

# SEASONALITY IN TOURISM IN THE SMALL ISLANDS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

By Laura Hagen-Grant

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism naturally brings with it peaks and troughs, some of them detrimental to the economy and some of them necessary. Natural resources, infrastructure, funding, and labour all suffer from fluctuations due to variations in the tourism season. This Report looks at the strategies undertaken by several North Atlantic islands to extend the tourist season into the spring and fall, so that these locations can benefit from the experiences and knowledge of others. The *objectives* of this Report are as follows: Define and account for seasonality in tourism;

- Identify key issues in the tourism industry that are in direct relation to seasonal shifts in tourism demand;
- Identify strategies in North Atlantic islands and other locations that have been employed both successfully and unsuccessfully to alleviate seasonality;
- Relate these cases to each other through their physical, geographical, and conceptual similarities; and
- Recommend actions in order to extend and diversify the tourist season while promoting sustainable and community-based initiatives.

Included are examples of off-season tourism in several North Atlantic islands and other relevant locations. The Report begins with a description of the locations studied, along with the characteristics of their tourist seasons and the challenges and trends that these destinations face. Following this, the Report examines the role of the community in the tourism industry, identifying some success stories of cooperation, as well as the emerging trend of festivals and events as attractions in the off-season. Case studies consist of Edinburgh's Hogmanay, New Year's Festival in Iceland, and Celtic Connections in Glasgow. Access is a timely issue as a new bridge to Prince Edward Island and a twenty-five-year-old one to Öland mark a permanent change in traffic flow to the islands. Finally, the last section details some exciting departures from traditional tourism products.

The research for this Report was conducted at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland; and field research was gathered by visits to Iceland; the Åland Islands, Finland; the Isle of Man; Prince Edward Island; and Öland, Sweden. Conversations with individual tourism operators, university professors, government officials, and local residents provided case study information and insight into theoretical and practical issues.

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## **THE NORTH ATLANTIC ISLANDS**

Within the context of this report, seasonality will be defined according to the definition given by Richard Butler (1994):

*. . . a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, and may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as number of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment, and admissions to attractions. (Butler 1994: 332)*

Other terms that will be used in this report are the "peak season," namely June to September, which is preceded and followed by the "shoulder" or "off-seasons" of April, May, October, and November. The "winter" season is referred to as the months of December to March. Other areas of the world may experience peaks in the winter season and valleys in the summer (ski resorts for example); however, this terminology reflects the seasons pertinent to the islands studied. The tourism industry is especially susceptible to changes in weather. Whether it be the winter lull from November to March in North America, or the monsoon season of May to October in Sri Lanka, the slow-down of tourist arrivals is evident when the weather is poor.

Butler identifies four other reasons for the predictable flow of tourists, and these deserve mention since the weather is often thought to be the only cause. First, he speaks of "institutional seasonality" which results from various holidays from the schools and industry. One only has to be on Prince Edward Island during the last weekend in July to experience this seasonal boost from the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick public holiday. Second, he identifies social seasonality: when it is socially expected to travel in certain places at certain times. This trend, however, is fading. The third example is that of sport, for example the golfing or skiing seasons. Even hockey tournaments can cause temporary booms in some cities, for example the annual SEDMHA hockey tournament in Nova Scotia. Finally, Butler mentions inertia as a reason for people's travel patterns. People who are not dependent on school or industrial holidays for time off (e.g., retirees) may have no real reason to travel in peak times other than tradition or habit. These reasons must be considered when dealing with seasonality and, especially, market segmentation.

Other causes of seasonality stem from the calendar; for example, the number of days in a month, the timing of Easter, and the number of weekends in a month and throughout the year. Also, supply side constraints include the availability of facilities and labour due to such events as school holidays and competing industries such as agriculture (Hagen and Baum 1997).

Apart from merely wanting to increase tourist numbers in the slow season, planners must consider other questions as well:

- Can the area physically, environmentally, socially, and structurally handle tourists in the off-season?
- Are the options proposed actually designed to attract visitors to the destination or to provide activities when they are already there?

- What causes the season to be low (e.g., weather, transportation access, holiday times)?
- Who travels during the off-season (i.e., market segmentation)?

The strategies of various countries and geographic regions are discussed in this report. To help with the comparison of data among the areas, the following pages provide an overview of each country and region studied, and their respective tourist markets.

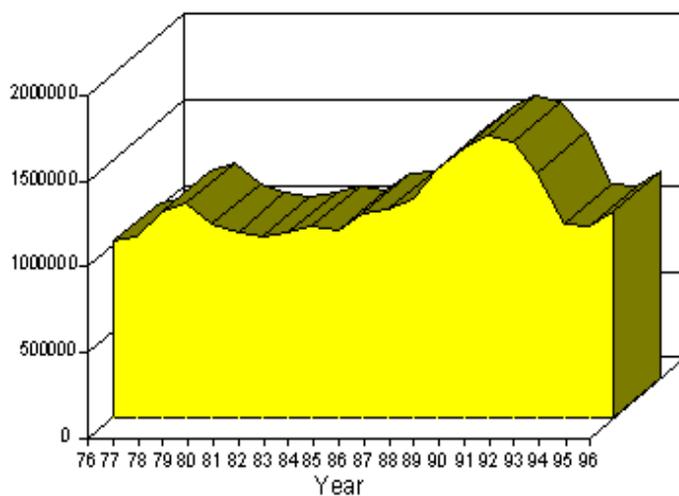
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## **THE ÅLAND ISLANDS**

The Åland Islands consist of an archipelago of 6,500 islands located in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Finland. The population of 25,202 in 1996 lived on only 65 of these islands, with 22,768 inhabiting the main island (ÅSUB 1997b). Åland has been an autonomous and demilitarized province of Finland since 1921. The islands belonged to the Swedish Kingdom until the Crimean War of 1808-1809 which resulted in Sweden relinquishing Finland and Åland to the Russians. The Russian Revolution in 1917 eclipsed the discontent of the residents with Russian rule. A wish to rejoin Sweden was communicated by Åland representatives to the King and Government of Sweden but it was disputed by the Finnish government. The case was referred to the newly formed League of Nations which decided in favour of Finland and a new demilitarized and autonomous Åland Islands. The authority of the Åland parliament to pass laws is quite similar to provinces in Canada in that it extends to education and culture, health, and medical services, promotion of industry, internal communications, and local district administration. It also has governance over the postal service and radio and television (Ålands landskapsstyrelse 1994).

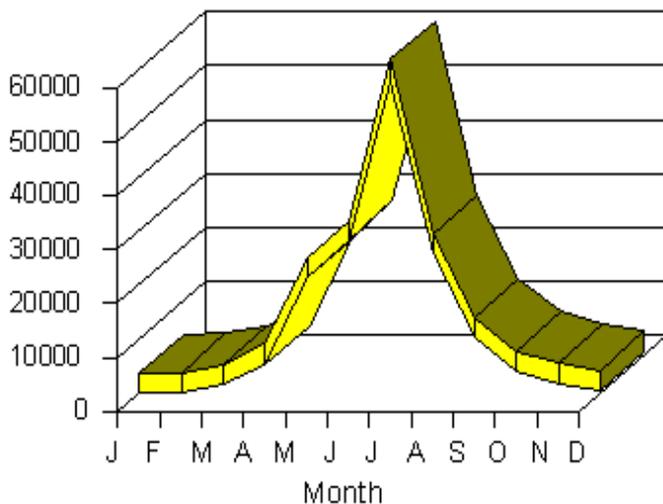
Today, Åland is a prosperous group of islands with excellent road maintenance, countless ferries, and small bridges connecting the islands of the archipelago at little cost to the residents, and its own airport with flights to Finland and Sweden. It is also host to an extensive and very profitable cruise industry employing thousands of Ålanders and Swedes. The fares are inexpensive; the profit is derived from the sale of duty-free merchandise and income from the onboard gambling machines. Once the ship has left port, the doors to the duty-free store are opened and people waiting in line pour in to purchase cheap(er) alcohol, tobacco, and chocolate. The dependence of the tourism industry on the cruises became evident when the numbers rose in 1991 and 1992 as capacity increased in the cruise fleets. In 1993, numbers decreased sharply when two ferry companies went out of business, resulting in a decrease in capacity. The following year's ferry catastrophe which saw over 900 people die off the coast of Estonia (which was a ferry once used between mainland Finland and Åland) further depressed the arrival numbers as noted in the graph below.

**Number of Visitors to Åland 1976-1996 Source: Statistik Årsbok for Åland 1997**



There is a great dependence in Åland on the Swedish and Finnish cruise passengers. The industry is very seasonal (see graph below) with the lower-spending camper, hiker, and cyclist as a main market (Baum 1996). In 1995, the Åland Islands joined the EU, along with Sweden and Finland. However, special conditions exist to ensure that it remains outside the taxation union of the EU, which will allow the islands to continue to sell duty-free goods on the ferry routes to Sweden and Finland, even after sales have been abolished elsewhere in the Union in 1999 (Ålands landskapstyrelse 1994).

**Number of Visitors to Åland 1995 Source:ASUB**



The tourism organization in Åland is Ålandturistförbund which works closely with industry to entice nature, business, and adventure tourists. The government no longer has a Minister of Tourism but works on individual projects with other governments and the turistförbund.

Other industries include manufacturing (9.7%), which consists of fish and potato processing and a plastic toy company; agriculture (10.5%), comprising potatoes, dairy cattle, sheep, and grains; trade (12.8%); and services, including tourism, represent 28.3% of employment in Åland (ÅSUB 1997). There has been much discussion in recent years regarding the determination of tourism's share in the economy, since the imbalance between the cruise and land tourism has led to some varying figures.

In the Åland Islands, tourist arrivals are reported at 1,120,697 for the year 1995 (ÅSUB 1997). On the surface, this seems to be a great feat for a small population. However, a look at the nights tourists actually stayed on the island shows that only 350,555 nights were spent in accommodations by 179,085 people (ÅSUB 1996). This large discrepancy is due to the massive number of cruise passengers who are included in the tourist total but who never leave the ship when it docks in the middle of the night. Also included in the original number are the local residents who travel to the mainland and Sweden on these ferries. There was a time when the ferries docked earlier in the evening, about nine or ten o'clock, and the passengers could leave the ship to tour the downtown of Åland's capital, Mariehamn. However, the entrepreneurial ferry companies recognized the potential for greater revenue if the passengers stayed onboard, hence the later arrivals. This has created some negative attitudes from the land tourism businesses toward sea tourism. As well, other industries that don't distinguish between the two types of tourism are negative toward the industry as a whole because of its power and share of the services sector.

Åland is an enterprising group of islands with two newspapers and several partnerships with other islands. Besides being a member of the North Atlantic Islands Programme, Åland is also a partner in the B7, which is a similar network to the North Atlantic Islands Programme; it involves the seven islands in the Baltic Sea, including Gotland and Öland, Sweden; Rügen, Germany; Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, Estonia; Bornholm, Denmark; and Åland, Finland. The group has a new office in Brussels and is organizing working groups on tourism, the environment, democracy, and exchange of knowledge and experience (B7 1996).

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## ICELAND

Iceland is Europe's second-largest island, lying just south of the Arctic Circle with an area of 130,000 km. It became an independent republic in 1945 after centuries of Danish rule. The Vikings sailed there over a thousand years ago and set up a parliament in 930 AD. The Gulf Stream gives the island a reasonably mild climate with average temperature in January at -1C and in the summer of 12-15C. There are, however, considerable variances since the glaciers and northern parts of the country suffer from more extremes (Iceland Tourist Board 1997). Iceland is home to three glaciers; a volcano on the largest, Vatnajökull, erupted in the fall of 1996 and caused extensive flooding.

