

## USAP ROSS SEA REGION INFORMATION SHARE 2020/21 SEASON

Country/NAP: United States/U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP)

Submitted by: Paul Sheppard/USAP Chief Program Officer

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Has your programme made any special season plans in the context of COVID-19? **YES** or NO  
If yes, please attach the special season plans/information as an Annex to this Information Share template.

**Who will be your station leader(s) for the upcoming season (Give station name and then the full name and contact email address for the station leader(s)/expedition manager/station manager(s) for each of your Antarctic stations or facilities). Also indicate any special medical capabilities at each station (such as COVID testing available, or oxygen concentrator, or number of ventilators).**

McMurdo Station:

Terry Melton, Station Manager, On station 24 Aug 2020 – 24 Feb 2021, [mcm-nsfstmgr@usap.gov](mailto:mcm-nsfstmgr@usap.gov)

Gary James, NSF Rep, On station 2 Oct – 17 Nov 2020, [mcm.NSFREP@usap.gov](mailto:mcm.NSFREP@usap.gov)

Andrew Rowell, NSF Rep, On station 15 Dec 2020 – 26 Jan 2021, [mcm.NSFREP@usap.gov](mailto:mcm.NSFREP@usap.gov)

Stuart Gregory, NSF Rep, On station 26 Jan – 19 Mar 2021, [mcm.NSFREP@usap.gov](mailto:mcm.NSFREP@usap.gov)

**Special Medical Capabilities: COVID-19 BioFire Rapid PCR Testing Capability**

**Season Schedule Overview (start dates/end dates, details of major activities and events)**

Initial Station Opening: 24-28 Aug 2020  
Main Body/Aerial Resupply: 2 Oct – 4 Nov 2020  
South Pole Station Opening: 20 Nov 2020 (T)  
Station Closeout: 19 March 2021, Winter over start

**Ship Cruise Schedules & vessel-related information (include information on any helicopters operated to/from vessels), including for collaboration or for SAR purposes**

NATHANIEL B PALMER: 11 Jan – 14 Apr 2021 (Science cruise in Ross Sea; one stop at McMurdo approximately 6/7 Mar)

**Aircraft Arrival and Departure Dates & air operations-related information**

First Scheduled Inbound Flight: 24 Aug 2020 (C-17 will remain in the region 24-28 Aug 2020)  
Main Body Flights: 2 Oct – 4 Nov 2020 (C-17 will remain in the region for the entire period)  
Weekly C-130 Flights: 10 Nov – 15 Dec 2020 (Provided by RNZAF C-130)  
On Continent Fixed Wing: 4 Nov – 3 Mar 2021. Will include 1x Basler and 2x Twin Otters  
Helicopter Operations: 15 Oct 2020 – 11 Feb 2021 (Two helicopters operational)  
3 x LC-130's available for MEDEVAC: 15 Dec 2020 – 1 Feb 2021 (based in CHC)  
3 x 757 operating passenger flights on 19 Feb, 22 Feb, and 17 Mar (Provided by RNZAF)  
Season Closeout Flights: 1 Feb-19 Mar 2021 (C-17 will remain in the region for the entire period)

**Planned Cooperative International Activities (logistics/science support activities affecting other NAPs)**

USAP/ANT NZ: Intra/Inter-continental airlift and MEDEVAC support (B-757, C-130, C-17, Rotary Wing, and LC-130 (MEDEVAC only))

USAP/AAD: MEDEVAC support (Basler, LC-130 (MEDEVAC from MCM only), and A-319)

USAP/ENEA: Intra/Inter-continental airlift and MEDEVAC support (Basler and C-17)
USAP/BAS: Intra-continental airlift support and inbound/outbound continental access (Basler, 2x Twin Otter, and Rothera Station transit); Collaborative science support in West Antarctica for preservation of equipment and infrastructure with light aircraft and limited traverse
<b>High Profile Activities</b>
No planned high profile activities. All seasonal efforts are focused on Tier 1 activities (life/health/safety tasks associated with maintaining year-round station operations).
<b>Non-governmental Activities</b>
No planned engagements with non-governmental activities.
<b>Use of Drones/RPAS or Balloons</b>
Drones/RPAS: Tentative plan for small unit to fly near Cape Royds. Date range TBD.
Balloons: Weather Balloons Only
<b>2021 Winter-over SAR assets (helo, etc) and any special medical capabilities/equipment availability</b>
Rotary Wing Assets: Four helicopters will remain on station during the winter without resident aircrews.
Special medical capabilities: TBD
<b>National Antarctic Programme Aircraft and Vessel Safety Statement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aviation Contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USAF Air Mobility Command – C-17 &amp; LC-130 / FAA Part 91 minimum standard (Joint Task Force - Support Forces Antarctica at McMurdo)</li> <li>- US Department of Interior – KBA &amp; ACHI / FAA Part 135 minimum standard (Inspections and certification at McMurdo and at contractor’s headquarters)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Research Icebreaker – Inspected by the US Coast Guard according to IMO standards (SOLAS, MARPOL).</li> </ul>

Also please remind your AFIM representative, that they should log into the AFIM Data Dashboard and ensure your AFIM-related data and information is current for the upcoming season.

ANNEX: Special instructions for the 2020/21 Antarctic season in the context of COVID-19.

The USAP will have a severely limited 2020/2021 operational season. All activities that do not support the live & safety of the USAP participants and/or preserves vital infrastructure are postponed until 21/22. 80% of all science activities are postponed. Science that is being accomplished has either been identified as

crucial to preservation of long-term data collection initiatives or is opportune and without the need of additional personnel in Antarctica.

South Pole Station resupply for the 2021 winter is among the highest priorities and this will be accomplished with three heavy traverses. LC-130 aircraft are not expected to service South Pole Station this season. Light aircraft will fill the aviation support requirements for the South Pole Station.

All USPA stations are off-limits to NGO visits. The South Pole area is still accessible to self-supported NGO, but no access to facilities or station personnel is permitted.

Both McMurdo and South Pole Stations will have a normal 2022 winter over with the normal contingent of sustainment-oriented personnel. No construction is anticipated.