

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: WORLD'S LAST GREAT WILDERNESS THREATENED BY TOURISTS



Adventure tourists long to discover dangerous and remote places - South Pole has become a massive hit over the past decades. Yet the environmental impact is visible and alarming.

Adrenalin holidays present the ultimate dream for many adventure tourists. In fact, adventure has become one of the most sought after components of holidays and many tourists seek out demanding trips which will challenge them to the end. Discovering underwater caves, rafting down giant waterfalls, trekking in the jungle - the world offers endless heart-stopping experiences as long as one is willing to pay. **Visiting the icy wilderness of Antarctica has changed from a nearly overlooked idea to a promising business.** At what stake though?

Two decades ago, only a few hundred visitors longed to see the South Pole and did so rather quietly. Last year, approximately 40,000 tourists paid for a cruise taking them to Antarctica, to witness this vast and dangerous place with all its wildlife and endless ice. The thrill is impossible to resist, after all, every journey through ice-berg filled seas is not an every day venture.

Sadly, such hunger for adrenalin holidays brings a major risk. According to Michiel Lamers, a Dutch Scientist who conducted a study for the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, **waters around the South Pole are becoming increasingly polluted by CO2 emissions. These are directly linked to the massive cruise liners which bring tourists by thousands.** Lamers claims that the rather insufficient guidelines relating to visiting the South Pole are more than vague and calls for establishing firm rules and binding international treaties which will protect the area effectively and thus will avoid further damage to the environment.

Each visit of a cruise liner influences local wildlife; irresponsible tourist companies which are often completely unprepared for the rough conditions present the biggest threat and need to be controlled before another natural treasure disappears under the pressure of adventure tourism.

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