The population of Iceland is approximately 267,000, with over half living in the capital city of Reykjavik and its surrounding areas (ITB 1997). The rest of the population is disbursed in fishing villages and towns throughout the country. The trend of migration to the larger capital centre is a concern for the government and new initiatives are being undertaken with the cooperation of the communities to help keep people working in their own communities. Icelanders speak Icelandic and most also speak English and Danish, having learned the languages in school.

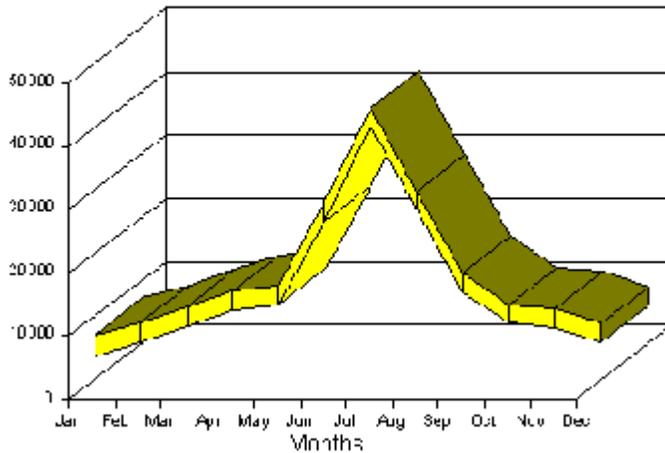
Iceland suffers from extreme seasonality in its tourism (see graph below). It has managed to curtail this somewhat in the past few years with strategies to attract convention and incentive travellers as well as other options discussed in the case studies. The country's major air carrier, Icelandair, has been a leader in the development of tourism in terms of the obvious element of travel, but also in tour operating and various cooperative deals with the individual operators. The city of Reykjavík has its own tourism committee which has been studying Dublin, Ireland's, tourism success story. The second graph below traces the domestic and international tourist numbers from 1990-1995.

The country's attractions include the glaciers and the outdoor Viking Parliament, which is the oldest in the world, as well as hot springs and swimming holes found throughout the country. Adventure tourism and farm holidays are important components of the industry and will be highlighted in the case studies. The city of Reykjavík has just initiated a shopping-themed vacation. Residents of the United Kingdom and continental Europe can purchase brand-name clothing at lower prices in Reykjavík than in other parts of Europe (a tax rebate takes an additional 15 to 20% off the price tag). The main sources for tourists to Iceland are Germany and Scandinavia. These people are attracted to the natural settings, while the North Americans who

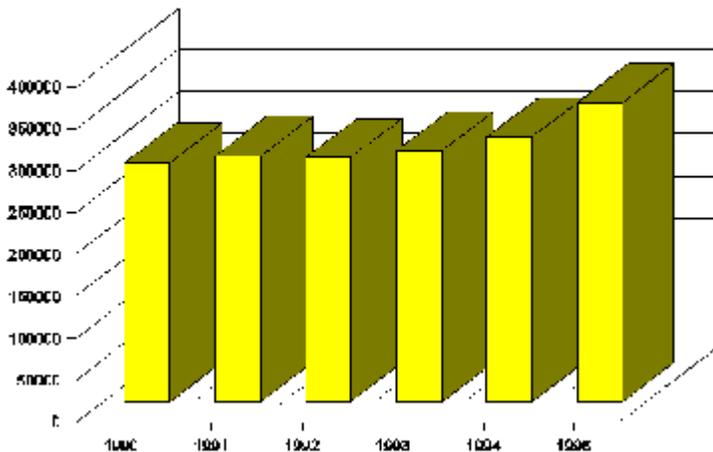
visit mostly stay in the hotels in the city.

### Foreign Visitors to Iceland 1995

Source Statistics Iceland



### Domestic and International Tourism Iceland 1990-1995



Traditionally, during the Christmas season of December 20 to January 5, most businesses are closed, even in the capital of Iceland. The city has been struggling over the years to encourage businesses to open, especially now that they are pushing the New Year's Eve theme. There has been slow but steady progress; however, labour is more expensive at that time of year and there is relatively little local market since it is tradition to spend the holidays at home. City marketers have been relying on positive financial results to demonstrate to private businesses the advantages of staying open.

The tourist board is a government body, while a new marketing bureau, funded by private shareholders, will be set up for the city of Reykjavík in 1998. As well, the local business and

incentive bureau, which was set up in 1992, is funded by membership fees and government grants.

All of these characteristics make Iceland a valuable example of cooperation between the private sector and government in tackling the seasonal trends in tourism.

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## **THE ISLE OF MAN**

Another island with a Viking history, the Isle of Man is part of the British Isles but has never been part of the United Kingdom. The official description of its status is a Crown dependency, since it relies on the British Crown to provide foreign representation and defence. However, the island maintains its own currency and stamps. The Manx language has recently been revived in the school system but is rarely used in conversation. The island has control over taxation policies which are often advantageous to the investor and provide a strong financial sector.

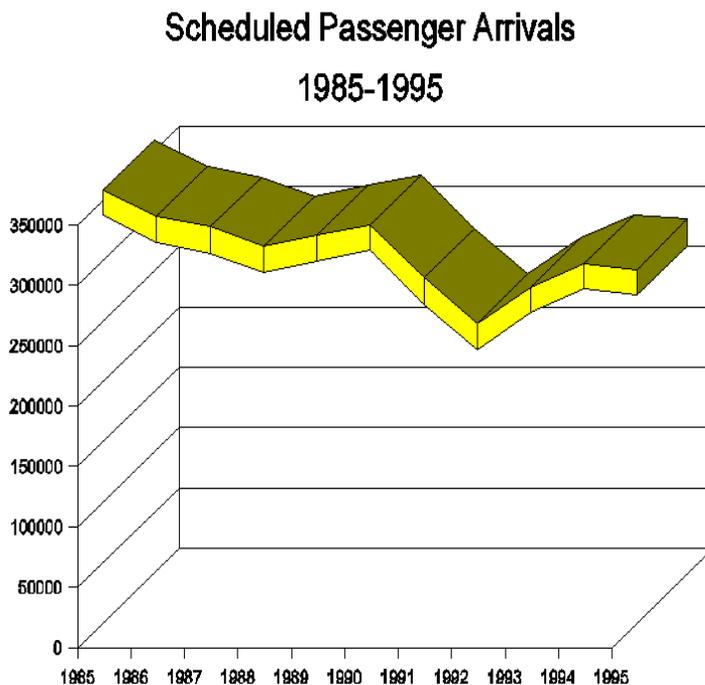
The Isle of Man measures only 50 by 20 km, with a population of around 72,000 people; 22,000 residents live in the capital of Douglas. The island's name comes from the God of the Sea, Mannanin, and those born on the island are known as Manx. The Isle of Man is home to the oldest continuous parliament in the world, opened in the year 979 A.D. The island plays host to tailless cats and four-horned sheep. In the early part of the century, the island was a booming tourist resort with Victorians enjoying the "foreignness" of the island. However, the arrival of the package tour in the 1960s provided residents of the UK with the opportunity to go to Spain and Greece for the same or lower price than a trip to the Isle of Man. In Douglas, many of the Victorian-style buildings that were once hotels are now being used for other business purposes or have been left to fall down. Many people who were once hoteliers are now in other occupations.

The Department of Tourism and Leisure on the island has been working at attracting more tourists, with their own inbound tourist package holiday company as well as a database of customers receiving their brochure, travel agent familiarization tours, and product differentiation (walking, railway, and water-based activities). However, there remains an opinion among the public that they are not successful in their pursuits. The challenge remains in getting the Isle of Man brochures on the racks in travel agencies in the United Kingdom. The image of impartiality in the travel trade is somewhat skewed since many of the main travel agencies are owned by tour operators who in turn own charter airlines. The system of commissions on package sales creates difficulties for smaller destinations such as the Isle of Man, since they cannot produce the volume of customers compared to the more accessible and popular destinations. This results in the brochures sitting in the back room, available only upon request.

The Isle of Man has over ninety special events throughout the year. A concentrated peak comes in late May and early June with the Tourist Trophy (TT) motorbike races. For two weeks the island is in the grip of over 30,000 tourists who come to watch the races on the island's roads. Every year there are fatalities associated with the fortnight celebrations and debates rage over the sustainability of an event that puts such a strain on finances, infrastructure, and population.

An alternative to the adventure tourism offered by the TT is culture tourism. Manx National Heritage operates as a trust for the preservation of Manx natural and cultural heritage. This organization receives funding from various sources to tell *The Story of Mann*, which includes numerous historic sites all over the island. This award-winning attraction is a major draw for visitors year-round.

The graph below shows tourist arrivals to the Isle of Man since 1985. This includes business travellers, visitors of friends and relatives, those who stayed in paid accommodations, and day-trippers.

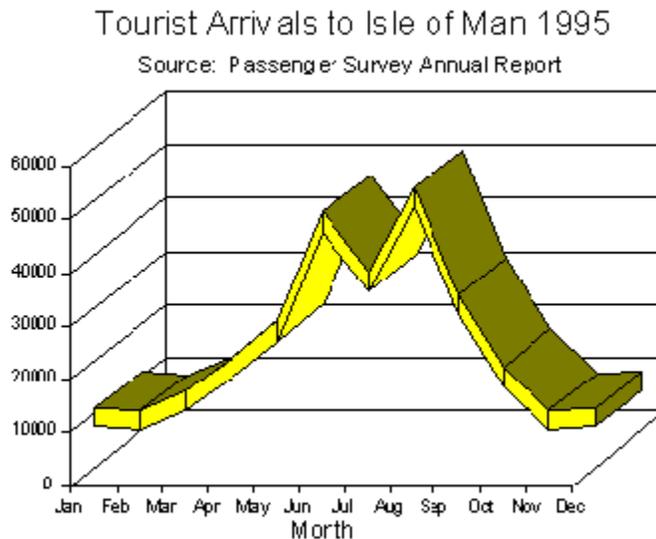


The overall number of tourist arrivals (excluding day visitors) for 1995 was 271,818 (Isle of Man 1996). The breakdown of these numbers by month is shown in the graph below. There is a marked difference between the season in the Isle of Man and the other areas studied. The peak is in August, whereas July is a serious low season. This is the result of years of decline in the industry on the island which has seen the government having to change its strategies from summer holidays to short break visits that occur mainly in the off-season.

The modes of transport to the island are controlled mainly by two private companies. The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company transports residents to Dublin, Belfast, Heysham, Fleetwood, and Liverpool, while Manx Airlines has flight connections to several cities in the United Kingdom.

There are also three other airlines that provide competition on some routes.

This island provides an example of an economy forced to diversify in the face of the decline of the tourist industry upon which it depended so heavily. It shows how a government has stepped in to provide services that the private sector will not, and it demonstrates what happens when private-sector companies provide the only form of access to the island.



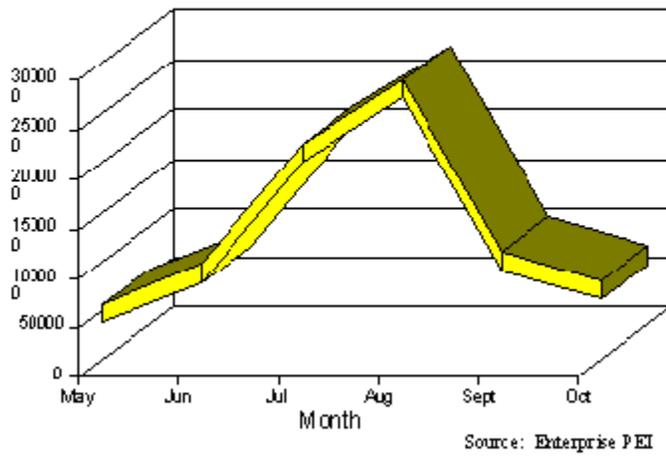
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## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Prince Edward Island has been a province of Canada since 1873. Provincial status has allowed the island to have its own legislative assembly to rule on such issues as civil law, education, health and social services, economic development, and labour legislation. The main industries on the island are agriculture, tourism, and fisheries, in that order. The services sector employed 29.5% of workers in 1995, including tourism (Enterprise PEI).

