

ARCTIC 2023 – PROJECTS SELECTED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Advancing visitors' participation in citizen science: the new appeal for the Arctic? (Participation)

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ABSTRACT

This proposed ship-time research onboard Le Commandant Charcot focuses on citizen science in expedition cruising. It is part of the 'Advancing visitors' participation in citizen science: the new appeal for the Arctic?' project we began in 2021 with the support of the Arctic Interactions (ArI) programme of the University of Oulu (Finland). By investigating people's motivations to visit the most remote parts of the Arctic, our project aims to situate and assess citizen science in the span of travel motivations. Our study focuses on two categories of Arctic visitors, namely 'frontier travelers' and cruise passengers. The former refers to those travelling without the aid of a commercial tour operator and who are responsible for their own safety. Interviews with those frontier travelers, including, for example, Éric Brossier and Isabelle Autissier, represented the first step of our project and were conducted in 2021. Those interviews revealed that citizen science is often one of the main motivations for visiting remote locations and communities of the Arctic.

The ARICE-Ponant call represents an opportunity to conduct the second part of our project, which requires conducting fieldwork with and among cruise passengers. The objectives of this ship-time research are twofold. Firstly, we intend to understand the reasons and motivations of tourists to engage or not in citizen science. Secondly, we aim to explore the potential changes in tourists' intentions to engage and participate in citizen science after experiencing and learning about the fragile Arctic environment while onboard. In order to achieve these goals, our time on Le Commandant Charcot will involve three research methods: surveys, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Based on our respective fieldwork experience, these three research methods have been designed to not be intrusive in the tourist experience. Passengers can participate anonymously and on a voluntary basis, and in addition, the implementation of the data collection will not interfere in passengers' daily activities. Such a data collection strategy can also easily adapt to last-minute schedule changes. Lastly, we aim to conduct this fieldwork during a cruise to the geographic North Pole, because the sea ice epitomizes the quintessence of popular and collective imaginaries of the Arctic on the one hand, but has also become an infamous symbol of climate change on the other hand, which is expected to have greater impacts in increasing passengers' awareness of environmental changes and potential to become ambassadors for the Arctic as well.

ARICE-PONANT CALL FOR SHIP-TIME PROPOSALS 2023

Access to the Arctic Ocean on board the Polar Expedition

Ship "Le Commandant Charcot" (PONANT, France)



It is expected that investigating passengers' interests in citizen science will lead to a better understanding of where to locate and explore consumers' demand, motivations and experiences. This could constitute a valuable resource for cruise operators in terms of future marketing strategies, and perhaps more importantly, for future collaborations between the tourism industry and the scientific community.