



## Carbon audit of Touring programme, 2016

### Summary

*This is the fourth carbon audit of the ESC touring programme, and the third based on detailed information from tour leaders. We report on the tours to European destinations and remote tours separately.*

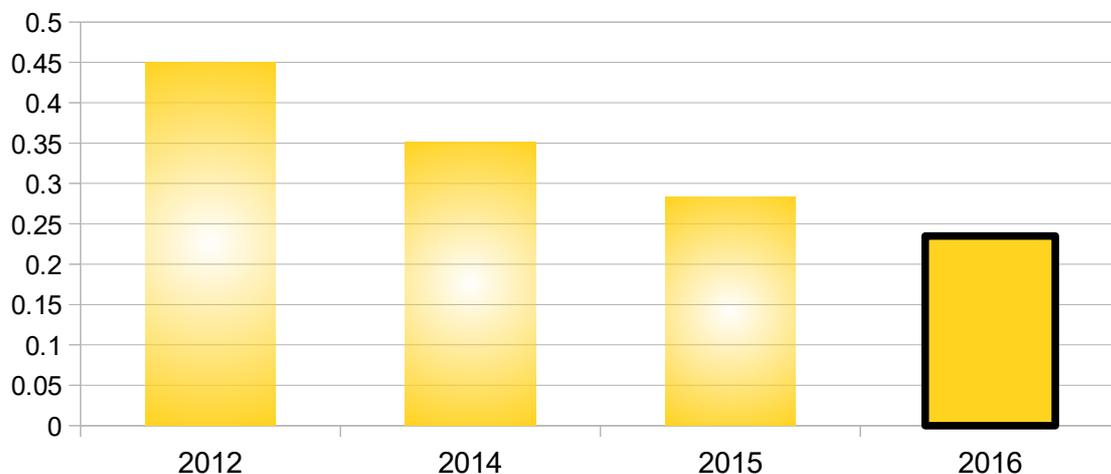
*The most striking factor is the large increase in carbon offsetting, with offsets being purchased for 32% of European and 60% of Remote tours.*

*Also, the level of participation from Leaders has been excellent, with 50% of European tours and 100% of remote trips contributing to the survey or purchasing offsets collectively.*

*However, many leaders who purchased offsets did not fill in the survey as well, which in retrospect is not surprising. This means that the data we have collected for European tours is not very trustworthy. It indicates that we have reduced net emissions for Europe to **235 kg** per tourer (compared to 280kg in 2015), but we suspect that it might be lower than this.*

*On the other hand, we have complete and accurate data for Remote trips, and 60% of these were offset. For those who did not offset, average emissions were 2,668 kg per tourer.*

Fig.1: EUROPEAN TOURS  
Net Carbon per tourer (tonnes)



## **Carbon Audit - approach**

As for last year, we asked tour leaders to do two things:

- Fill in a simple web-form, to provide details of return travel for the party.
- Consider a collective purchase of carbon credits to offset the emissions of the team.

This year, a heartening 60% of leaders responded, by doing at least one of these (50% for European tours, 100% for Remote trips). Leaders deserve an especially big "thank you" for their support.

Paradoxically, we didn't collect such good data this year. Many leaders who organised collective offsets for their team did not also fill in the survey. Why should they? Their nett contribution would be zero.

Unfortunately, the numbers that we report are only rough estimates based on the returns we receive. They are an indication, rather than a real measure, and should only really be trusted for comparisons year-on-year. Every year, we include the customary caution, that:

*"this process is not an exact science, but we are using as far as possible the same underlying models from year to year "*

and this year we **have** changed the model!

We depend on the detail of people's travel (car sharing, rail travel etc.) to arrive at an estimate, and this year we received less of that detail. The results are out of line with previous years, particularly on the impact of different travel modes, probably as a consequence of this, and so should be treated with some caution. They probably over estimate the impact of offsetting, and underestimate saving from car sharing and rail travel\*.

The rest of the report analyses the information that members have given us.