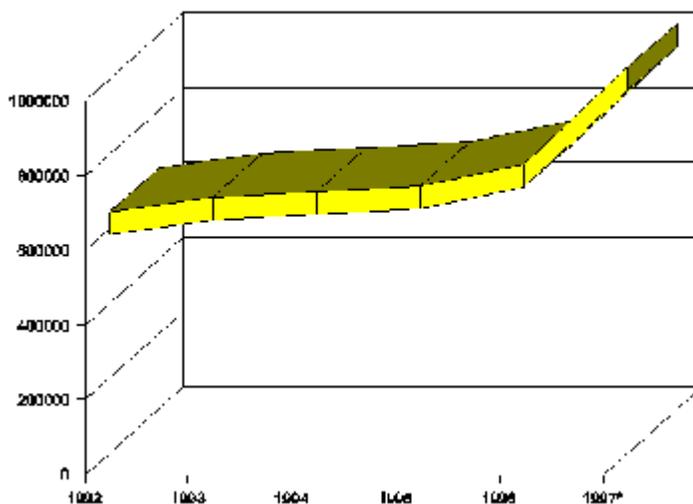
As the graph below denotes, the tourism season has a busy July and August, peaking in August, but a slow June and September.

## 1996 Business and Pleasure Arrivals To P.E.I.



This differs somewhat from Åland and Iceland where June is almost as strong as August, and July is the busiest month. Part of an explanation for this is that the school year ends in May in these areas. Typical visitors to Prince Edward Island come from the other Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland (27%), Ontario and Québec (26%), and the northeastern United States (9%); most arrive in their own car. A surprising number of visitors (75%) are over forty years old, 16% come in families, and 75% are couples. There has been a marked levelling of the tourist numbers since 1993, with annual growth rates of 14% (1993-94), then only 2% (1994-95) and 1.4% (1995-96). The number of business travellers in 1996 was also down in numbers to 1992 levels (Prince Edward Island 1996). An historical view of tourist arrivals to Prince Edward Island is provided below. Unfortunately, the only comparable data available starts in 1992.

### Pleasure Travel Visitation 1992-1997



The whole of the Maritime region had a poor season in 1996. However, a new thirteen-kilometre bridge linking the island with the neighbouring province of New Brunswick created a boom this year; estimations are that visitor numbers jumped by almost 30% in the summer of 1997. The Confederation Bridge should also encourage business travel as travel time and inconvenience are decreased.

Another aspect of the industry which bears examination is the heavy tourist concentration around the capital city of Charlottetown and an area on the North Shore called Cavendish. In 1996, 79% of all pleasure travellers visited the Charlottetown area and 75% visited Cavendish (Prince Edward Island 1996).

Promotion for Prince Edward Island is conducted by different groups in the areas concerned. The provincial government includes a division called Tourism PEI which controls the publication of the annual tourist guide and numerous promotional materials, public relations, and development and support in the private sector. The Tourism Association of Prince Edward Island is a non-profit organization to encourage the cooperation among private operators and between them and the government. This group also assists in the training of employees in the hospitality industry and joining with other provinces in group marketing to larger areas. Other area tourist associations such as the Cavendish Area Tourist Association are concerned with specific geographic regions of the island.

Prince Edward Island is the setting for Lucy Maud Montgomery's renowned novel *Anne of Green Gables*, which was first published in 1908. Montgomery grew up on the Island and her love for Prince Edward Island is communicated in her writing. The novel is part of the Japanese school curriculum; as a result, 1.6% of visitors to Prince Edward Island in 1996 were from Japan (Prince Edward Island 1996). The Japanese are attracted to the Anne of Green Gables theme: visiting a replica of the fictional "Green Gables House," attending a musical based on the novel, visiting Montgomery's grave, and purchasing mementos. Television shows based on other Montgomery books such as *The Road to Avonlea* and *Emily of New Moon* have also generated national as well as international attention for the island.

In previous years, tourism promotions have relied heavily on the Anne theme. However, this is occurring less in recent years as promotion moves towards the activity-based holidays. As well, the many marinas across the island offer much for the seafaring tourist. However, the packages are much less developed than they are in Europe. Bird-watching and fishing have been promoted, and a coast-to-coast walking trail consisting of abandoned railway lines offers a consistent route from province to province for the cyclist, hiker, and walker.

Tourism PEI has also begun to package the island as a premier sporting destination, offering off-season prices on golf, weekend, and activity packages. The province has also extended the hours of its prime Visitor Information Centres until the middle of October. Prince Edward Island has also collaborated with neighbouring provinces in marketing and training programs for private businesses.

The challenges faced by Prince Edward Island remain the cool wet climate in the spring and fall and the encouragement of businesses to open earlier and close later when there is little profit to

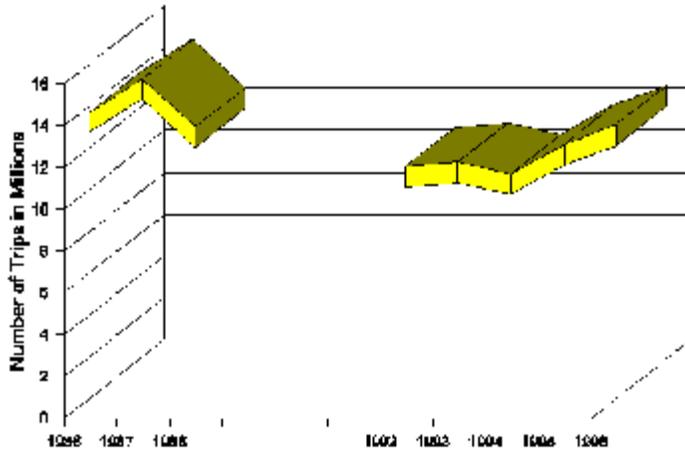
be made. Areas such as Cavendish become virtual ghost towns in the matter of a day following Labour Day at the beginning of September. The Confederation Bridge opens up a larger market, while at the same time increasing competition from the mainland. The Province is looking to the spring season for growth potential.

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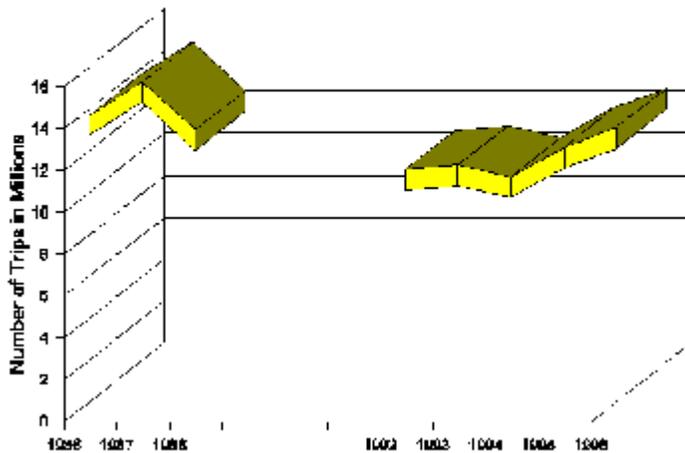
## **SCOTLAND**

Although not an island, Scotland is presented with the same tourism challenges as the other North Atlantic islands included here. Its northern wet climate requires constant imagination in coming up with new activities that aren't dependent on the weather. Its population is roughly 5 million people with almost 1.5 million living in the two main cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The main source of Scotland's tourists is the United Kingdom, and they are seeking everything from adventure and activity in the Highlands to culture and night life in the cities. Historical data on tourist arrivals in the graph below denote a varying number of visitors over the years; unfortunately, data from the years 1989-1991 are unavailable. Important to note is that overseas tourists have been on the rise since 1985 (with a slight dip in 1994), so it is the [LAURA? decrease in] domestic numbers that have caused the numbers to change.

**Total Number of Trips to Scotland  
1985-1988 and 1992-1996**



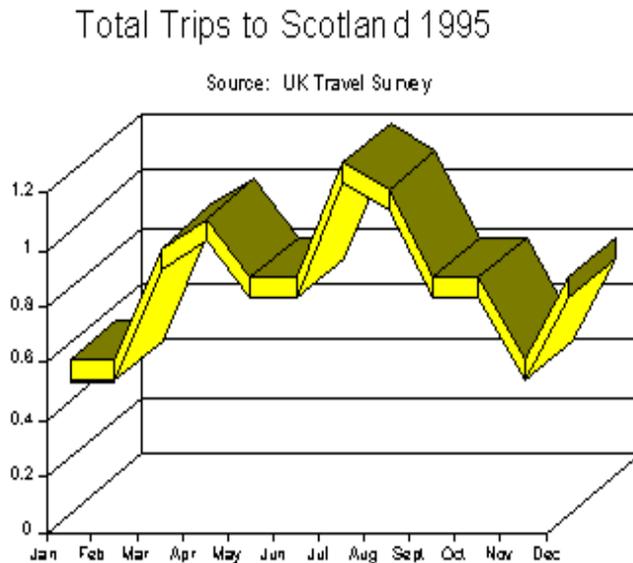
**Total Number of Trips to Scotland  
1985-1988 and 1992-1996**



In 1995, 9.7 million trips were made to Scotland by visitors from within the United Kingdom, and 1.77 million from overseas. The majority of travellers used a private car to travel while there, and those visiting friends and relatives (VFR), accounted for 35% of all British travellers and 20% of overseas travellers in 1994 (STB 1996). The nature of the market is similar to the other markets included in the study, with a high proportion of tourists to population and an industry based on domestic travel.

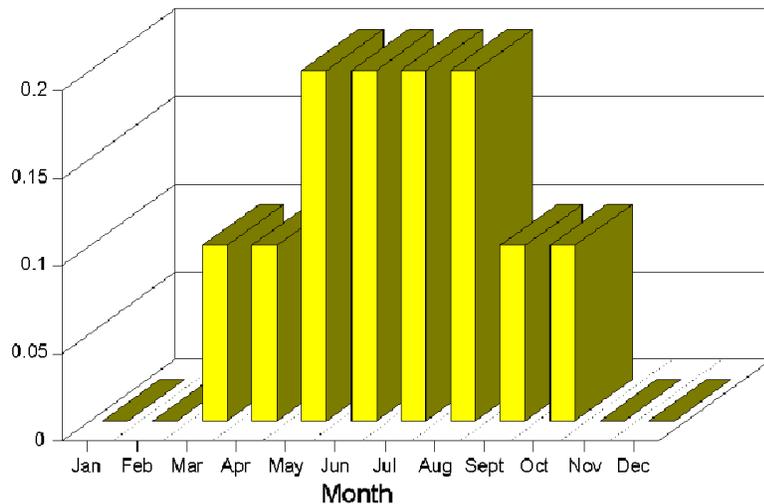
The population of Scotland has similar characteristics to island dwellers, especially Åland. Both are subject to domination by the neighbouring sovereign state and they harbour animosity and resentment toward the more powerful state. They regard their lifestyle as Scottish or Ålandish rather than British or Finnish. Their way of life is different and, thus, they offer varying tourist products. Recently, Scotland has experienced growth in the tourism industry thanks to the

success of two Hollywood movies based on the historical figures of William Wallace (*Braveheart*) and Rob Roy (*Rob Roy*). Promotion is carried out regionally because of the different products offered throughout the country.



The seasonal nature of the industry is demonstrated in the graph below, which shows the number of trips taken by residents of the United Kingdom in 1995. The Easter and summer peaks are noticeable, as well as a sharp increase in December, which could be influenced by the Hogmanay celebration in Edinburgh or the various Christmas celebrations held throughout the country. When considering Scotland, the second graph shows how important it is to pay attention to regions as opposed to the country as a whole. This graph shows the distribution of domestic tourist trips in the Highlands, demonstrating that their season is not as evenly distributed as that of Scotland as a whole. An important note when considering this monthly data is that any month receiving less than 50,000 people was not counted; therefore, there are zero levels in some of the graphs.

