Japanese Antarctic Research

Syowa Station has its own conservation stewards

Japanese Antarctic research began in 1957 with the establishment of Syowa Station on East Ongul Island. Syowa Station has since served as the base for a wide variety of research activities including: climate and aurora observation, ice core drilling, geological, botanical and zoological research, and meteor collection.

The Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition has made great contributions to environmental protection, including the discovery of the ozone hole in 1982, through analysis of cumulative data. Syowa Station has its own team of conservation stewards who specialize in waste disposal and management.

Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition completes the procedures stipulated in the Law Relating to Protection of the Environment in Antarctica and are issued certificates before they engage in activities in Antarctica.



Penguin Research



Water Quality Research

For further information regarding Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition, contact the Public Relations Section of the National Institute of Polar Research.

Ph: +81-42-512-0655
E-mail: kofositu@nipr.ac.jp
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Rules for Going to Antarctica

All Japanese citizens engaging in any activity in Antarctica must complete the legal procedures stipulated in the Law Relating to Protection of the Environment in Antarctica.

Antarctica – an irreplaceable global asset.

Japan plays a part of an international cooperation in protecting the Antarctic environment.

Antarctica

南極

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Japan

Antarctica - The Global Commons

Handing over this precious natural environment to the next generation



Antarctica and the Global Environment

Antarctica - the common heritage of all humankind.
How do we preserve this valuable natural environment?

Situated far away from the northern hemisphere, where the bulk of humanity resides, Antarctica is often cited as the place on earth that is the least affected by manmade environmental pollution. Accordingly, investigating environmental pollution in Antarctica allows scientists to estimate the extent of global environmental pollution.

The continent itself acts as a giant time capsule. Antarctic ice contains information from the formation of the earth until the present day in the most pristine condition anywhere.

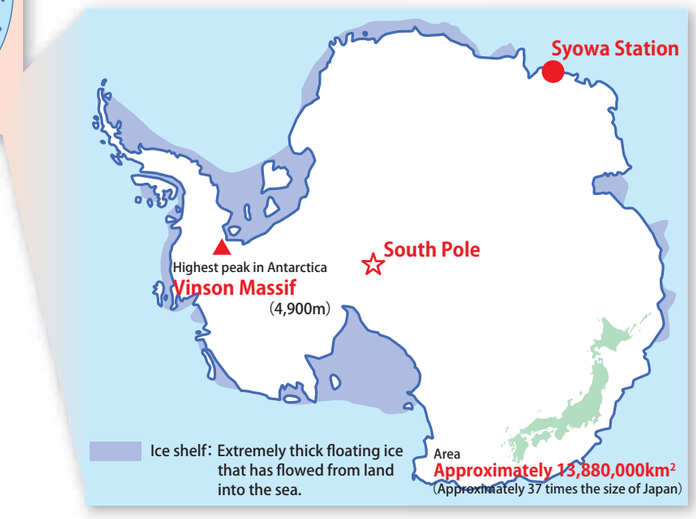
For these reasons, scientists from Japan and around the world conduct a variety of surveys and research in order to find out about the past and future of our planet, and use this information to protect the environment.





Snow and Ice Research





Antarctic Wildlife

Adapted to the Harsh Natural Environment



The Common Issue Facing Humankind

Ensuring a bright future for Antarctic wildlife

A variety of wildlife inhabit in the harsh Antarctic environment. Many of these species native to Antarctica are considered to be very sensitive to influences from outside the Antarctic. Protecting the environment to ensure their continued existence is a common issue facing humankind.





Weddell Seal

Weddell seals grow up to 3m long and weigh as much as 500kg. They dig holes in thin parts of the ice to gain access to the sea.



South Polar Skua

South Polar Skuas are predatory birds that frequent penguin breeding colonies where they feed on eggs and chicks. They sometimes rob other seabirds of their catches.



Adelie Penguin

Adelie Penguins are found throughout the Antarctic continent. In the summer months they congregate in rocky areas to breed.They feed mainly on krill.

