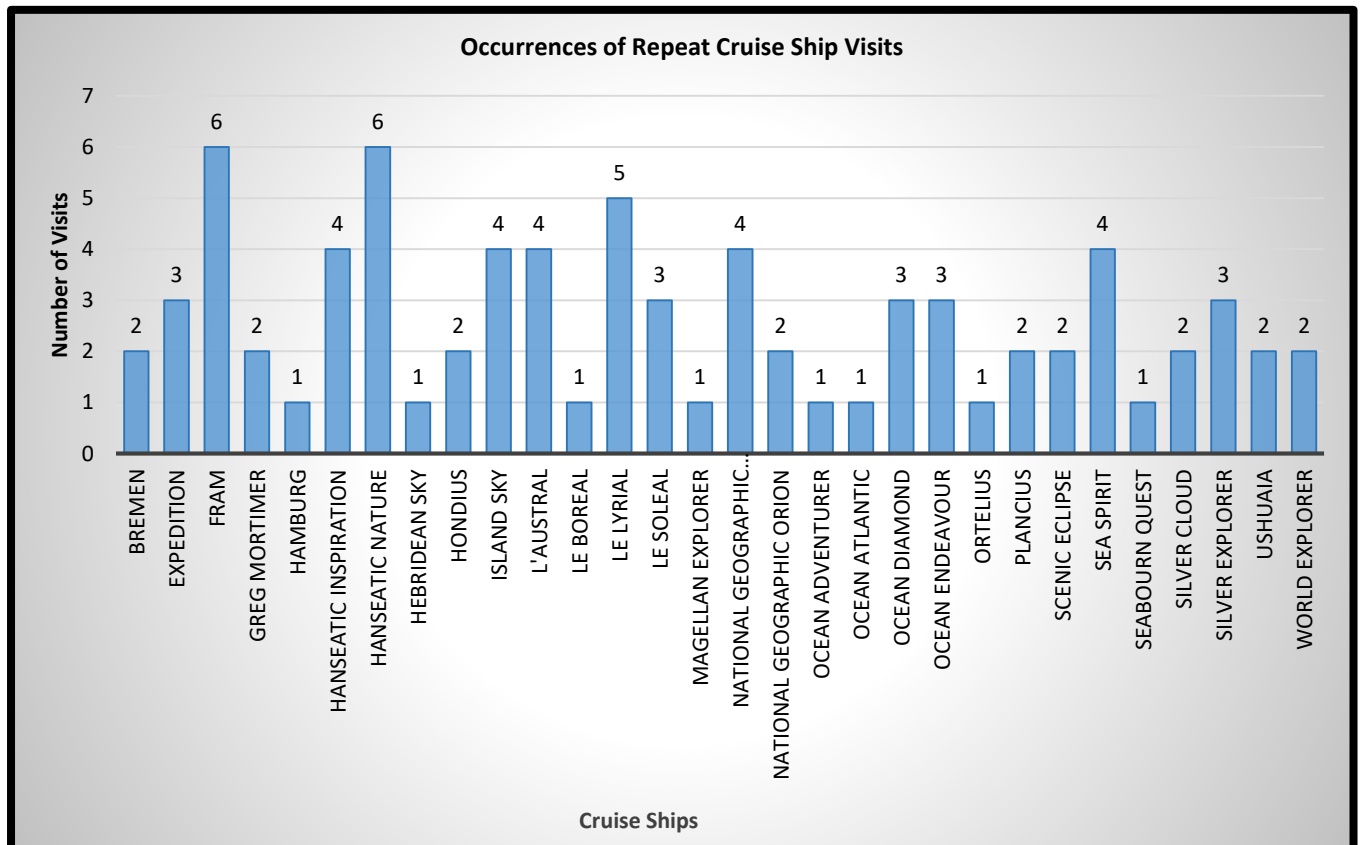


Figure 3: Occurrences of Repeat Cruise Ship Visits

### Passenger numbers on visiting vessels

This year saw a large increase in the number of ships visiting with 151-200 passengers. 80% of passengers came on ships that held between 50 and 200 passengers. Ships with passenger numbers in excess of 200 accounted for 20%.

Ship Passenger Numbers	Number of Ship Visits	Total number of Passengers	Comments
< 50	0	0	
50 - 100	3	216	
101 - 150	25	2,819	
151 - 200	39	6,932	
201-300	9	1,800	
301-400	1	345	<i>Hamburg</i>
>401	1	409	<i>Seabourn Quest</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>12,521</b>	

Table 2. Passenger numbers on visiting vessels.

