



through the Arctic archipelago. Most of the ships visiting Nunavut are expedition vessels carrying relatively few passengers—between 50 and 200. Of the expedition vessels that consistently visit the territory, a couple of the larger ships carry 200-300 passengers.

The *Crystal Serenity* visited Nunavut this year, carrying about 1,000 passengers and 600 staff on board. It was the first luxury cruise vessel to transit the Northwest Passage and the first to be accompanied by an ice breaker on its journey through Nunavut. The ship stopped in Cambridge Bay and Pond Inlet and is already accepting bookings for its second voyage in 2017.

Cambridge Bay is centrally located in the territory and is a logical mid-way stop for ships transiting the Northwest Passage. Pond Inlet lies at the top of Baffin Island and is a fitting gateway for ships entering or exiting the Canadian Arctic at Lancaster Sound.

The visual differences between the two communities are striking and reflect the variety of what Nunavut has to offer. Pond Inlet is nestled across an inlet from an array of sloping, sheer-faced mountains, with rolling tundra surrounding the community on all sides and a nearby floe-edge that is teeming with life. Cambridge Bay is cradled in a vast flat landscape that stretches out in all directions. On some days when the conditions are right, the land's flatness is reflected by clouds in the sky, which parallel one another to produce extraordinary contrasts that invoke a surreal sense of wonder.

The arrival of the *Crystal Serenity* has significant implications for marine tourism in the Canadian Arctic. Consider the size of this ship compared to the communities it visited: About 1,700 people call Cambridge Bay home and 1,670 live in Pond Inlet. There were almost as many people on this ship as there are in both communities, though the amount of passengers that disembarked in each community was limited.

It is the role of government to ensure that the potential arrival of more ships of *Crystal Serenity's* size are managed in a way that directly provides economic benefits to the communities they visit, while protecting the communities, lands and waters of Nunavut.

Accordingly, the Nunavut government is preparing for a potential increase and shift in the Arctic cruise tourism industry. The two most significant ways involve the development of a formal management plan designed specifically for marine tourism, and the creation of new marine tourism regulations as part of general updates to the territory's tourism legislation.

The management plan will help communities better assess the potential benefits of marine tourism. It will also provide support for the local development of marketable products, programs and

services, address inconsistent communication flows within the marine tourism sector and, finally, will support the new regulations under development.

The territory's tourism legislation, the *Travel and Tourism Act*, was grandfathered from the Northwest Territories and is no longer relevant to Nunavut's contemporary tourism industry. The act was drafted during a time in which marine tourism was not prevalent, and when the economic viability of cruise ships in Canada's Arctic only existed as a remote possibility.

Updating the legislation includes developing new marine tourism regulations that, among other requirements, may result in a cruise ship-specific licence. These updates are not being developed in isolation; consultations took place in 2008 and again in 2015 throughout Nunavut, with extensive input heard from industry, community members, and other interested parties.

The arrival of the *Crystal Serenity* could signal a new era for tourism growth in the territory. The Government of Nunavut will make every effort to ensure that the sector does not grow at the expense of Nunavut's extraordinary environment and wildlife, which are a significant draw for tourists in the first place and must be preserved in order to protect the traditional heritage of Inuit and the authenticity of the tourist experience.

Most importantly, Nunavut can only capitalize on a sustained increase in cruise tourism if communities are ready to receive and take advantage of such an increase. Achieving this will take significant efforts from local municipal governments and their community members, interested local stakeholders, and the cruise industry itself. Cruise tourism will only be successful if positive relationships continue to be fostered between the ships and the communities they visit. This will involve more consistent communication, increased collaboration on product and program offerings, and a willingness to build on and foster the relationships between cruise ships and the communities they return to every year.

If marine tourism development in the territory is managed in a way that effectively reflects community concerns, it presents an exciting opportunity to directly stimulate Nunavut's local economies. More cruise ships means more jobs, and while only seasonal in nature, these opportunities will be consistent and in an industry that is more sustainable than other alternatives, especially in an Arctic context.

Cruise ships want to come here because their passengers are driven by a desire to visit the Arctic. It is up to government to ensure that communities benefit from these visits, both economically, and from the pride that comes from showcasing our dramatic landscapes and reinforcing our rich cultural heritage. ●