



China Tightens Control on Antarctic Expeditions

Chinese authorities have tightened controls over citizens and organizations going to Antarctica to avoid damage to the environment, according to a statute issued by the State Oceanic Administration (SOA). The new rules restrict travellers from bringing animals, plants or microorganisms that are not indigenous to Antarctica, as well as hunting, picking plants, erecting structures, and recovering meteorites. Those who plan activities that may interfere with the continent's environment or ecosystems must obtain approval from the SOA. Traffic to Antarctica, including expeditions, tourist trips and scientific research, has risen in recent years and posed challenges to environmental administrators. The move can better regulate Chinese visits to the southernmost continent, protect the legitimate rights and interests of citizens, legal persons and other organizations, and uphold China's national image.