### Vessel Changes

There were 8 new vessels this season: *Greg Mortimer, Hamburg, Hanseatic Inspirations, Hanseatic Nature, Hondius, Magellan Explorer, Scenic Eclipse and World Explorer*. A Government observer spent time on board all 8 vessels observing staff work practices and passenger landing observations.

### Passenger Demographics

The passengers represented 75 different nationalities. The top ten nationalities represent 88% of the overall passenger numbers. When compared to 2018-2019 there has been a shuffle round in the order of the top 5 nationalities. Germany has overtaken Australia and UK for the first time and France now features in the top 5. China has been relegated to 6<sup>th</sup> place.

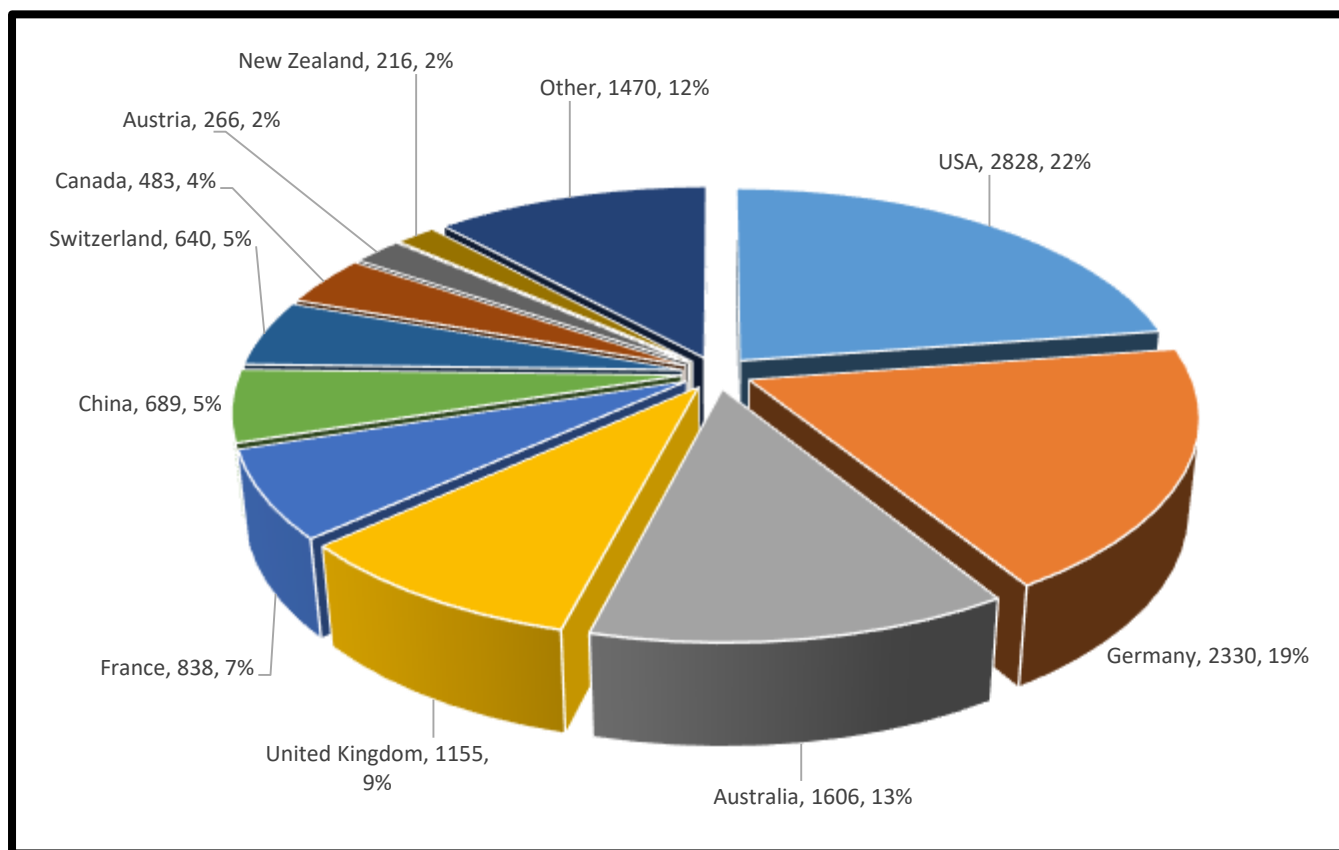


Figure 4: Cruise Ship Passenger Demographics

Country	2019-2020	2018-2019
United States of America	2828	3057
Australia	1606	1253
United Kingdom	1155	1194
China	no longer in top 5	990
Germany	2330	935
France	838	not previously in top 5
Sub Total	8757	7426
All Others	3764	2908
<b>TOTAL (Table 1)</b>	<b>12521</b>	<b>10337</b>
% share of top 5	<b>70%</b>	<b>72%</b>

