

Guidelines in works for Antarctic tourism

As the number of Chinese tourists to Antarctica soared to the No 2 ranking, experts urged the country to speed up legislation on Antarctic travel to protect the environment there as well as tourists' safety and interests.

Last year, 5,286 Chinese tourists visited the frozen continent, amounting to 12 percent of worldwide visitors there, second only to the United States with 14,566 tourists, according to the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators.

Fewer than 800 Chinese tourists made the trip in 2010, when China was ranked behind countries such as Australia, Canada and Germany in visitor numbers.

"The size of the market for Antarctic tourism grew dramatically with people's rising interest in natural wonders, but the legislation in this respect lags behind," said Qin Weijia, director of the China Arctic and Antarctic Administration.

He said the number of Chinese tourists to Antarctica last year alone was equal to the total visits by team members participating in the country's expeditions to the Antarctic since 1984.

"Among the 29 countries that are consultative parties of the Antarctic Treaty, China, together with India, Poland and Ecuador, are the only four that have not yet made laws to specify their citizens' behavior and protect their safety when they travel to the most remote place on Earth," he said.

Yang Huigen, director of the Polar Research Institute of China, said, "The legislation may also put what President Xi Jinping said into practice – to pursue a community of shared future for mankind and to be a responsible great power."

In April, Lin Shanqing, deputy director of the State Oceanic Administration, told Xinhua News Agency that the country's legislative body had started to pay attention to the legislation on issues regarding traveling to Antarctica.

Ponant, a French cruise company, started to offer polar excursions to Chinese three years ago. Prices range from \$400 to \$1,250 per person per night based on different cabins for a journey ranging from 11 to 16 days.

Jean-Philippe Lemaire, a captain of a Ponant cruise liner, said the staff vacuum all the tourists' garments before they go on shore each time to minimize dust pollution.

But Wang Wenlong from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, who has taken the cruises to both poles, said tourists still need guidance on dos and don'ts and the corresponding legal liability and punishment.

“We had plenty of opportunities to encounter a large number of rarely seen animals but didn’t have rules of how to interact with them without interrupting them,” Wang, 41, said.

The legislation will come in handy in case of accidents or trouble happening to Chinese tourists, Qin said.

“It may stipulate a fixed coordinating mechanism after an accident occurs and give clear requirements regarding the purchase of travel insurance,” he said.

Corruption, graft unveiled on TV

A five-episode political documentary focusing on an effective anti-graft measure taken by the Communist Party of China began airing on Thursday, with many details of corrupt officials revealed for the first time.



A screenshot shows the documentary Sharp Sword of Inspection. [Photo/CGTN]

The documentary, named “Sharp Sword of Inspection”, highlighted President Xi Jinping’s strategy of using inspections as tools to boost clean governance amid the country’s unprecedented campaign of fighting corruption.

It was jointly filmed by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the country’s top anti-corruption watchdog, and China Central Television. It is being aired by CCTV with one episode each day.

According to the documentary, Yu Haiyan, former vice-governor of Gansu province, cut up all his photos taken with bosses who bribed him and flushed

the pieces down the toilet to destroy evidence for graft charges. It said he also dipped his cellphone in vinegar and then threw it into the Yellow River to erase his phone records with the bosses.

Nearly 20 corrupt senior officials, including Wu Changshun, former police chief of Tianjin, and Wang Min, former Party chief of Liaoning province, were interviewed in the TV series. They expressed their regrets and confessions over their misdeeds. All of the corrupt officials who appeared in the documentary were investigated after they were inspected.

"I was afraid of the inspection team, and I drained my brains to learn the activities of the inspection team," Wang said in the documentary. He was sentenced to life imprisonment last month for receiving 146 million yuan (\$22.5 million) in bribes.

Inspection, or xunshi, proves to be an effective tool for fighting corruption. Among the corruption cases probed by the top anti-graft watchdog, about 60 percent of the indicators of corruption were collected by the inspection teams.

The discipline inspection commission has launched 12 rounds of inspections at 277 Party and government departments, State-owned enterprises, institutes and universities since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012.

On Aug 30, 17 organizations inspected in the 12th round, including the government of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Peking University and the Cyberspace Administration of China, publicized their measures for correcting problems found by the inspection team.

The inspection team found that the promotion of some officials at Peking University had violated rules. The university said in its rectification report that it had removed the posts of those officials as a measure to implement the inspection report.

Xi has highlighted the importance of inspections numerous times in the five years since he initiated the anti-graft campaign.

In May, Xi presided over a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, during which senior officials were asked to set themselves as examples by exercising self-restraint in the use of their power, accepting supervision and acting in line with rules.