## Total Number of Trips to Highlands and Islands 1995



Tourism in Scotland falls under the mandate of the Department of National Heritage in the government of the United Kingdom. In 1969, the Development of Tourism Act delegated responsibilities to arm's length bodies in the individual countries for their tourism marketing within the United Kingdom. Therefore, Wales, Scotland, England, and Northern Ireland each have their own tourist boards which are funded by the Secretary of State for each country. Regionally, there are more tourist boards, and, locally, there are even more. The British Tourist Authority is strictly in charge of marketing the United Kingdom internationally (however, it is working with the Scottish tourist board for Scotland's marketing). Domestic marketing is the realm of the national authorities that develop the products the local and regional bodies provide. Wales has begun to out-source responsibilities, such as accommodation grading, to the private sector. This is opening up a new area in public/private exchanges in tourism.

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## ÖLAND

Öland is a small island (1,345 km) off the southeastern coast of Sweden. In 1972, a six-kilometre bridge was completed, connecting the little island to mainland Sweden. Since the construction of the bridge, the population of Öland has grown slightly as commuters to the mainland choose to live in Öland.

Tourist arrivals have also risen. In recent years, the 25,000 residents of Öland have been bombarded with an estimated 2.5 million tourists every year. Their tourist season is very short since the seasonal workforce moves to the ski resorts in the north of Sweden in the middle of August. The communities on the island are active in attracting tourism to the island. The other main industry is agriculture; Öland farmers grow primarily strawberries, onions, potatoes, and sugar beets.

Unfortunately, no statistical data on tourist arrivals are available for Öland. Most of the arrivals are day-trippers and, with no toll on the bridge, statistics-gathering is difficult.

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## PROFILE OF THE OFF-SEASON TOURIST

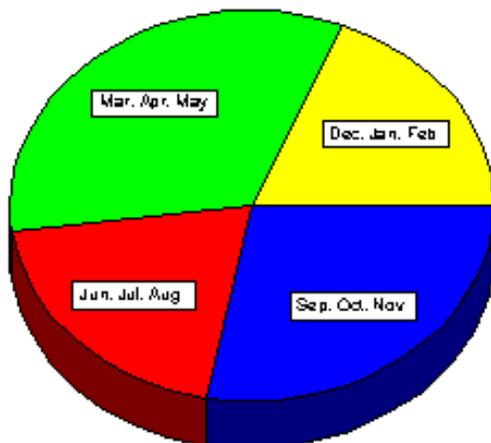
Individuals travelling in the off-season may also take vacations in the summer. However, in the fall, winter, and spring they become a different market with new needs in response to the changes in environment.

In a report prepared for the Canadian Tourist Commission (Canada 1996), Coopers and Lybrand profiled the Canadian domestic travellers according to the season in which they travel. They concluded that spring travellers are "young, but approaching middle age, married, and middle income." (p. 19) These consumers enjoy outdoor activities and beach vacations and are more likely to travel within Canada. Fall travellers, as compared to travellers in other seasons, are older and are more inclined to visit friends and relatives. They are also generally more educated and interested in knowledge-based attractions. This segment is also attracted to the United States as a fall travelling alternative. Winter travellers are again a younger segment searching for outdoor activity as opposed to cultural enrichment that is characteristic of the fall traveller. This segment has proven to be higher income earners and less likely to have children (Canada 1996).

There are also specific segments of travellers that are applicable to the islands in the study. The most often cited off-season group is the business traveller. Their characteristics are described in various publications (Seaton and Bennett 1996, Holloway 1994, Ritchie and Goeldner 1994, EC 1993, Getz 1991) and can be divided into three types: individual, conference, and incentive. The graph below depicts the distribution of off-premises corporate meetings as researched by *Meetings and Conventions* (1992).

## Off-Premises Meetings by Season

Source: Abbey and Link 1994

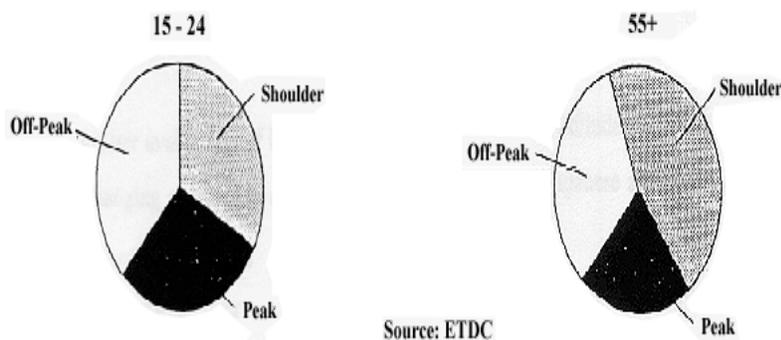


Accessibility and reliability of transportation, accommodation standardization, urban proximity, and business tools (i.e., faxes, copiers, phones, computer hook-ups) are all demands of this segment.

Conferences can vary from non-profit associations to large-scale corporate gatherings. However, trade publications estimate that 75% of corporate meetings host fewer than one hundred individuals (Abbey and Link 1994), thus opening up the market to large numbers of small-scale convention sites. The needs of the convention delegates are the same as the individual business traveller, but the convention planners look for other additional factors such as support from local community, price of food and rooms, and activities for spouses and children. As well, new developments in the conference market have led to the need for exhibition space for other businesses seeking new clients in the conference. Fears of this market being negatively affected by an increase in use of technology such as conference calls, video conferencing, and e-mail have been largely unfounded. On the contrary, as this segment grows, telecommunication equipment will come to complement the market, allowing for more participants than ever before (Abbey and Link 1994).

Insurance companies and car dealerships have historically rewarded top employees with exciting and exotic vacations. These vacationers are termed "incentive travellers" and they demand a high level of service and quality. The experience must be memorable, often incorporating a high-profile or original event.

Another segment of travellers is senior citizens. The following graph identifies the skew of people in Europe over the age of fifty-five who travel in the course of a year (EC 1993). The report defines peak season as July and August; shoulder season as May, June, September, and October; and off-season as November to April.



As the graph denotes, a minority of people over the age of fifty-five in Europe travel in the peak season. This demonstrates the accessibility of this segment for travel in the shoulder months. The European Commission argues that by the year 2000, one in five Europeans will be over the age of sixty-five (CEC1993). Comparatively, Foot and Stoffman (1996: 207) estimate that Canada will not reach this ratio until the year 2020. Either way, it is obvious that the market will develop in both regions. Foot and Stoffman suggest keeping an eye on the older individuals in the age groups as they are the trend-setters (for example, the shift in the 1980s toward tennis as the early

boomers tried to regain their youth, and the consequent increase in popularity of bird-watching and golf in the 1990s as these same boomers slow down).

The Commission's report indicates that "Senior citizens are a multi-segmented market sector, reflecting the varied physical and intellectual characteristics of those concerned." (1993:26) It outlines some common characteristics:

- scenery and culture are important;
- comfortable transport and accommodation (i.e., good heating and easy access) are valued;
- accessible medical help is necessary;
- clear explanations, several stops on a long journey, and familiar meeting points are preferred;
- price is a factor in destination choice; and
- activities and socialization are important.

Empty-nesters and DINKS (Double Income No Kids) also like to travel in the off-season; however, they tend to be more flexible than seniors in terms of when and where they travel. Generally, these segments have more money and are looking for active vacations.

Overlapping the age categories are some specific activity groups. For example, ecotourism has become a popular form of tourism. Eagles details the travel motivations of the Canadian ecotourist. The author identifies the following social motives for this market:

- physically active;
- starting a new life;
- searching for a change from a busy job;
- attracted to local crafts and culture; and
- meeting people with similar interests.

He also mentions that ecotourists are very price-conscious, despite their higher income (Eagles 1992). Other insights into this group reveal their loyalty to quality service and their adversity to weather. The Highlands of Scotland play host to thousands of tourists in the off-season who take in the scenery and wildlife of the area. Little care is needed to house this market since they usually prefer self-catering accommodation; however, services such as early breakfasts and warm rooms with places for the adventurers to dry their clothing complement the experience.

Adventure tourists may also fall under the ecotourist title; however, these also include snowmobilers, white-water rafters, hikers, and other fall and winter sporting enthusiasts.

Students are another good low-cost market for off-season development in tourism. For example, many school tours visit Åland in the month of May at the end of the school year. In June, Prince Edward Island hosts elementary school visits from schools in Eastern Canada as well as from the island before the big season starts. Packages containing information on the island for the teachers and the children, along with good directions, are essential to this segment. Other considerations are entertainment that is open in the evenings, heritage sites available to be visited during the day, and activities that appeal to adults as well as children. University sport is also considered

big business over Easter on the Isle of Man. This market is searching for good recreation facilities, as well as pubs and bars with entertainment to fill the evenings.

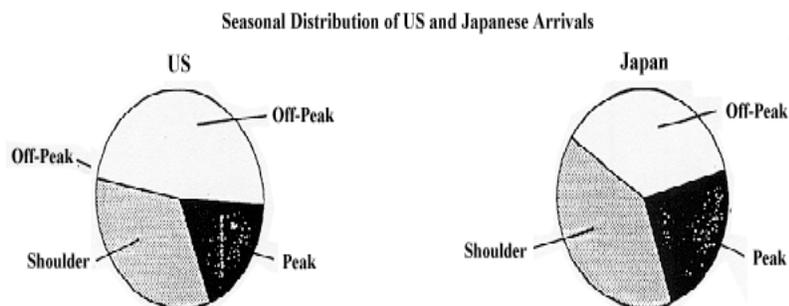
The Commission of the European Communities (1993) identified long-haul tourists, specifically North American and Japanese, as potential off-season visitors. It cites Europe's heritage and culture to be of more interest to North Americans than the warm climate, thus travel is not constrained by the weather. "Only 8.5 percent of the (US) population hold a valid passport" (p. 20) so the possibility for growth is very great. Long-haul tourists are generally empty-nesters, seniors and students (McEniff 1992), so they are searching for value and activity.

On the other hand, the Japanese are increasing their propensity to travel, with their numbers visiting Europe doubling over the years 1985-1991 (CEC 1993: 21). Prince Edward Island has seen the number of Japanese travellers to the province increase at an average annual rate of 17% since 1993 (Prince Edward Island 1996: 126).

The CEC study identified some factors that will contribute to the growth in Japanese travel:

- growth in Japanese incomes;
- greater availability of leisure time and a change in attitudes to leisure and work;
- changing attitudes to overseas travel among the Japanese aided by the appreciation of the Yen;
- links between overseas travel and increased Japanese overseas investment;
- government initiatives including overseas travel promotion campaigns, easing of restrictions, the use of fiscal incentives, air transport policy and the campaign against workaholism; and
- promotions by EC tourist agencies. (p. 22)

These elements can be kept in mind when thinking of Japanese travel in general, not necessarily just to Europe. The Japanese require excellent service, high-quality meals, specific attention, and very clean surroundings. Gestures such as Japanese language signs or serving Japanese tea are added touches (CEC 1993). It is interesting to note that although the proportion of Japanese visitors to Prince Edward Island increased, their length of stay, expenditure per party, and average party size decreased in 1996 (Prince Edward Island 1996). This may indicate that the extras are not being offered to the visitors or they are being marketed to for the wrong season. The CEC study suggests the following distribution of travellers from Japan:



The Prince Edward Island survey indicates that 62% of Japanese travellers to the island come during peak season; therefore, there is great potential for an enlarged market for the island.

Recent trends in European vacations show travellers taking several short breaks versus the traditional two-week family vacation. Weekend get-aways and four-to-five day breaks are becoming the norm in the industry, and encouraging to operators is the fact that only half of these short breaks are taken between May and September (Martins 1989).