Table 3: Trend Analysis on Passenger Demographics

### Expedition Staff

There was a total of 1,222 expedition staff (1,110 in 18/19) from a total of 47 countries (44 in 18/19) with an overall ratio of approximately one staff member to each ten passengers. The demographic breakdown was slightly different to last year in that the highest number of staff came from Germany (last year USA) and France now feature in the top 5 relegating Australia to 6th. Over 65% of staff came from 5 countries:

Germany	210 staff (17%)	USA	167 staff (14%)
Canada	161 staff (13%)	UK	155 staff (13%)
France	107 staff (9%)		

### Expedition Leader Briefings

The Expedition Leader briefing was delivered differently this year. All ELs had to complete, and pass, an online briefing prior to arrival in South Georgia. No EL briefings were delivered at KEP.

### Cruise ship Crew

8,468 members of crew came from 85 different nationalities. Over 50% came from the Philippines.

### Last Cruise ship port prior to arrival in South Georgia

Falkland Islands	58 (60 in 18/19)	Tristan da Cunha	1
Antarctic <sup>1</sup>	15	Punta del Este	1
Ushuaia	4		

### First Cruise ship port after leaving South Georgia

Antarctic <sup>1</sup>	58	Montevideo	2
Falkland Islands	15	Gough Island	1
Cape Town	1	Ushuaia	2

### Activities Undertaken

The activities undertaken in order of popularity were small boat landing, small boat cruising, ship cruise, extended walks, kayaking, and scuba diving. Boat landings by Zodiac recorded the highest activity number with 54,677 passengers landing by small boat.

This number rises to 63,504 (54,209 in 18/19) when crew, staff and others are included.

<sup>1</sup> Antarctic Peninsula or associated Islands

Activity	Number of sites activity carried out		Passengers carrying out activity		Number of times activity carried out at all sites	
Boat Landing	31	(34)	54,677	(46,474)	417	(457)
Boat cruising	36	(32)	22,414	(16,134)	195	(167)
Ship Cruise	21	(21)	12,370	(9,680)	75	(73)
Extended Walk	14	(24)	6,736	(4,522)	77	(78)
Kayaking	19	(23)	772	(86)	60	(86)
Scuba diving	16	(10)	81	(343)	25	(14)

Table 4: Activities undertaken by cruise ship passengers (Brackets show 18/19 season)

### Small Boat Landings

This is a proxy for the number of passengers coming ashore at each site each year. The top 10 sites account for 88% (48,463 passengers) of all landings. The 18/19 season is available for comparison.

	2019/20		2018/19	
	Visitor Site	Passengers Visits	Visitor Site	Passengers Visits
1	Grytviken	11,410 (91%)	Grytviken	10,032 (81 %)
2	Salisbury Plain	7,206 (58)	Salisbury Plain	6,195 (51)
3	St Andrews Bay	7,038 (56)	St Andrews Bay	5,550 (48)
4	Stromness	5,756 (46)	Gold Harbour	5,013 (52)
5	Gold Harbour	5,726 (46)	Stromness	3,938 (39)
6	Fortuna Bay – Whistle Cove	5,182 (41)	Fortuna Bay – Whistle Cove	3,937 (32)
7	Prion Island	2,487 (20)	Prion Island	2,985 (31)
8	Jason Harbour	1,688 (13)	Godthul	1,285 (17)
9	Fortuna Bay (Anchorage Bay)	1,090 (9)	Moltke Harbour	1064 (10)
10	Moltke Harbour	880 (7)	Right Whale Bay	963 (10)
11	Cooper Bay Macaronis	870 (7)	Jason Harbour	873 (13)
12	Right Whale Bay	843 (7)	Fortuna Bay (Anchorage Bay)	834 (11)

Table 5: Summary of the most popular small boat landing sites.

### Extended Walks

Extended Walks took place on 77 occasions (78 in 18/19) at 14 sites (22 in 18/19). Although the Stromness Walk had the most participants with 1575 passengers, staff and crew taking part on 12 visits, the Shackleton walk was the most undertaken with 23 visits.

