



Cruise Tourism in Arctic Canada

Community Report for Pond Inlet

What's Going on With Arctic Cruise Tourism?

The number of planned cruise itineraries in Arctic Canada doubled between 2005 and 2006 from 11 to 22 and has increased by an additional 9.5% on average over the past four years. Cruise ship activity has now begun leveling off and we are no longer seeing dramatic increases in itineraries as we did during the 2006 season. Although some additional growth is expected the observed leveling off of itineraries is likely due to the 2009 economic recession, the limited number of ice-strengthened ships available for tourism purposes, and a fluctuating market of individuals seeking to experience the Canadian Arctic by sea. Despite expected overall growth in the sector the actual patterns of cruise activity reveal a great deal of variability. We are now observing more cruise ship activity through the Northwest Passage and in the western Canadian Arctic and less activity in the southern Arctic than we have in the past.

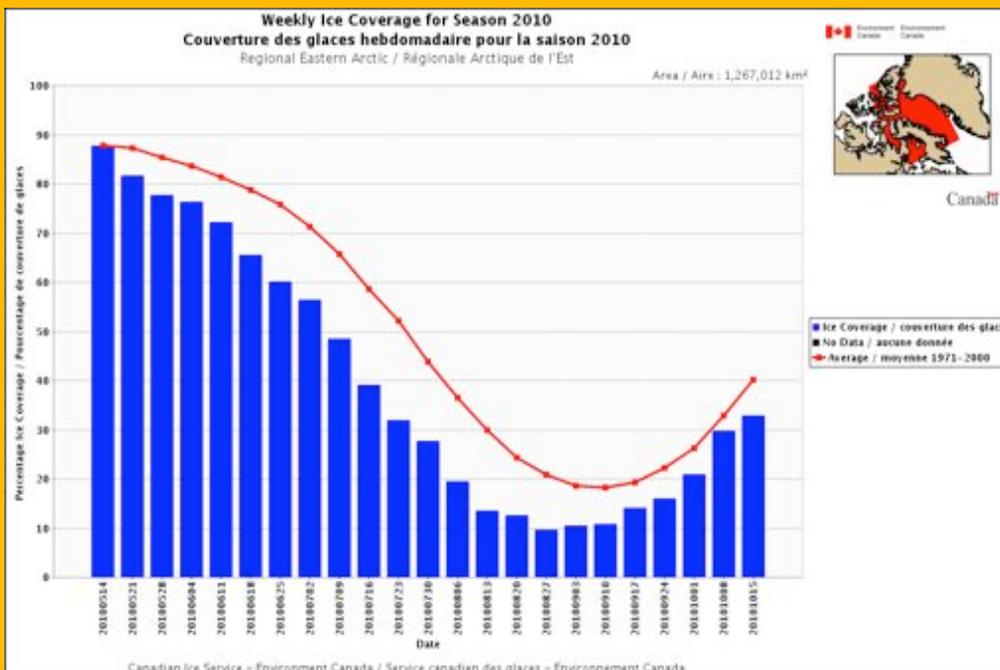


Total Cruise Itineraries in Arctic Canada

Year	Total	Pond Inlet
2005	11	-
2006	22	13
2007	23	9
2008	25	8
2009	26	8
2010	23	11

Are More Ships Coming?

In Arctic Canada decreasing sea ice extent and thickness has facilitated an increase in navigable shipping routes. Sea ice retreat has been primarily concentrated in the Beaufort Sea but is also evident across the entire Canadian Arctic. During the 2010 summer season weekly sea ice concentration was between 20 and 35% lower than it is normally and the open water season was considerably longer than it has been in the past. As a result, it is more accessible for cruise ships to travel in the Arctic and the season for safe travel is getting longer. However, a number of factors that are difficult to predict will effect whether or not more ships will be visiting in the future including, changing cost of fuel, availability of ice-strengthened ships, fluctuating demand, global economic conditions, political situations, changing regulations and policies.



Weekly Ice Coverage in the Regional Eastern Arctic for 2010 (blue columns) Compared to the 1971-2000 Average (red line)

About Cruise Ship Tourism in Pond Inlet

During 2010, 47 people who have a connection to the cruise sector in Pond Inlet were interviewed. The questions related to the costs and benefits of the industry to the community. Those interviewed were also asked to think about strategies to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits of cruise tourism to the community, as well as to Nunavut more generally.

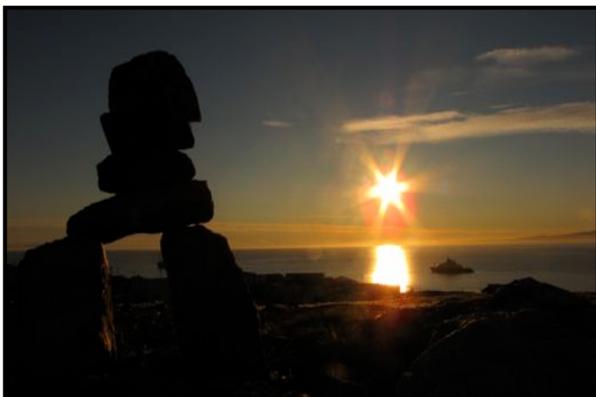
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The good things about tourism

Benefits identified included:

The cultural shows were highlighted to provide unique opportunities for local performers to learn about Inuit culture, while also showcasing Inuit culture and traditions. The guided walks were regarded as important to share local history with visitors. Cruise tourism in this sense was reported to make residents feel proud of their culture, elders and the work of the cultural group, and the local guides.