Europeans are more inclined to use pre-arranged packages, as opposed to North Americans whose travel is mainly domestic. However, short break packages have become successful in the off-season in North America because of the overall discounts and cost savings they provide to the consumer. The Canadian Tourism Commission advise the marketing of packages in the off-season in order to target the millions of potential Canadian shoulder month travellers (16,255,000 trips -- Canada 1996). Prince Edward Island, for example, has begun to offer golf, cycling, romance, culture, and family packages across the island, all providing different prices for peak and off-season.

The final type of tourist to travel in the off-season is the culture or heritage tourist. Culture is not usually dependent on weather, hence, it can be experienced at any time. This tourist can fit into any of the above categories of ecotourist, school visitor, and special interest. An addition to the criteria laid out for these tourists would be the visitation of heritage sites which can be indoors. For example, the Manx Museum and the Peel Heritage Centre, which describe the history and people of the Isle of Man, are open all year and offer hours of entertainment for the heritage tourist.

This quick summary of the type of tourists who travel in the off-season is meant to offer some insight into the market for the attractions on the islands in order to better understand the case studies. An overriding point in literature on off-season tourism is the need to tie quality and price to form value for money for the travellers. Seniors and students are savers on fixed incomes, hence a growing need for value will dictate tourism in the shoulder months.

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## **THE COMMUNITY AND TOURISM**

The extension of the tourist season entails much more than offering festivals and events and keeping museums and hotels open. Often the intensity of the summer tourist season leaves the environment and the population fatigued and needing rest. The off-season is a time for the residents to return to normal and use the streets, services, and activities that are so often congested with tourists in the summer (Murphy 1985). As Hartmann (1986:32) puts it, "a dormant period for the host environment is simply a necessity in order to preserve its identity." On the other hand, this peaking causes exceptional strains on the community and its infrastructure which is most likely designed to handle resident population rather than visitor numbers (Murphy 1985). As well, the lack of full-time permanent employment in the sector

hinders the employment base in dependent communities. These aspects must be kept in mind when dealing with the off-season. This is why a distinction has been made between the off-season and the winter season, where the winter season could serve as the "dormant period" while the off-season provides the opportunity for expansion. Nevertheless, it is the community that must play host to the guests, and thus the community that must want to further the season.

It is relatively easy for the business person to see the positive results of a tourism industry, but the private individual's opinions may be clouded by the negative effects of visitors. It is these opinions that can affect the quality of service offered by an area. In a labour-intensive industry such as tourism, this poor service can have a direct effect on visitor numbers.

As the traditional mass tourist is replaced with the more experienced short-break visitor, diversity and sustainability will be the key aspects to any area's tourism product. "It is crucial to the tourism industry's survival, therefore, to develop a better understanding of its local image and its impact on the host community, and to consider the long-term effects of its development plans." (Murphy 1985: 118) Without local involvement and management, growth and development will not be realized since the success of the hospitality industry often rests at the local level with workers, owners, and politicians. The extension of the tourist season into the shoulder months is a goal that is often economically desirable for the businesses involved. However, whether or not it is socially viable depends on the attitudes of the residents. It is important to know some factors that contribute to the formation of these opinions in order to prevent conflicts, and to promote what is desired by the community, the hosts themselves.

Murphy (1985) explains that locals' attitudes are dictated by the following:

- the physical and social carrying capacity of the area;
- the type and extent of visitor/resident contact;
- the importance of the industry to the area and the individuals; and
- the type of promotion chosen for the area;

This author would like to add: *the level of the decision-making authority for the industry in the area.*

Peter Murphy notes that the community has as its resources: the environment and the people. The physical carrying capacity of a destination depends on the management of the resources and the infrastructure in place to handle these resources. The formulation of a form of carrying capacity for an area attempts to balance the expectations of the tourist with the protection of sensitive areas. It decreases conflict between these two bodies because it "must take into account the recreation activities and needs of visitors in addition to the biological parameters of a site." (Murphy 1985: 65)

The social carrying capacity of a destination is formed from the attitudes of the residents and their tolerance to the presence of tourists. The acknowledgement of a social carrying capacity demonstrates that destinations have "a finite supply of resources, including hospitality." (Murphy 1985: 134) Several factors are involved in a community's formulation of a social carrying capacity. In general, however, the more knowledgeable the residents are about the benefits of

tourism, and the greater their involvement in the process, the higher their threshold of tolerance (Murphy 1985).

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## **ECKERÖ, ÅLAND ISLANDS**

Eckerö is a municipality in Åland with a population of only 816 (ÅSUB 1997), yet it plays host to between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors a day in the peak season. The season lasts for only six weeks in July and August and its intensity allows for the residents to be content with its brevity. Residents of the community have found visitors in their gardens or taking their rowboats out for a spin. This type of contact discourages the involvement of the community in the extension of the season and affects their attitude toward the visitor.

The municipality recognizes this problem as a management problem as it ties into the social and physical carrying capacity of the area. Its solution is to mark certain trails for the tourist to follow, as well as suggesting places to picnic and rent boats. The logic is, if the tourist has a path to follow, then he or she will not wander about everywhere else. The containment of the traffic flow (foot or car) to a certain route decreases damage to unprotected areas and safeguards the residents' privacy.

Eckerö is also a ferry town with Eckerö Linjen transporting 600,000 passengers a year to and from Sweden. The town's challenge is to capture the visitors before they drive on through to the rest of the islands. In this respect, it is comparable to Borden-Carleton, Prince Edward Island, which has long served as the gateway to the island with a year-round ferry route running back and forth to New Brunswick. In June of 1997, this community faced the even larger obstacle of a bridge opening that partially bypasses the community. A new gateway to Prince Edward Island has been established in Borden-Carleton to welcome visitors and encourage them to stop; it includes retail shops and a visitor centre. Eckerö has approached their problem using the following ideas:

- distribution of promotional material at the opposite ferry crossing;
- the option of a day program for those visitors on foot who are only there for a few hours;
- arrangement of sightseeing tours by taxi for a fixed price for an hour or two to ensure the nicer parts of the area are pointed out;
- the possibility of a horse and carriage ride from the ferry through the town; and
- the provision of numerous camping and cottage sites.

The village is ideal for coastal cottages and attractive campsites with a view of the water; these are both options for Borden-Carleton. If the accommodations are available and marketed, then the tourists may enjoy staying in Borden-Carleton or Eckerö for the start of their trip.

Eckerö is very much a fishing community. It has realized the potential of fishing as a recreational alternative for the sport fisher as well as for the family in the spring and fall. In Åland, a different fishing license is required for each area since the water has many different owners. However, in Eckerö, the owners have formed five associations that allow licenses to be bought for any area

and the money goes towards rebuilding the fish stocks. Also, work in tourism has been put toward the projects listed below:

- Fishing is being packaged as a tangible product. This includes offering the equipment and the location as well as the facilities for the tourists to prepare the fish themselves.
- Restocking the fish to ensure future prosperity is also part of the development program.
- Every Wednesday and Saturday during the season, 100 fish are set free from the farm in Eckerö and the tourists are almost guaranteed a nibble. Children also become involved because no license is required for those under 12 and the fish are easier to catch.
- An annual fishing competition is held over two days in April. This allows fishing enthusiasts to gather to compete and visit the community.
- A new hunting and fishing museum has opened in a fishing harbour three kilometres from the ferry, with a shop selling local crafts. The building is set among numerous fishing sheds and blends in well architecturally. It closes in the winter season but will open for any individual or group who would like to visit during this time.

The municipality partially funds an association that works with private industry in the area to offer help and advise and act as a coordinator among the various interests (much the same as tourism industry associations in other areas). This association has received funding from the EU under its regional development plan to develop some alternatives for Eckerö. The leader of this association, Peter Winqvist, has a vision for developing a tourist structure that is not susceptible to the three determining factors of the Åland tourist industry: transportation access, Finnish and Swedish currency fluctuation, and climate. The plan is to work closely with locals to encourage them to take pride in the details of their business in order to differentiate among the businesses and allow some of their culture to emerge.

For example, rather than serving the standard hamburger, local fish or dessert dishes could be offered instead. This strengthens the residents' identity and gives the visitor a more authentic experience. Another example is the handcraft school where textiles, metals, and woods are used to create crafts. This school will produce the skilled labour that is lacking in Eckerö now and provide the basis of the tourist industry. Mr. Winqvist sees this opportunity as it meshes with the development in Mariehamn of the waterfront where some craft stores could be located. This is an example of how local services for the residents can both produce employment and income in an area, as well as benefit the tourist in offering a better product. The key, according to Mr. Winqvist, is to stimulate new money and ideas, and, in order to do that, new skilled people are required. Projects such as this school offer such opportunities to expand the knowledge base of the community, which makes them more open to new experiences and possibly more welcoming to tourism and its effects. Finally, the local level of the association allows for input from the businesses to be considered individually rather than taken in Åland as a whole.

Many fishing villages could benefit from the Eckerö example, as it is one of the most successful municipalities in Åland in the handling of its tourism industry. It has managed to combine its two main industries to complement each other well.

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## EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

In Edinburgh, Scotland's capital, the Old Town is alive with varying degrees of tourist activity for most of the year thanks to the draw of Edinburgh's castle and the various "tacky tourist" shops along the Royal Mile. However, there is very little vertical or horizontal integration among the businesses, narrow diversity in the products offered, and few residents in the Old Town (Parlett et.al 1995). A strategy has been suggested by Parlett, Fletcher, and Cooper that identifies five key elements to the Old Town's sustainability and development :

- effective management to ensure a sustainable resource;
- provision of a management manual and annual audits to maintain the built environment;
- providing a more balanced retail environment, one that caters to locals as well as tourists. They mention that the retailing should be "a natural extension of the city centre";
- the development of arts and crafts would encourage local artists to establish studios and possibly relocate to the Old Town; and
- promotion of the area is concentrated with the housing association and private developers to promote the area as a residential location. Hand-in-hand with this is the improvement of local amenities for the residents. (Parlett et al. 1995)

These elements are designed to integrate the locals into the tourist area. Locations such as Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, which have become dominated by tourists in the summer and then find it difficult to offer services in the winter, can also learn from such initiatives.

Edinburgh has been successful in uniting the tourist and the resident every year during the annual Hogmanay celebrations in the days and nights leading up to New Year's Eve. In the report summarizing the effects of Hogmanay 1995, it is noted that 44% of the participants in 1995 were from the city itself. Twenty-seven per cent of the visitors from outside the city came only for this event. The income into the city was 23 million, with both locals and visitors taking in the planned activities and pubs (STB 1996a). Events and festivals are discussed in the next section; however, their importance in integrating visitors and locals in a common activity must be noted here. It is in the sharing of an authentic celebration that the tourist gets a genuine travel and cultural experience and the resident is sensitized to the guests' presence. The key to Hogmanay's success is its varied activities from December 29 to 31. Everything from free food fairs to Handel's *Messiah* is on offer, with the climax the New Year's Eve Celebration. The word-of-mouth promotion from the thousands who have attended other years, combined with marketing the event as the most famous New Year's Eve festival in Europe, have also added to its popularity.

Promotion plays a key role in the attitude of residents. It forms the expectations of the visitor and may be the difference between an extended stay and an abbreviated one. It also affects the residents in that they are often on the receiving end of the tourist reactions. It is imperative that the local people be involved in the marketing and promotion of their area. Fresh eyes can always draw on aspects that have been taken for granted; however, realistic eyes can also help to keep some perspective and avoid dashed dreams.