Site	Number of Visits	Number of Passengers	Numbers including crew, staff & others
Fortuna Bay Anchorage Bay	3	264	308
Fortuna Bay Shackleton Walk	23	1168	1363
Fortuna Bay Whistle Cove Kings	5	608	709
Godthul Walk	2	110	128
Gold Harbour	4	316	346
Grytviken	2	366	408
Leith Harbour	2	100	116
Maiviken	5	167	206
Ocean Harbour Walk	2	132	160
Peggotty Bluff	1	188	218

Salisbury Plain	9	1224	1401
Sorling Valley	2	122	143
St Andrews Bay	5	594	676
Stromness	12	1377	1575

Table 6: Extended Walk Information

The Shackleton Walk regained some popularity this season with 23 separate visits (15 in 18/19) and a total of 1,168 passengers (9% of total passenger numbers) taking part (717 in the previous season).

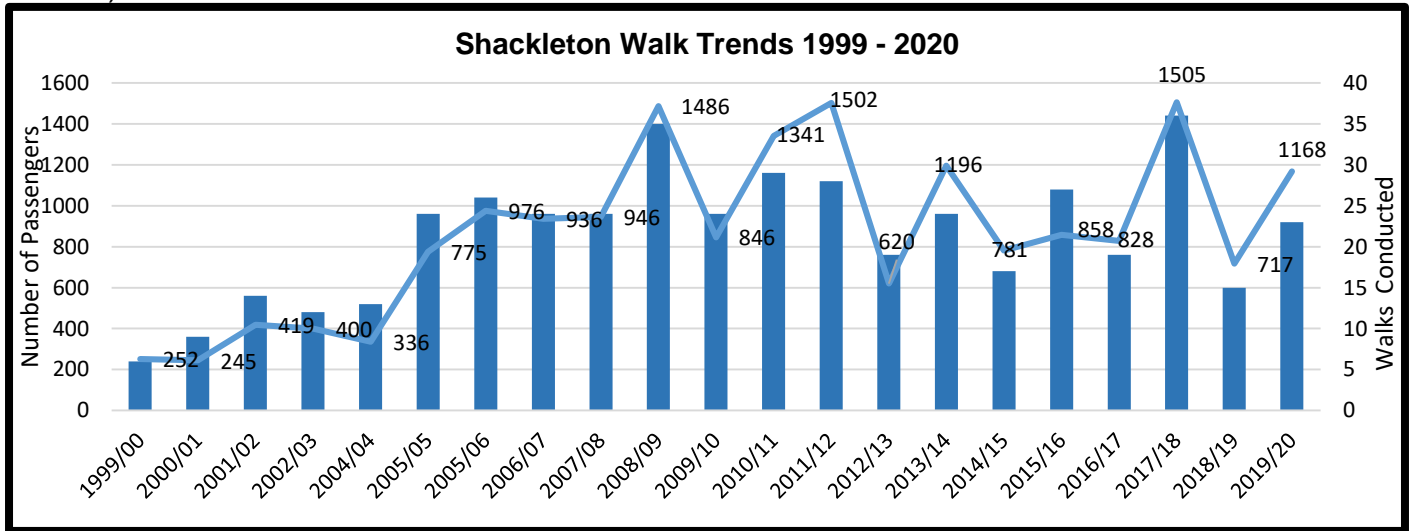


Figure 5: Shackleton Walk Trend

### Kayaking

The most popular kayaking sites were Grytviken (167 passengers kayaking), St Andrews Bay (99 passengers), and Gold Harbour (66 passengers).