The opportunity to meet new people, make 'friends' and to participate in activities with visitors was highly valued. The generation of seasonal, indirect and supplementary income for the community, especially the guides, carvers, artists and performers was also noted. That cruises allowed relatively large numbers of visitors to be hosted in a short time was thought to be an efficient use of time and resources.



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The not so good things about tourism

Concerns related to economy, culture and environment included:

- Minimal spend among visitors (especially Europeans)
- Inappropriate and anti-social behaviour of some local children
- A sense of intrusion by cruise visitors compounded by tourist's lack of understanding of subsistence lifestyles, and by inappropriate photography of local people and property by tourists.
- Local protests may send the wrong message to cruise companies
- Standard of arts and crafts could be improved for saleability
- Adverse effect on marine wildlife
- Increased risk of marine pollution
- Variable ice conditions and existence of choke points especially in the Northwest Passage
- Poor charting of safe shipping lanes throughout the Arctic
- Fear of passenger safety due to vessel's grounding and/or sinking with only limited SAR capability
- Increased risk of breaches bio-security and sovereignty



Management Concerns

Management challenges at the community-level:

- Lack of infrastructure to support vessels, and potentially larger vessels that are anticipated in the future
- Observed increases in the number of small vessels, and yachts in particular visiting the community
- Sometimes vessels cancel at short notice and conversely sometimes vessels arrive without prior notice
- Clustering of visits by cruise ships
- Visitor centre management and a lack of training for visitor centre staff
- Good people get attracted to better paying jobs

Governance challenges at the Territorial-level:

- Cruise tourism not regarded as a priority and therefore suffers from lack of a coordinated approach throughout Nunavut
- No one agency or organisation taking a coordinating role at the Territorial level
- Lack of variety in the visitor experience across hosting communities in Nunavut
- Chronic lack of data on the cruise sector in Nunavut which undermines management and coordination efforts

What Are Other Communities Saying?

Interviews were conducted with residents of other communities across the Canadian Arctic including; Ulukhaktok, Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, and Nain. The most common concerns across the region included:

Threats to National Sovereignty and Possible Security Threats to Communities

No Regional Organization. Similar Cultural Shows (drum dances) are Performed in Every Community

Risk of Ship Passengers Bringing Drugs, Alcohol or Illegal Substances to Communities

Strong Need for Better Communication Between Ships and Communities

Increased Risk of Marine Pollution and Impacts on Marine Wildlife and Subsistence Hunting



Action Plans and Ideas: Where Should We Go From Here?

A selection of local residents, who are associated with cruise tourism in Pond Inlet, suggested the following actions and strategies for maximizing the benefits of this sector to the community while minimizing the negative:

Community-specific strategies:

- Consider an Arts and Crafts Association and establish standard pricing policy
- Set up a regular Trade/Craft Show to market local goods and provide opportunities for demonstrations, possibly using the amphitheatre next to the visitor centre
- Provide opportunities for visitors to interact with performers, and consider ways to integrate modern Inuit culture into the cultural demonstrations
- Provide a better welcome at the beach, and clean up the beach area
- Provide a local liaison person to help improve communication and coordination between ship, shore and the community
- Raise awareness among local residents, and especially children, about the tourists and cruise tourism in Nunavut
- Provide a pre-trip planning guide for tour operators about the community and in particular to establish what is and what isn't appropriate behaviour in the community
- Establish a local 'Cruise Ship Committee' to provide a coordinated approach to the management of cruise visits, as well as to develop a local cruise tourism policy, to clarify roles, provide pre and post season briefings to the community, and to consider charging a landing fee to cruise operators
- Use local guides more regularly for community tours (and include more cultural heritage sites such as the Sod House), and provide a vehicle for those visitors with limited mobility
- Provide more assistance at the visitor centre to manage tourists on the day of their visit, and consider use of the community centre for larger groups of cruise visitors
- Improve interpretive provision in Sirmilik National Park
- Monitor impact of cruise tourists at heritage and archaeological sites

Industry-specific strategies:

- Appoint Inuit environmental monitors on the cruise ships
- Improve communication between ships and communities
- Provide an information sheet on the community for all passengers
- Coordinate itineraries to avoid clustering of cruise visits
- Provide reliable up to date itineraries so communities can be prepared

Territory-specific strategies:

- Monitor and regulate all cruise ships visiting Nunavut including small vessels
- Develop a Nunavut-wide cruise tourism policy
- Streamline cruise permitting process across Nunavut
- Coordinate activities across all host communities to avoid duplication of visitor experiences, possibly via pre-season teleconference and debrief post-season
- Develop a port readiness programme akin to that in Newfoundland
- Appoint a cruise liaison representative at the Territorial level

There are several action plans listed above that can be implemented to deal with community concerns (some are already underway). As shipping increases in the Canadian Arctic the need for laws and regulations is also increasing. Other regions that have a more established Arctic cruise industry have a formal representative body that offers information, guidelines and voluntary policies for operators, which directly support community interests (i.e. Scandinavia - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators: AECO). This sort of organization does not currently exist in Arctic Canada.

Additional Information

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Case Study Communities

Ulukhaktok, Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Pond Inlet, Nain, Kuujuaq



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