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\* *Most of the leaders who bought credits did not submit detailed data about travel modes. For these tours, we had little data about any rail travel, or the details of any car journeys. This means that the saving from greener methods of travel is under reported compared to previous years, and we can't make a meaningful comparison.*

*For a good estimate of the impact of car travel, we'd like to know the number of passengers and the number of ski weeks per UK return journey (and ideally, the size of the car engine). Some car journeys are very green, and others aren't.*

*As the quantity of carbon bought as offsets increases, we need to be more careful in accounting for this. We need a better figure for the average (un-offset) emission, and then we should subtract the average (per tourer) offset from this.*

*It is important to remember that the figures we produce are only indicators, to show if we are doing better or not. We don't want to use an indicator that could become negative!*

## European Travel – overall results

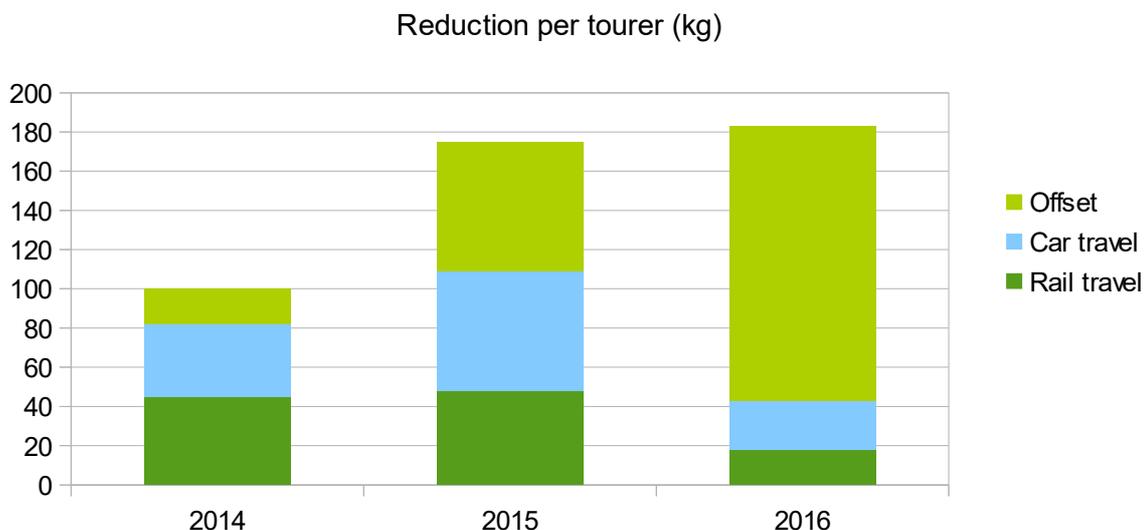
The principal results from the survey are as follows (with 2015 figures given in brackets) :

- An impressive 34% of us offset our carbon emissions (17%)
- Almost 26,000 kg of carbon credits were purchased to offset European trips (compared to less than 8,000 kg in 2015)
- The average (net) carbon emission per tourer was estimated to be about no more than **235kg** in 2016, and is probably lower (280 kg in 2015)

Results from our four surveys in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016 are shown in Fig.1, showing the net carbon per tourer for European tours. Some of this year-on-year improvement is from survey improvements, but a large part of it is due to people doing things differently.

We can look to see how we have made progress by comparing the contributions to reducing the average from different factors (carbon offset, car journeys, rail travel), and this is shown in Figure 2 below. There has been a considerable increase in the contributions from the purchase of carbon credits for offset (mainly for air travel).

Fig.2 Contributions to the reduced average



Also, the results show a decrease in the contributions from rail travel and car sharing. This is very surprising, as there is no other indication for these reductions. We think we are just seeing the limitations of our very simple survey method. We know that our purchase of offsets for European tours has gone up significantly this year from our purchasing records, but this table over-represents the contribution this makes.

We need to re-think our approach to auditing for next year.

## Remote Trips – overall results

We have audits from all of the remote trips on the 2016 programme (outside Europe). A total of 35 people were responsible for the emission of 77 tonnes of carbon, and 40 tonnes of carbon were purchased by three trips to offset their emissions. This included

the two trips that received club support through Adventure Fund grants.

The two trips that did not offset their carbon emissions were responsible for about 2.67 tonnes of carbon per tourer.

### **Conclusions for 2017**

We will be trying to reduce the club's average net carbon emissions further for the 2017 season, as follows:

#### **Rail & Car sharing**

We will continue to encourage these, as in previous years.

#### **Carbon offsetting**

The further increase in the purchase of carbon for offsetting is an excellent continuation of the progress last year. We will increase the emphasis on this in 2017, as follows:

- **Tour leaders**

- Inform and encourage tour leaders to make collective purchases for their team, if they wish.

- Drastically simplify the audit system, for leaders

- **Remote trips** – encourage ALL remote trips to buy carbon credits to offset their emissions.

In addition, we must redesign the Carbon Audit, probably as a system for members to complete, but only sent to a fractional sample. This will reduce the work of leaders, AND improve the level of trust in the results. We will run a small scale trial in 2017.

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*Steve Wright*  
*Sept 2016*

*Climate Care, Eagles*