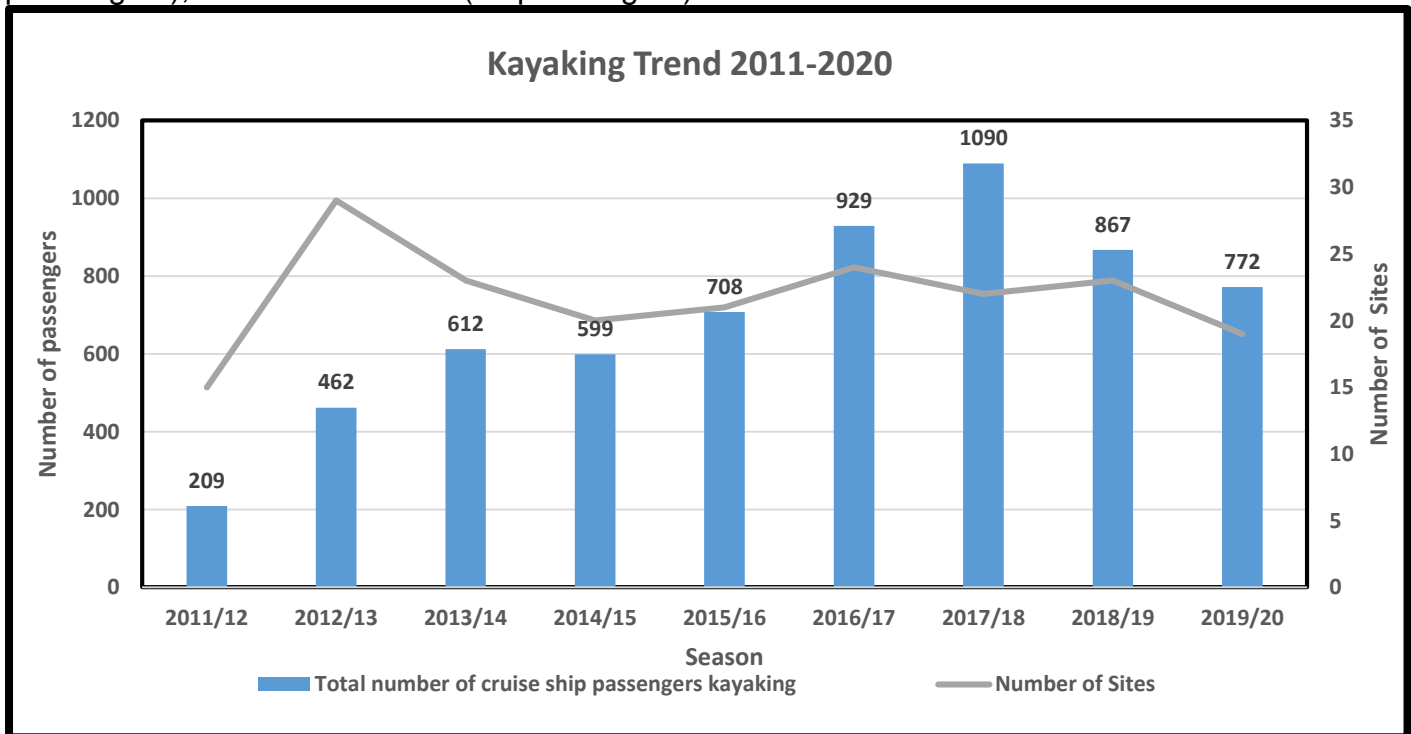


Figure 6: Kayaking Trend

### Scuba Diving

81 cruise ship passengers took part in scuba diving, a massive drop when compared to the previous season (343).



## Landing Sites of Particular Interest – Prion Island

The number of passengers and visits to Prion island has fluctuated since the Boardwalk was erected. However, as a proportion of overall passenger numbers to South Georgia the number of visitors has decreased from 39% (2011/12) to 20% (2019/20). The total number of small boat landings this season fell to 23 (31 last season), while the total number of passengers fell from 2,985 last season to 2,487. When including staff and crew this rises to 2,821 (3,392 in 2018/19).