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## **FARM TOURISM**

An option that has been well-tested in Iceland is the involvement of the tourist in a setting that meshes the environmental and social aspects of tourism to offer a product that is within a community. Farm tourism has been successful in Iceland and has also encouraged the geographical spread of the industry in the country. Its types vary, but the basic product involves the tourist staying on a family farm, helping out with the chores and getting to know the family and their way of life. Arinbjorn Johansson is a tour operator in the northwest of Iceland who has been offering horseback riding and hiking tours in the area around his farm in Brekkuaekur since 1979. These tours last from six to fourteen days, and involve an experienced guide escorting riders and hikers camping and visiting the farm.

For the last three winters, Mr. Johansson has opened up his home at Christmas and New Year's to groups of tourists who would like a taste of the Icelandic holidays. They help in the preparation of the meals, participate in the traditions of the season, and even receive a gift from their hosts. The guests accompany Mr. Johansson to a local service and a cultural program with local artists. The community welcomes the visitors and the visitors get a genuine look at local culture. On most of his tours, Mr. Johansson arranges a meal at a local farm house with a typical Icelandic family. He believes that by appreciating nature and culture, we defend them. He admits to preferring to spend the holidays alone with his family, but he does enjoy sharing his local community with his guests.

Farm tourism and horseback-riding tours are options for islands to extend the tourist season. Considering that 75% of Prince Edward Island's tourists are over forty years old (Prince Edward Island 1996), these activities will appeal to the growing market of the more active middle-aged baby boomers. Farm tourism is different from guest houses on farms in that the guests participate in the daily routine and have the chance to get to know their hosts. Horseback riding would come under the adventure tours market which travels in the off-season. Mr. Johansson includes some city culture at the beginning of his tours, and then moves to the countryside for camping and riding, and even coach sightseeing, covering different regions of Iceland. The alternatives are numerous, the point being that many activities from adventure to culture can be included in one visit.

Farm tourism in the Isle of Man was relatively unknown until a group of women got together and decided to market it on their own. With no official reservation system on the island, visitors are left to pick accommodations from the visitors guide that provides a list of names and numbers. However, these people have published their own brochure with pictures and descriptions of nine farms to which they welcome tourists. The leaflet entitled "Stay on a Farm" is on display at the tourist information centre and has gotten some interest from German visitors who are known for their love of the outdoors. There is little interaction of the visitors with the actual operation on these particular farms; however, the selling point is the farm atmosphere.

An organization called Scottish Farmhouse Holidays has a list of over one hundred farms in Scotland that offer standardized accommodation on an active farm. They arrange car rentals and ferry transport as well as offer the possibility of moving from farm to farm. Fall harvests mean that the farms are operational well after some of the other summer tourist accommodations close

down. As well, the hosts are the owners of the farms which means more personal interaction with the residents.

For two weeks at the end of May and beginning of June, the Isle of Man is overrun with thousands of visitors attending international motorbike races. The accommodation sector cannot handle the extra people since the rest of the season does not come close to the numbers who visit during this particular fortnight. Therefore, in order to house this influx of people, the Department of Tourism and Leisure has instituted a homestay program whereby tourists can stay at a bed and breakfast in a private home. The homes are registered and inspected by the Department, and the Tourist Information Centre administers the names and vacancies to the visitors. This program has received positive feedback from both guests and hosts, and many long friendships have been formed. While this time of year is the peak for the island, the program demonstrates the ability to involve the community in the hosting of its guests and thus incorporate them more into the community.

Local attitudes were an important factor for a gentleman from Stockholm when he tried to introduce tour skating into Åland. P. G. Brauf is a member of a century-old skating club in Stockholm. A contagiously enthusiastic man, he contacted some people on Åland to see if ice conditions were suitable for skating. The Ålanders' reactions were immediately negative since the activity had never been practised before in Åland and people assumed open water or snow prevented good conditions. However, Brauf tested it and now members of his group in Stockholm make weekly trips to Åland's archipelago.

Tour skates are old-fashioned blades that strap on to special hiking boots. The skaters can travel dozens of kilometres in a day; one group of seniors covered 80 kilometres in one excursion. The sport has caught on in Åland and, recently, some local enthusiasts began organizing and renting equipment for interested parties. In early March 1997, Brauf held a small training session with the staff of the tourist board in Mariehamn; he has since taken the director herself on some trips. Now the staff know enough to be able to recommend the sport as an off-season activity, with Brauf offering to guide any group that shows interest. This sport started at the community level to encourage activity and nature appreciation in the area, and is now evolving into an option for the adventuresome winter traveller. Brauf is anxious to visit other islands to share some of his knowledge.

One fear among some tourist destinations is that their culture is lost on tourists who are short on time and only want a glimpse of the customs, particularly when special events are staged or shortened and the authenticity is lost. To prevent this, Murphy (1985) suggests local heritage be included in the tourism product and to avoid the convenient packaging of the local culture. With regards to Prince Edward Island, this would involve less emphasis on *Anne of Green Gables* whose exploitation was painfully described by Squire (1996). She points out that the beautiful land that was described by Lucy Maud Montgomery has been overrun by signs and fast-buck enterprises.

The Trossachs region (southwest of Scotland) has also taken a community approach to some of its off-season activities. The Forestry Commission in the area sells Christmas trees from their visitor centre in the weeks leading up to Christmas. The Commission is a public body that

produces timber as a regular business; however, the holidays offer the opportunity to make the buying of a tree a festive event for locals and visitors alike. The tea room at the facility has festive treats and the visitor centre offers some education about the forest. This option demonstrates how one community has tied the environment and tourism together to extend the season. Options for other islands could be smaller purchases in the season for the traveller from the mainland, such as eggs for Easter or saplings for the spring. Perhaps even a trip to an apple orchard or berry field could be made a special event and turned into an annual affair for a family. A small village in Prince Edward Island, Victoria-By-The-Sea, opens up its seasonal businesses for one month around Christmastime to encourage people to shop in the cozy small-town atmosphere.

The community remains the base of the tourist industry and must be respected as such. If sustainable tourism is to be achieved, the local population must participate in the activities and decision-making in the area. This means that not only private operators but residents and workers as well must become interested since it is the future of their community that is at stake. At the same time, it is important for an area to be aware of the effect tourism has on the economy in order to demonstrate the benefits the industry offers the area. Eckerö's example showed how the town has combined its two main industries to work together. Edinburgh has demonstrated the need for residents to keep its tourist areas alive. And the Trossachs and Iceland have shown how respect for the environment can be incorporated to protect and enjoy the resource base. These cases all demonstrate the importance and global scope of sustainability and community participation in the off-season tourism product.

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## **FESTIVALS AND EVENTS**

As mentioned earlier, it is through interaction among locals and tourists that the true cultural exchange occurs, and this is what festivals and events can offer a location. As well, festivals have the ability to concentrate people away from the city centre and the more environmentally sensitive environs into areas that are less developed. A festival or event may encourage tourists to return again to the destination to see more of the area, or they may find accommodation outside the city, resulting in a geographic spread of visitors.

Edinburgh has focused a great deal on festivals and events to generate tourist numbers in both the summer and winter seasons. Between December 1995 and August 1996, nine festivals generated an estimated 122 million of additional expenditure in the city, resulting in 30 million in income and roughly 2,545 full time jobs (STB 1996b). The areas surrounding the city have also benefitted from the events since some visitors chose to stay outside of the city or travel in the area before or after the festival.

The first year of a festival or event does not automatically draw a large crowd. This is why Tove Erikslund-Henriksson from Ålands Turistförbund suggests that a festival should begin in the high season to entertain those who are already there and to create public awareness. The following years it can be moved ahead or pushed back in the season as it becomes a draw in its own right. This is what Åland has done with its Match Race (a tall ships race), which had its

debut in July in 1996 and was held again in August 1997. This may seem like a small change but July is very much Åland's high season, while August's numbers are almost the same as June's.

In his book, *Festivals, Special Events and Tourism* (1991), Donald Getz identifies some more specific and developmental advantages to festivals and events that can be demonstrated with some examples from various destinations:

- expansion of the tourist season;
- animation of static attractions and facilities;
- image makers;
- catalysts for urban development and renewal; and
- alternative tourist product and promoters of sustainable development.

The animation of static attractions and facilities is well exemplified by the Viking Festival "Up Helly Aa" held in the Shetland Islands off the north coast of Scotland. This festival is held in January and begins with the Scalloway Fire Festival. A Viking bearing a torch leads a procession through the ancient capital of Scalloway to the wharf where a replica Viking ship awaits. The street lights are turned off as the people follow the Viking to the ship. The ship is then set aflame, commencing the celebrations that continue through the night. The spirit of the festival stems from Viking and pagan ancestors who traditionally celebrated in the winter. Local talent is on offer throughout the festival, breaking up the cold winter for the residents and visitors alike. While the visiting numbers are not large, visiting musicians and their families do provide some extra traffic flow. The Fire Festival gives a much more dramatic effect than any museum exhibit ever could!

The ability of an event to create an image for an area or theme should not be underestimated. In Åland, a weekend in March is dedicated to Literature, with famous writers from nearby Sweden and Finland coming to the islands. There are numerous events planned throughout the weekend, including several readings as well as evening cultural events. Many people come for the first time from Sweden and the mainland of Finland to hear their favourite authors, helping to create awareness of Åland as a tourist destination. Also along this theme, Edinburgh hosts a book festival every two years in August; it has potential for the off-season months of September and October. It generates 1.84 million for the city with 62,000 visitors (STB 1992). It hosts both publishers and authors. These events help to give a destination more of a cultural image, which in turn diversifies the visitor base.

Getz's next point is the capacity of festivals to encourage urban development and renewal. This is demonstrated by Glasgow. Glasgow is known as a city with incredibly friendly people, although, as a remnant of the industrial era, its dirty buildings and cluttered seashore do nothing for the attraction of tourists. Thus its festivals and events are very important to the tourism industry. Celtic Connections is an annual event held in Glasgow from the middle of January until the first of February. It plays host to some of the biggest names in music such as Emmylou Harris, the Chieftains, and Shane McGowan; Atlantic Canada has been well represented in the past with Ashley MacIsaac, the Barra MacNeils, and Great Big Sea. It encompasses several venues around the city, including the Royal Concert Hall, local pubs and hotels, as well as a ferry permanently docked on the River Clyde. The pubs stay open an hour later (still only until 1 a.m.)

to catch the influx of music lovers. It is similar to the annual East Coast Music Awards celebration in Atlantic Canada.

However, there is more to this Festival than just music. The passions of the country are incorporated into debates, lectures, and workshops on politics, sport, and music. These are held at the nearby university to give an all-round experience to the event. For example, for 6 you can spend an hour and a half learning to play the harp with Catriona MacKay or learn to step or ceilidh dance with the experts. Debates entitled "Scotland at the Millennium: A Broadcasting Debate," or lectures such as "Edinburgh's Shore Poets," can be taken in at the University of Strathclyde.

The entire event is heavily publicized throughout the city with billboards, posters, and pamphlets. An added feature is a 94-page *Festival Guide* that details each day's events, how to purchase tickets and the tourist information centre number for visitors. These can be obtained at the tourist information centre or in local pubs. An offer is extended to the reader to become a Friend of Celtic Connections, offering the "Friend" the brochure in the mail, reduced entrance fees to afternoon and evening ceilidhs, discounts on tickets to the festival as well as other concerts, waiting list priority, and advance notice of the next year's events. The annual fee to become a member is 25.

Sponsors for the event include the city of Glasgow, ScotRail, various record companies, Glencore Grain United Kingdom Ltd., the Scottish Arts Council, United Distillers, the National Heritage Arts Sponsorship Scheme, and the Russell Trust.

The city of Reykjavík in Iceland has been working at establishing itself as a destination for New Year's Eve celebrations. In 1996, it played host to around two thousand visitors, while five years ago there were only about fifteen. The bulk of the work has been done by the private tour operators or those owned by Icelandair. They offer packages to the tourists that include hotel accommodation, tours around Iceland, and a gala dinner on New Year's Eve. The locals have bonfires in the streets to celebrate the evening, and a tour of the bonfires is also planned for the visitors.