The inspection work should focus on sticking to the Party's leadership, strengthening the Party's buildup and comprehensively enhancing Party discipline, according to a statement released after the meeting.

Yang Xiaodu, minister of supervision and deputy head of the discipline inspection commission, said last month that 256,000 graft cases were filed for probe from January to June, compared with 193,000 during the same period a year earlier.

Telescope brings tourism boom to poor county

This is the quietest tourist site in China – no phones, cameras and cars are allowed inside. Even planes have been rerouted to avoid disturbance, but still, it draws thousands of tourists.



The 500-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope. [Photo provided to China Daily]

Since it began operation in September last year, the world's largest radio telescope, located in southwestern province of Guizhou, has received 240,000 tourists, according to local authorities.

The Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST) is a single-dish telescope, with a diameter of half a kilometer. It was built in Dawodang depression, a natural karst basin in Pingtang County, an impoverished area in mountainous Guizhou.

The telescope is used to probe space for the faintest signs of life and is sensitive to any electromagnetic interference.

Nearly 10,000 residents living in the core zone, within five kilometers of the telescope, have been relocated.

"All phones and cameras must be handed in if visitors want to enter the core area," said Liu Xingwu, a local tour operator.

“Vehicle engine ignitions also produce electromagnetic waves, so all sightseeing vehicles which enter the core zone have been modified to remove magnetic interference,” said Liu.

With a total investment of 1.2 billion yuan (about \$188 million), the telescope has also created a boom in tourism for the county, which is home to around 330,000 people.

An astronomical and cultural park is being extended. New theaters and exhibition centers will open ahead of the National Day holiday in October, said Shi Bangze, director of the county tourism bureau.

Shi said that any increase in tourist numbers must not interfere with scientific studies underway at FAST.

“Scientists are using FAST to probe space, and they do not want any disturbances, so tourism can only be developed on the condition that the research functions are not impeded,” he said.

The county has instigated a daily cap of 2,000 visitors within the core area.

“Most travellers come on weekends and holidays. We use manual film cameras rather than digital ones to take photos of the visitors. The cameras have been tested for interference,” Shi said.

“Once the daily limit is reached, we divert tourists to other scenic areas further away from the telescope,” he said.

[China to improve voluntary services](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The State Council, China’s cabinet, Wednesday moved to improve voluntary services with socialist core values.

[Airport plans may leave delays in the past](#)

Beijing Capital International Airport, the busiest in China, will increase ground resources and reduce the number of flights to improve flight punctuality, the airport president said on Wednesday.

Improvements are planned to the airport’s operation resources, such as

improving the runway and taxiway system, increasing the number of spaces on the ground for aircraft and enhancing shuttle efficiency. On the other hand, the airport will optimize flight slots and improve availability during its peak hours of operation, the airport's president, Han Zhiliang, said at the Beijing Global Friend Airports CEO Forum, a conference of the civil aviation industry.

Many Chinese airports have on-time performance issues. In July, the national flight punctuality rate was 50.76 percent, the Civil Aviation Administration of China said. Nearly half of all flights were delayed or canceled.

As China's busiest airport, Beijing Capital International strives for significant improvement to its on-time performance, Han said.

Its slot scheduling is overused. "The utilization rate of slots capacity has reached 98 percent at the airport ... while data show that a reasonable slots capacity percentage for a large-scale hub airport is 80 percent," Han said.

"The heavy slot arrangement at a busy airport lowers the ability to respond to extreme weather and emergencies, increasing the possibility of causing large-scale and lengthy delays," he said.

"Once extreme weather or an emergency happens at the hub airport, punctuality will fall like dominoes, causing delays. ... At the Beijing International schedule screen, it is rare to see a blank slot from morning to night. Nearly all slots have been allocated to airliners," he said.

He said 103 flights depart and land in an hour at the airport during peak hours, while the capacity standard is 88 flights per hour.

Ouyang Jie, a professor of airport research at Civil Aviation University of China, said, "The move aims to cut regional routes, such as the number of direct flights to third-tier small cities, and detour those regional routes to nearby Tianjin and Shijiazhuang airports". He said passengers can take high-speed rail between nearby airports and Beijing.

It takes about 30 minutes to travel between Tianjin and Beijing by high-speed rail, and 90 minutes between Shijiazhuang and Beijing.

Beijing Capital International Airport will increase the volume of international flights.

The airport handled 94 million passengers in 2016, making it the second busiest in the world for the seventh consecutive year, but it is designed to handle 82 million.

To ease the heavy pressure, Beijing is constructing a second airport.

Liu Xuesong, president of Capital Airports Holding Co, said on Wednesday that the capital will build both the current and the new airport into large-scale international hubs.

According to Liu, construction of the second airport is proceeding well. The

main structure of the terminal building was topped off last month, he said.