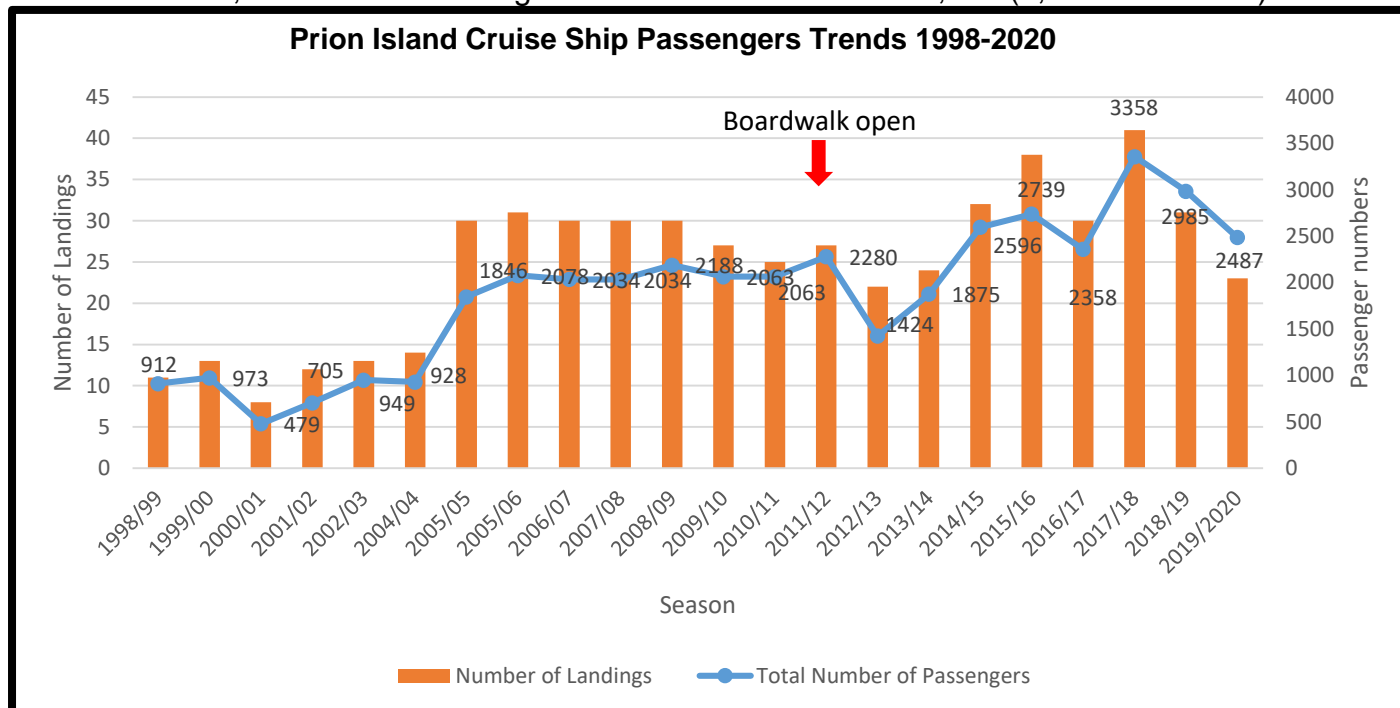


Figure 7: Prion Island Visitor Numbers

## Landing Sites of Particular Interest – Grytviken

All vessels are required to visit Cumberland Bay East to make customs declarations and complete the biosecurity audit. We welcomed *Ushuaia* as the first cruise ship of the season on 20 October 2019 with 58 passengers. The last ship that landed at Grytviken was *Fram* on 10 March 2020 with 160 passengers. Grytviken was closed to visitors on 12 March due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the two final cruise ships of the season, *Ocean Atlantic* 13 March and *National Geographic Explorer* 15 March were not permitted to land.

### Grytviken Church

The church at Grytviken was used on 6 separate occasions for organised events which included Christmas carol services and concerts.

### Post Office

The Post Office was not taken on board any cruise ships this season (2 last season). The 'Enduring Eye' Hurley Exhibition which includes original lantern slides on loan from the Royal Geographical Society remained open for another season in the Grytviken Post Office display room. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Grytviken post office was closed on 12 March.

### All Vessel Matters

### Post Visit Reporting

It is mandatory for each vessel to complete a post visit report. One vessel did not return their report.

## Medical Assistance

No medical facilities are available on South Georgia for visitors. However, there were 5 records of requests for medical assistance from cruise ships. Three Fur Seal incidents were reported.

## Cruise Ship Bird Strikes

It is mandatory for every vessel to provide details of bird strikes/bird collision with their ship. There were 62 recorded incidences of bird strikes this season (last season 271) of which 5 were reported dead.

The comments received are summarised here.

Date Strike Detected	Location and Weather	Birds Alive	Birds Dead	Comments
20-Nov-19	Stromness Bay - rain	8	1	Use of Ice lights (risk of floating ice)
21-Nov-19	- rain	1	1	Use of Ice lights (presence of floating ice). According to bridge officers, several birds landed on the ship between 24:00 and 3:00. They all took off by themselves but the SG Diving-Petrel that we released in the morning (and the dead prion).
29-Dec-19	Cumberland Bay - rain	0	1	WINDS FROM NW--36KNOTS ROUGH SEAS
16-Jan-20	Bay of Isles - rain	8	0	All blackout blinds on portholes and windows were closed. Deck lights were kept to a minimum. They were only on to comply with safety measurements.
23-Jan-20	Cumberland Bay - rain	1	0	Misty rain but relatively clear visibility. In transit off Godthul. All deck lights off and portholes blacked out, only ice and navigation lights on.
28-Jan-20	Stromness Bay - clear	1	0	bird found on deck in the morning, safely released
29-Jan-20	Cumberland Bay - clear	1	0	bird strike at night, kept overnight and released next morning
19-Feb-20	Cumberland Bay - clear	1	0	Bird released safely
20-Feb-20	St Andrews Bay - clear	8	0	Birds released safely
21-Feb-20	Bay of Isles - clear	1	0	bird condition was checked and then released
22-Feb-20	North-west - clear	3	0	bird condition was checked and then released
04-Mar-20	North-west - snow	23	2	-
10-Mar-20	Cumberland Bay - clear	1	0	Bird released safely
<b>Total</b>		<b>57</b>	<b>5</b>	