The following wildlife can also be seen in Antarctica.



Krill



Moss



Sea urchins

The Current State of Antarctica



Increasing tourist numbers

The number of tourists visiting Antarctica has roughly quadrupled in the last fifteen years

Environmental Impact

Protecting Antarctica is Your Responsibility

Drawn by the breathtaking scenery and abundant wildlife, tourists from around the world have been visiting Antarctica in recent years.

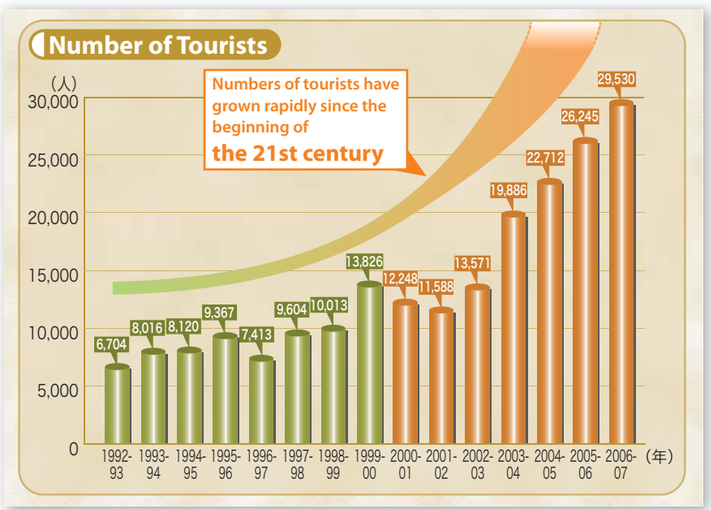
The number of Antarctic tourists is increasing year by year, and nearly 30,000 people travel to the continent by ships or planes annually. This has raised concerns about the impacts on this precious environment.







Efforts Made by Cruise Ship Operators for the Environmental Protection



Information Provided by International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators' Web Site



Cruise ship operators take every possible precaution to avoid impacts on the precious environment; before setting their feet on Antarctica, passengers are given lectures regarding environmental protection and all footwear are cleaned thoroughly to avoid accidental introduction of non-native species.

Protection of Antarctic Environment



National and International Efforts

Two international agreements and Japan's contributions to them

International Efforts

Various countries are involved in an international cooperation to protect Antarctica

International cooperation to protect the Antarctic environment began in 1961, when the Antarctic Treaty entered into force. The treaty guarantees that the continent will be used for peaceful purposes only and promotes international cooperation with regard to scientific investigation.

In 1998, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Antarctic Environmental Protocol), a Protocol aimed at the protection of the Antarctic environment and its ecosystem, came into effect.

These two international agreements have promoted the peaceful use of Antarctica, and international cooperation in scientific researches and environmental protection.

As a Party to these agreements, Japan sends representatives to the annual Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting to discuss the state of environmental protection and other Antarctic issues.

Japan's Contributions

Japan plays an active role in protection of the Antarctic Environment

To ensure that the rules stipulated in the Antarctic Environmental Protocol are implemented domestically, Japan established the Law Relating to Protection of the Environment in Antarctica in 1997. The law entered into force on January 14, 1998, the same date that the Antarctic Environmental Protocol came into force.

The Antarctic Environmental Protocol stipulates rules that must be followed by Parties, including Japan. Through implementing these rules Japan contributes to the protection of Antarctic environment. (See next page for more details regarding these rules.)