The director of tourism in Reykjavík, Anna Margret Gudjonsdóttir, thinks that locals find it exciting to have guests around at that time of year, since it is such a new phenomenon. She hopes that the city can maintain its traditions while still playing host to the visitors. She fears that the locals may become objects on display if tourism grows too much. This is why they have formulated a plan that will set its goals for the future and set the course of the industry in the city. She says tourism is of vital importance to the city and doesn't think that a public body should be in charge of marketing. That is why a new organization based on private shareholders will be introduced. This is modelled after one in Dublin, Ireland, whose success in this area has encouraged Reykjavík's plans.

Another city that has concentrated on the New Year for its festival theme is Edinburgh. Its annual Hogmanay festival attracts thousands of people from across the United Kingdom for the days preceding New Year's Eve, and an estimated 350,000 residents and tourists were on the streets of Edinburgh on December 31, 1996. With its reputation as one of "the" places to be on

New Year's Eve, Edinburgh gets a lot of word-of-mouth promotion for its festival. It is also advertised in the promotional material for the city and visitors to Edinburgh are reminded by flyers and posters posted across the city.

An event that incorporates both the concentration of a festival outside the city and activity in the downtown can be found on the Swedish island of Öland. In October 1996, it introduced a food festival. This is a far-reaching initiative that includes tours of food-processing factories on the island, sampling of traditional dishes in the local restaurants, and climaxing with a cook-off at the castle ruins overlooking the community of Borgholm. Invitations are sent out to all the famous Swedish chefs and the event is featured for two hours on Swedish radio. The theme for the festival will change every year; 1997's dishes were all made with cod or herring. For a part of the world that sees most of its tourist businesses close down in the middle of August, this is definitely a late event. The ski season beckons most tourists and business people north in August; however, it is hoped that this festival in the fall will mark the slowing down of the new extended season. To mark the beginning of the season, the same castle in Öland opens with Medieval Days, where local people dress up in period costume and host visitors in the castle ruins. Traditional meals are served and entertainment is provided.

The Isle of Man saw its tourist season all but collapse with the advent of the package tour. In recent years, the strategy has refocused on the shoulder months because concrete factors such as transportation links and unseasonable weather have given them no choice. However, this strategy has paid off since it is now equipped to attract the increasing number of off-season short-break travellers. The Department of Tourism has a specific Special Events Unit that works year-round at promoting, administering, and developing the over ninety festivals and events on the island. A busy time for the island is over the Easter break. In the United Kingdom, schools and universities get two weeks' vacation around the Easter Holiday, providing ample opportunity for a season in itself. There are many sports events that occur over the fortnight, the biggest of which is the student festival of sport which attracted 2,700 visitors, 7,884 bed nights, and a total expenditure of 476,107 to the island (Special Events Unit -- Isle of Man). Other events over Easter include an athletics competition; a marathon race; rugby, football, field hockey, and tennis tournaments; a drama workshop; and a car rally.

For the past ninety years, the island has hosted an extremely successful motorbike race called the Tourist Trophy (TT). For two weeks at the end of May and beginning of June, over 30,000 people visit the island and bring millions of pounds in spending money with them. The success of this event has encouraged other motor-related events during the year, such as the May rally and an international rally in the fall. Other festivals held in the summer that are designed to boost the low summer numbers are Cycle Week in May and the Manx Flower Festival in July.

During Cycle Week, the roads are closed as they are for the TT so the cyclists can race on the public roads. In 1996, almost 2,000 visitors came as a result of this competition. Events like this encourage environmentally friendly tourists to visit the island and possibly prompt a return visit later in the year. The Flower Festival consists of a week where visitors and locals alike visit the local churches to hear various concerts and see the flower arrangements. A pamphlet from the tourist information centre outlines each day's visit, the route to get there, and the landscape along

the way. This type of festival appeals to the older age group, and incorporates local pride into a tourist activity.

Strange as it may seem, the first two weeks of July are traditionally slow for tourism in Pitlochry, Scotland. To combat this, the town hosts the Athol Festival. The theme for 1997 is Victorian, fitting in well with the architecture of the town. According to the Tourism Management Project Officer, the Festival has two advantages: (1) it provides entertainment for the visitors who are there and perhaps encourages them to stay longer; and (2) it brings the local groups together to put on the event. It lasts for a week to ten days, and includes an appearance by Queen Victoria herself!

Festivals and events offer a venue for local pride and involvement, conservation, and celebration. They also contribute to employment and income. Sport competitions, music festivals, historic celebrations, and literature appreciation all offer unique experiences for residents and tourists to appreciate the local culture together.

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## **ACCESS**

In general, islanders are proud to be islanders and work hard to establish self-sufficiency and independence from the larger mainland markets. Often, however, if growth is to be achieved on an island, business and pleasure needs to be conducted in the larger centres. Thus, the common struggle among islands comes to the foreground: access. The actual accessibility of the islands can vary dramatically according to government and private company policy. Access includes frequency and type of transportation, as well as cost. The effects of modes of transport on off-season tourism vary according to the individual policies of the governments and private firms involved.

The various islands in this study have dealt with the access hurdle in contrasting fashions. Prince Edward Island and Öland have bridges connecting them to the mainland; however, the Canadian example is a private/public partnership, while the Swedish bridge is strictly public. Iceland is served by Icelandair, which has flights on both international and domestic routes, with some competition from other airlines. Åland must rely on the larger Finn Air to transport its residents by air; however, water travel is supplied by several Swedish and Åland companies which provide efficient and inexpensive travel to the mainland. The Isle of Man is served by a private ferry company with a monopoly on all routes to the island, and an airline which has a virtual monopoly with the exception of a handful of connections (which, incidently, have the cut-rate fares).

Viking Line is a shipping company that originated in Åland in 1959. Its entry marked the beginning of growth in the shipping industry between Stockholm, Sweden, and Turku, Finland. Transportation on its vessels is very cheap and competition from other Åland and Swedish ferry companies ensures the prices will remain low. The income for the company can be broken down into thirds: one-third from ticket sales, one-third from freight shipment, and one-third from duty free sales.

The boats used to travel between Turku and Stockholm are massive cruise boats with up to ten levels, including dance clubs, lounges, cafés, restaurants, conference rooms, and shops. The segmentation of the market according to the season demonstrates that cruise passengers travel in consistent numbers over the year, while conferences decrease in the summer and passenger transport increases during the spring and summer. Off-season strategies include two-for-one deals and discounts for senior citizens. This author rode the *Birka Princess* from Stockholm to Åland on a Tuesday in February, and was surrounded by senior citizens dressed up and ready to go on their 24-hour cruise to Mariehamn and back again. Karaoke emanated from the lounges as the slot machines and duty-free shops were kept busy from opening until close.

According to the Managing Director of Viking Line, the key to the success of passenger transport (over 4.5 million per year) is the balancing income from duty-free sales. The introduction of duty-free sales on the routes to Finland has also added a new market previously unreachable for duty-free sales. In recent years, they have begun hosting one-day conferences on their ferries. This is an idea that could be adopted by an island such as Newfoundland, where time plays a large factor in transportation to other provinces. Meetings held while in transit are thus more focused and time wasted on transportation is cut dramatically.

Manx Airlines in the Isle of Man has the same goal as Viking: to improve access to the island it serves, while in turn broadening the client base. Viking chose to improve value, while Manx Airlines chose to increase choice. They fly to many major centres in the United Kingdom; however, it is still more expensive for a Londoner to purchase a return ticket to the Isle of Man from London-Heathrow than it is to spend a week in Italy. With the introduction of reduced fares on some of the routes to the Isle of Man, air travel to and from the Isle of Man has steadily increased over the last decade. In the off-season, Manx Airlines charter their planes to tour operators who set up inclusive tours elsewhere. As well, the company finds that demand from the business traveller and visiting friends and relatives keeps the planes flying, albeit on a reduced schedule, during the winter.

The competition for Manx Airlines, the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co., must also offer year-round service. This private company, running a monopoly of ferry service, is often under criticism from residents and visitors alike for their very high prices and infrequent services. However, the company is dealing with the recent decline in visitors to the island and works at sponsoring local events and educational trips to the island. They have begun to offer lower fares and packages, due in part to the decrease in airfares to the island, demonstrating the advantages to competition.

On the other side of the coin, Öland has had a bridge to the mainland of Sweden since 1972. Before the bridge opened, there were around 300,000 people who visited the island every year. In 1973, the figure was over a million! However, these visitors are spread unevenly over the year: it is estimated that 85% of the visitors to the island come during June to August, with 6% in April and May, and 8% in September and October (ÖTAB). Öland has since had to concentrate on shoulder-season activities to flatten their arrivals curve.

Prince Edward Island has recently opened its new bridge and it differs from the Öland bridge in many ways. It will be run by private company for thirty-five years, at which time the federal

government will take over. The Öland bridge is government-built and has no charge to cross it. As well, there is a city of 50,000 on the other end of the bridge encouraging people to live on Öland and commute to the city. Prince Edward Island has neither a large city nor a free crossing, so its tourist season will not be as dramatically affected. However, with federal funding, the Canadian province has established a "Gateway to PEI" to welcome the visitors, with a park and local shops encouraging stops in the town of Borden-Carleton, where the bridge touches land on the island. The plan is for the Village to remain operational for twelve months of the year -- a positive first impression for off-peak travellers.

Åland has the advantage of being located between two large centres -- Stockholm and Turku -- making its cruise clientele very large. However, islands such as Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and the Isle of Man do not have the population base to support a cruise industry and thus only benefit if the cruise liners stop in their bays. The other option is to start a cruise from these islands; however, air links would need to be put in place in order to get enough passengers, and this would result in increased costs.

Once the visitor has reached an island, transportation on the island can also affect the off-season experience. The Isle of Man proudly displays its heritage with an electric railway that is one hundred years old and a steam railway that celebrates its one-hundred-and-twenty-fifth anniversary in 1998. These two train systems run from March to November and allow for a unique view and experience of the island.

Guided walking tours are offered on most of the islands; however, they do tend to be seasonal. Cities such as Reykjavík, Iceland, and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, offer self-guided tours that can be followed from brochures.

Prince Edward Island offers the option of cassette tapes guiding the individuals around the Island. For example, there is one produced by a private company entitled *The Back Roads of PEI*. The tapes are on sale in retail outlets and allow for activity in any weather and at the individual's own pace. Another transportation link in Prince Edward Island is the Confederation Trail, which covers 225 km of rolled stone dust trail. This is part of a nationwide project to convert old railway lines into a Trans Canada Trail. This path is open to hikers, cyclists, and wildlife lovers during the spring and fall. In the winter, the province leases most of the trail to the PEI Snowmobile Association for their members and visitors.

The crucial issue for accessibility is the cost of travel to and from the islands. If off-season activities such as coach tours or cruises are to succeed, then the islands must be accessible to warrant the extra time to get there. The longer distance an aircraft is in the air, the more profitable it is, thus longer routes have more flexible pricing than shorter trips. However, it is also the case that airlines can lose money on some routes and still continue profitably. Therefore, the case must be made for the peripheral regions (namely the islands) to have access to the mainland (or larger centres, whatever the case may be) in order to attract visitors. In the Isle of Man, competition on routes has led to lower fares and very popular connections.

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## ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

It is more challenging and expensive to attract tourists in the off-season. As mentioned at the beginning of this Report, the people who travel in the spring and fall are not as easily satisfied as the summer tourist may be with a beach and some sun. Initiative and imagination are required, and the following pages outline some of the projects undertaken by private individuals and governments in the islands studied.

The challenge begins with getting people to the destination during a specific time of year. Iceland has had some success with its convention market. The country has its own Convention and Incentive Bureau that operates as a link between Icelandic companies and associations and their international partners. The Bureau functions as a non-profit organization with membership fees from its thirty-three members covering the costs. The biggest month for conferences is June; however, there has been growth in April, May, September, and October. The graph below shows how Iceland has fared during the shoulder months between 1990 and 1995.