Table 7: Incidental Bird Strike

## Biosecurity Audit

The biosecurity audit introduced in 2018/19 was continued without change for 2019/2020. 5,727 biosecurity checks were undertaken on passengers at King Edward Point of which 4.5% had some kind of biosecurity failure (last season this was 8%). The failures were the same as previous years and included mud, plant material and guano on the soles of boots, seeds or grass stuck to fasteners.

Information on what vessels could do to improve measures was shared with the vessel by the Government Officer conducting the audit.

## Part 2: Yachts

A total of 7<sup>2</sup> yachts visited on 8 different occasions with 88 persons aboard (80 in 18/19).

Three yacht applications to visit did not materialise – *Admiral Bellinghausen* cancelled, *Australis* did not show and *Bazileus* was prohibited from visiting due to a history of misconduct in Antarctica.

Yacht	Operator	Arrival Date	No. of Visits	Pax	Crew	Staff	Other	Total
Golden Fleece	Golden Fleece	07-Sep-19	1	5	3	0	0	8
KAT	Private	28-Jan-20	1	0	13	0	0	13
Pelagic Australis	Pelagic Expeditions LTD	26-Sep-19	1	8	3	0	0	11
Pelagic Australis	Pelagic Expeditions LTD	12-Jan-20	1	0	3	1	10	14
Ypake II	Private	25-Nov-19	1	7	2	0	0	9
Saoirse	KERI-LEE PASHUK	26-Nov-19	1	0	4	0	6	10
Spirit of Sydney	Spirit of Sydney Exp	11-Oct-19	1	5	2	2	0	9
Tecla	Tecla Sailing	29-Feb-20	1	10	3	1	0	14
<b>Total No.</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>88</b>

Table 8: Yacht Visits

**Yacht Landing Sites.** Yachts conducted beach landings at a total of 28 different sites during this season (35 last season) landing in total 633 persons ashore.

## Part 3: Expeditions

There were 3 expeditions supported by yachts this season, two kayaking and one Shackleton Traverse. They are highlighted in yellow above.

## Part 4: Other Vessel Visits

Vessel Name	Organisation	Dates	Comments
HMS <i>Clyde</i>	UK Military - Royal Navy	25 Oct to 28 Oct 2019	South Atlantic Patrol
RRS <i>James Clark Ross</i>	British Antarctic Survey	28 Nov to 29 Nov 2019	Cargo and Passengers
<i>SA Agulhas II</i>	South African Research Vessel	7 Jan 2020	Visit, deliver weather buoys
<i>Billesborg</i>	Weco	16 Jan to 22 Jan 2020	Cargo
RRS <i>Discovery</i>	NERC Research Vessel	24 Jan to 25 Feb 2020	Survey and visit
RRS <i>James Clark Ross</i>	British Antarctic Survey	1 + 4 Mar 2020	Passenger exchange and cargo
HMS <i>Forth</i>	UK Military - Royal Navy	8 to 11 Mar 2020	South Atlantic Patrol
RRS <i>James Clark Ross</i>	British Antarctic Survey	23 to 26 Mar 2020	Cargo
<i>Billesborg</i>	Weco	7 to 12 May 2020	Cargo
RRS <i>James Clark Ross</i>	British Antarctic Survey	14 May 2020	Collect passengers

Table 9: Other visiting vessels

<sup>2</sup> No PVR was received from Spailpin, they visited with 4 people on board and are not included in these statistics

