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Record Breaking Orkney Cruise Season Draws to a Close

The departure of the Marco Polo (Thursday 11 October) marks the end of a stunning and record breaking cruise season for Orkney.

The UK's day call cruise capital, Kirkwall, had 144 ships and 146,000 passengers booked between March and October, an increase of ten ships on the 2017 season.

“Orkney’s popularity as a marine tourism destination has a very positive outlook for the future” said Michael Morrison from the Council’s Harbour Authority. “With berthing requests as far ahead as 2023 for cruise lines wishing to book Scotland’s longest deep water commercial berth at Hatston, the 2019 season already has 155 port calls confirmed and 98 calls booked for 2020.”

Market growth in terms of vessel size is evidenced in the increasing numbers of smaller explorer style vessels and there is a mood change with some cruise lines now offering an all-inclusive package with tours booked as part of the cabin fee.

In July 2019, Orkney will welcome the maiden call of the Spirit of Adventure from Saga, the first of two new ships that the company will bring to market in 2019 and 2020. Cruise lines also expected to visit in future with their new luxury explorer class vessels include the French company Ponant and Norwegian company Hurtigruten.

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