This graph shows how the months of March, April, October, and November have increased in numbers compared to June, August, and September. However, the peak remains in July.

The services of the Convention and Incentive Bureau are outlined in their promotional package as:

- Assistance with corporate meetings and conference preparations
- Information about meeting facilities, availability of accommodation and flights
- Suggestions for incentives, special events, spouse programmes and safaris
- Organization of inspection visits
- Information about suppliers of services for conferences and incentives
- Promotional material and bid support for conferences

The Bureau helps develop networks within the travel industry and increases the efficiency of the conference market.

An organization on Prince Edward Island that is geared to attracting winter visitors is the PEI Snowmobile Association. Promotion consists of a newsletter, which is distributed to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, special interest reports in the media, trade shows, and a portion of the provincial government's annual tourism campaign. However, their most powerful tool is word-of-mouth. New developments have led to trail condition reports on the national weather channel and a 1-800 number that allows the caller to get trail conditions on the routes in their region.

The density of the island allows for all the trails to be rural as opposed to wilderness tracks that are challenging when there are mechanical problems. Future plans for the association include a telephone number for people to call in order to arrange snowmobiling packages and tour guides. This would be a small-scale tour operation that could link the hotels and other services in the winter season to ensure availability. The president of the association, Gerry Martin, is excited about the European market from the United Kingdom, Germany, and Sweden who have all shown interest in a similar program set up in New Brunswick.

Ten years ago, if tourists visiting Iceland in winter encountered a large snowstorm, they would be stuck in the city. However, over the last decade, a group of volunteer rescue team members have created an alternative for the storm-stayed visitor. They have altered vehicles so that they sport 44-inch tires, CB radios, and a computer navigation system. Snowmobiles are unreliable in bad weather, but these trucks can climb glaciers, thus solving the dilemma of transportation outside the city.

One rescue team member, Arngrimur Hermansson, headed the innovation and has since become a tour operator in Iceland. He caters to individuals through travel agents, as well as business groups and incentive travellers. His packages are very flexible -- they can include snowmobile travel, river rafting, horseback riding, musical bands, and meals in the snow using snow for tables. He has adapted a Ford van to travel the rough winter terrain and carry up to eight passengers. The CB radios allow for only one guide to conduct the tour and for every vehicle to hear. The transportation is even available to the physically handicapped, opening up a whole new market. The passengers have no need to leave the vehicle, but the excitement of travelling through the deep snow is still there.

Hermansson estimates that his clientele is mainly from Holland, Belgium, Norway, and Sweden. He mentioned that Icelanders have begun to embark on his adventures; however, they are often more demanding -- wanting more excitement. The foreign visitors are between the ages of forty and sixty, are high-income earners, and come to Iceland on weekend breaks. The business travellers see money as no object since it is usually not out of their pocket; conference groups are much the same. In general, Hermansson sees his customers as wanting adventure that feels risky, but really isn't: he calls this "soft adventure."

In 1992, a Tourism and Environment Task Force was set up in Scotland to move the tourism industry to sustainable development through environmental awareness. An action of this Task

Force was to set up ten pilot Tourism Management Programmes (TMPs) across Scotland to encourage private and public-sector partnership, community involvement, and environmentally responsible tourism development.

In 1994, Pitlochry became the first non-pilot TMP in Scotland. Its aims are to promote sustainable development through the district, promote high-quality products, and involve the local community. In 1995, a Project Officer was announced. Karen Fraser leads the TMP in its role of coordinator between local tourist interests and project developer along the guidelines set above. The Programme itself is a partnership organization and receives its funding from local, regional, and national public and private organizations. Some examples are Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Athol Mercantile Association, Perthshire Tourist Board, and Scottish National Heritage.

This small town of only 2,500 year-round residents (reaching 9,000 in the district at its summer peak) has long claimed to be the number one inland resort for visitors to Scotland. This is due in part to its good location on the A9, which is the main highway between the central belt of Scotland and the Highlands. Another, but no less influential, factor is the incredible scenery surrounding Pitlochry. Tourism is the lifeblood of the town, not only for employment but for facilities and infrastructure. Their high season runs from Easter to the end of October with lulls after Easter, the first two weeks of July, and the end of September. Its visitors are for the most part domestic, coming from England and other Scottish towns. It is not perceived as a family destination, which can explain their extended season. It is estimated that between 500,000 and 750,000 people visit Pitlochry each year.

The resident population of Pitlochry is an older age group; thus, to accommodate the summer influx of tourists, many seasonal employees are imported into the community from Easter through to October. Property is a precious item in Pitlochry: those who do own homes or land hold on to them and then rent them out in the summer months. Therefore, housing has traditionally been scarce and in poor quality for these employees. This has resulted in them spending as little time in the town as possible, thus contributing to the seasonal nature of the industry. In the past, there has proven to be low loyalty on the part of these younger residents to their employers. The result was less investment in training and a lower quality of service. As well, this is usually a younger crowd away from their home town enjoying their summer, often in residential areas; as a result, conflicts sometimes arise between the residents and the employees.

The TMP's logic is that if the employees had better lodging, then a better-quality worker would come and possibly stay year-round. This would improve their loyalty to the employers, increase the quality of service, and possibly increase community involvement. Therefore, a purpose-built housing project has been proposed to the local enterprise company with the aim of having a private contractor build a low-cost mixed housing complex with approximately sixty bed spaces. The local housing association could use part of it for low-cost housing and the hotels would rent the rest to house their employees.

At the moment, a deal between the parties involved is close; however, some difficulties have arisen. The ever-present "Not in my backyard" mentality is slowing the selection of a location. As well, the employers want the right to force an individual to move out if that person leaves the

company for another. This has conflicted with some of the tenancy laws in Scotland. However, Fraser is optimistic that it will be built for the 1998 season.

The town also has some other initiatives for the off-season. The Festival of Choirs, new in 1997, is organized by the local Choral Association. It takes place over two days in March, one month before the opening of the Festival Theatre. This festival will play host to choirs of all musical backgrounds from all over Scotland as well as other locations. The organizers are hoping that the famous Festival Theatre will be a draw for participation of choirs and observers to the festival.

The Festival Theatre itself must remain closed during the winter due to lack of funds to heat it and low interest during the off-season. Options are being studied for its possible year-round operation, including hosting conferences or building a joining auditorium for smaller acts and cinema presentations. However, this does not address the problem of the Theatre itself being idle.

The Isle of Man has some interesting independent operators who offer some off-season alternatives to the visitor. Clay pigeon shooting is a unique activity that can be taught to almost anyone. An enthusiastic gentleman will teach customers how to shoot and it is surprising how rapidly his zest for the sport catches on. In fact, the sport is even more adventuresome in poor weather, since the waiting room is heated and there are complimentary home-made snacks and tea and coffee inside!

Activities for visiting business people and incentive trip travellers are essential in any off-season tourist destination. The snow adventures offered by Hermansson and the long-distance skating by Brauf both offer outdoor adventure and excitement for the business person who spends all day in meetings, and it is a unique experience for the incentive traveller.

Öland is an island with special ideas for extending its tourist season. One program is called "work away," which encourages visitors from mainland Sweden to stay on the island into the fall, but continue their work by using communication links. The local communities assist the individuals by setting up the links and software to make it work. The result is more external income into the economy, resulting in jobs and tax dollars.

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Another initiative involves a private businessman who has revamped a decrepit campground, changing it into a modern facility that even the wariest of campers would enjoy. The amenities include cable TV and a coffee maker in every cottage, a restaurant with a sea view, and all new laundry facilities. For the more avid campers, there are still take-out windows and immaculately clean bathrooms. The owner is a well-travelled individual who has compared camping experiences around the world and adapted them to the Swedish market. The efficiency of the Swedish camping industry allows for close monitoring of its clients. For example, no one can camp in the country without a particular card that has a magnetic strip with information on their last visit, their hometown, and their payment. Therefore, a database can be kept on the individuals visiting the park and payment is not required until departure. Regardless of the weather, this campground has campers from April until November.

Öland's tourist guide includes an index that indicates how long each service is open. The tourist information centre believes this encourages competition between the businesses. Options for the spring include school trips to the island from mainland Sweden. As well, a new ferry service from the north of the island to Götland (another Swedish island to the east of Öland) will allow tourists to make a round trip from Stockholm. The challenge remains to convince businesses to remain open.

Scotland developed an Autumn Gold Campaign that encompasses the major areas of Scotland in a push to sell the fall season. It is mostly oriented towards the short-break domestic traveller. The offer includes a special card that allows for discounts on different services during the run of the campaign, September 28 to November 30. There are forms throughout the tourist information centres to order the Autumn Gold pack, which includes the discount card, a list of participants in the scheme, and a colourful Autumn Gold Guide with accommodation, transportation, and festival information. In order to evaluate the outcome of the plan, the callers or writers are asked questions about their demographics and travel habits before giving their addresses.

The new owners of an amusement park on Prince Edward Island have some exciting ideas about making it a year-round operation. Encounter Creek is owned by two Americans who have always wanted to own an amusement park. Now they have invested \$1 million (Cdn) of their own money into a park just thirty minutes off the bridge to the island. The plans for the fall include keeping the heated wave pool operational well into September and celebrating Halloween for the whole month of October with scary characters in their enchanted wood. With winter comes Christmas treats and decorations throughout the park, with everything in the park available except the outdoor wave pool. Sledding hills and walking and skiing trails will be open throughout the winter; snowmobile trails are also a possibility. While early spring will be a bit messy, May and June of 1998 will see the season start up again as construction of a new restaurant gets under way. Further plans for a campground and chalets will evolve as the progress is measured. The owners are looking at the convention market, working in conjunction with the hotels to offer products to the individuals throughout the winter.

In order to encourage endeavours such as Encounter Creek, the Federal Government of Canada has established a fund for tour operators that facilitates obtaining financing. This fund contains \$500 million (Cdn) and is designed for tourist operations who are outside urban areas and operate for more than one season of the year. The loans are being handled by the Business Development Bank of Canada. They do not offer lower interest rates, but what they do offer is a chance for tourist operations to secure financing on their limited assets since it is often difficult for tourist businesses to get money before the season starts. The starting point for the loans is \$500,000, so the loan scheme is directed at off-season operators who are targeting international business. However, the Business Development Bank of Canada has regular loans that can cater to the smaller operators as well.

As the season extends, the needs and tastes of the traveller will change. Activity and adventure are on the agenda of the off-season traveller. The previous pages have outlined how some governments and individual businesses have tried to meet these expectations.

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## CONCLUSION

This report has studied the tourism industry on Iceland, Isle of Man, Prince Edward Island, Åland, and parts of Scotland and Sweden in order to identify examples of successful ways of providing a more balanced tourist season. Once the off-season traveller was profiled, the community was noted as being an integral part to the planning mix while festivals and events were studied for their ability to link the community with its visitors. Access to the islands was discussed because of its potential to affect traffic flow to an island, and options for the shoulder season/short-break traveller were also studied.

The research for this report found that Iceland has worked on New Year's Eve and conventions to flatten their tourist arrival curve, while the Isle of Man has developed festivals and events for the same reason. Prince Edward Island has worked on packaging and golf to extend its season and Åland has focused on activity and cruise-based initiatives. Scotland and Öland have also developed their own festivals and community-based responses.

Seasonality in tourism is a trait of the industry. However, private businesses and the economy as a whole would benefit from a season that lasts longer than two months. The preceding case studies are some responses of the industry in similar climates. However, each island faces its own challenges. Cooperation, originality, professionalism, flexibility, and thoroughness are characteristics that are present in the successful schemes to tackle seasonality.

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Elli Peel, Department of Tourism and Leisure, Isle of Man

Lesley Pender, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland

Gudrun Petursdóttir, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland

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