## Annex 1 – Total Cruise Ship Passenger, Crew and Staff Nationality

Country	Passengers	Staff	Crew	Other	Total
<b>Total No.</b>	<b>12521</b>	<b>1222</b>	<b>8468</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22244</b>
USA	2828	167	36	10	3041
Germany	2330	210	634	1	3175
Australia	1606	65	3	0	1674
United Kingdom	1155	155	76	12	1398
France	838	107	614	0	1559
China	689	34	41	0	764
Switzerland	640	12	27	0	679
Canada	483	161	10	1	655
Austria	266	19	72	0	357
New Zealand	216	29	11	1	257
Netherlands	203	23	26	0	252
Taiwan	167	7	0	0	174
Belgium	123	4	15	0	142
Israel	114	0	2	0	116
Norway	83	13	46	1	143
Sweden	76	20	45	0	141
Malaysia	53	0	2	0	55
Italy	48	14	47	0	109
Russia	45	18	58	0	121
India	42	2	161	0	205
South Africa	42	27	61	1	131
Brazil	40	9	38	1	88
Mexico	40	3	15	0	58
Singapore	34	2	1	0	37
Japan	32	3	4	0	39
Ireland	30	10	7	3	50
Poland	26	3	45	0	74
Denmark	24	5	0	0	29
United States Minor Outlying Islands	24	1	0	0	25
Chile	18	10	40	0	68
Thailand	15	0	7	0	22
Argentina	14	39	48	0	101
Spain	14	10	10	1	35
Luxembourg	13	1	0	0	14
Hong Kong	12	1	0	0	13
Liechtenstein	11	0	0	0	11
Finland	10	3	7	1	21
Costa Rica	9	2	11	0	22
Cyprus	7	0	0	0	7
Czech Republic	7	1	5	0	13
Indonesia	7	0	343	0	350
Portugal	7	2	47	0	56
Ukraine	7	2	412	0	421
South Korea	6	0	2	0	8

(Continued) Country	Passengers	Staff	Crew	Other	Total
Philippines	5	1	4494	0	4500
Hungary	4	1	27	0	32
Monaco	4	0	0	0	4
Peru	4	3	28	0	35
Romania	4	0	248	0	252
Ecuador	3	3	1	0	7
Egypt	3	0	3	0	6
Estonia	3	0	7	0	10
Iran	3	0	0	0	3
Latvia	3	1	7	0	11
United Arab Emirates	3	0	0	0	3
Bolivia	2	0	0	0	2
Bulgaria	2	0	46	0	48
Croatia	2	0	39	0	41
Iceland	2	8	0	0	10
Jamaica	2	0	16	0	18
Kuwait	2	0	0	0	2
Lebanon	2	0	0	0	2
Malta	2	0	0	0	2
Belarus	1	0	16	0	17
British Indian Ocean Territory	1	0	0	0	1
Colombia	1	5	18	0	24
Greece	1	0	29	0	30
Honduras	1	0	86	0	87
Kazakhstan	1	0	5	0	6
Lithuania	1	3	3	0	7
Morocco	1	0	0	0	1
Niger	1	0	0	0	1
Serbia	1	0	52	0	53
Slovakia	1	0	4	0	5
Uruguay	1	2	8	0	11
Barbados	0	0	1	0	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	14	0	14
Cambodia	0	0	3	0	3
Cuba	0	0	3	0	3
Dominican Republic	0	0	3	0	3
El Salvador	0	0	8	0	8
Falkland Islands	0	1	0	0	1
Fiji	0	0	1	0	1
Grenada	0	0	1	0	1
Guatemala	0	0	28	0	28
Guyana	0	0	9	0	9
Kenya	0	0	1	0	1
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	17	0	17
Macao	0	0	0	0	0
Macedonia	0	0	4	0	4
Mauritania	0	0	1	0	1

(Continued) Country	Passengers	Staff	Crew	Other	Total
Mauritius	0	0	47	0	47
Moldova	0	0	2	0	2
Montenegro	0	0	17	0	17
Nepal	0	0	1	0	1
Nicaragua	0	0	48	0	48
Panama	0	0	28	0	28
Paraguay	0	0	24	0	24
Slovenia	0	0	3	0	3
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	1	0	1
Tunisia	0	0	4	0	4
Turkey	0	0	13	0	13
Venezuela	0	0	3	0	3
Zambia	0	0	2	0	2
Zimbabwe	0	0	15	0	15

### Annex 2 – Yacht Passenger Demographics<sup>3</sup>

Country	Passengers	Staff	Crew	Other	Total
United Kingdom	10	0	5	7	22
Ireland	8	0	0	0	8
USA	8	1	0	3	12
Netherlands	4	0	2	0	6
Australia	2	0	1	0	3
South Africa	2	0	0	0	2
Canada	1	2	3	0	6
Argentina	0	0	2	0	2
Austria	0	0	0	1	1
Brazil	0	0	12	0	12
Chile	0	1	0	0	1
France	0	0	3	0	3
Germany	0	0	3	0	3
Italy	0	0	1	0	1
New Zealand	0	0	1	0	1
Poland	0	0	0	4	4
Switzerland	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total No.</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>3</sup> This does not include 4 persons from yacht *Spailpin*