The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting

Antarctica Terminology

Antarctic Treaty

Forty-seven Parties as of March 2009.
The main provisions of the treaty are:

- *moratorium on all territorial claims in Antarctic Treaty Area(area south of 60 degree south latitude)*
- *Use of Antarctic Treaty Area for peaceful purposes only (Prohibition of military bases and military operations)*
- *Freedom of scientific research and promotion of international cooperation*

Antarctic Environmental Protocol

Thirty-three Parties as of March 2009.
The main provisions of the protocol are:

- *Environmental Impact Assessment*
- *Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora*
- *Waste Disposal and Waste Management*
- *Prevention of Marine Pollution*
- *Area Protection and Management*

Rules to Follow when Visiting Antarctica

The Law Relating to Protection of the Environment in Antarctica

Follow the rules and help keep Antarctica Pristine

Under the Law Relating to Protection of the Environment in Antarctica, all Japanese citizens who plan to engage in any activity in Antarctica, independent of the purposes of the activity, must complete legal procedures before entering the Antarctic Treaty Area.
Please help our efforts to protect the precious Antarctic environment by following the rules.









The future of Antarctica is in your hands — The following activities are prohibited in Antarctica:

Antarctica is said to be "the world's nature reserve." Protecting its environment is the responsibility of all visiting it.

Antarctic wildlife including birds and seals.

Do not
- Capture
- Disturb
- Feed
- Touch
- Surprise
- Collect birds, eggs

Maintain a distance of at least 5m from penguins and other birds, and 15m from seals.

Do not
- Take pets with you

Introduction of non-native species, such as dogs, is prohibited to prevent infectious diseases.

Do not
- Trample on vegetation

Do not
- Discard trash, cigarette butts, or food / drink waste

It is prohibited to burn waste outdoors. Return to the ships to use the toilet. Remember to take any rubbish or waste back to the ships for proper disposal.

Do not
- Destroy or deface historic sites or monuments

Enter Antarctic Specially Protected Areas

Visitors to Antarctica are prohibited from entering Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs). Special permission is required to enter ASPAs, even for scientific research purposes. Enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of the Environment.

※*To protect their particularly significant values, 70 areas are designated as ASPAs. (As of March 2009.)*

All visitors must complete legal procedures.

Two different procedures.

There are two kinds of procedures that must be completed before visiting Antarctica: Certification and Report. All visitors must complete one of these procedures.

Certification of Antarctic Activity Plans

This procedure is to be followed by those planning such activities as solo adventurous journeys, scientific researches and alike. Their Antarctic Activity Plans must be certified by Minister of the Environment before engaging in such activities. Passengers on foreign cruise ships and planes that received permission or other administrative treatment similar to the certification from other Parties to the Antarctic Environmental Protocol do not need to follow this procedure. Certificates, which must be carried all the time while in Antarctica, are issued to those whose Antarctic Activity Plans have been certified by the Minister of the Environment.

Report of Antarctic Activity Plans

This procedure is to be followed by passengers on foreign cruise ships and planes that received permission or other administrative treatment similar to the certification from other Parties to the Antarctic Environmental Protocol. Their Antarctic Activity Plans do not need to be certified by Minister of the Environment, but they have to provide the Minister of the Environment with prior report to indicate that their Antarctic Activity Plans are already permitted by other Parties.

Certification or Report? You must complete either one of the procedures.

The type of procedures that you need to complete is determined by whether or not the activities that you are planning to engage in Antarctica have received permission or other administrative treatment similar to the certification from other Parties to the Antarctic Environmental Protocol.



Certificate

Have the activities that you intend to engage in Antarctica received permission or other administrative treatment similar to the certification from other Parties to the Antarctic Environmental Protocol?

Yes

- Submit a Report of Antarctic Activity Plans to the Minister of the Environment.
- Participate in the activities described on the report. (Certificate are not issued.)

No

- Submit an Application for Antarctic Activity Plans to the Minister of the Environment.
- Examined by Minister of the Environment.
- If the Antarctic Activity Plan satisfies the requirement of the law, certification is provided by Minister of the Environment and Certificates are issued.
- Engage in activities described in Antarctic activity Plan (carry Certificate all the time while in Antarctica)

Attention

You must confirm and complete the relevant procedures before visiting Antarctica. Any questions regarding these procedures should be directed to the Ministry of the Environment.

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