

World's Extreme Travelers

Defining them objectively

by adding up the ranks of all existing lists:

9 original lists are summarized to get the total

Two new ideas: Not only ranks per list, but ranks per traveler
Measuring the breadth of the travel spectrum



Lake Ounianga, Chad

A list/club founded by Frank W. Grosse-Oetringhaus

Founded in Feb. 2017, **third up-date: Sept. 2018**

Our Mission, Our Process

- ❑ **We want to produce a list of the world's extreme travelers by defining them objectively.**
- ❑ Since there are several lists in existence we want to condense these into one, into **one overall ranking.**
- It is our intention to **collect** all these lists, all that are ranking travelers for their performance in various perspectives, lists with different names and different focuses. We don't make a selection, we take them all and treat them all equally.
- We take these lists and **rearrange** them in a matrix to make them comparable, not ranks by lists, but by travellers. That leads to a matrix.
- We had run a **pilot project**. Because of the positive response, we continue. We were advised to skip one small, very suggestive list and to include the ISO 3166-2 list, the official subdivision of countries.
- We take the lists as they are, we don't change. We explain shortly, but we don't comment. We use already published data, if possible only by Nomad Mania, ex TBT „The Best Travelled“, because this club has by far the most profound data.
- ❑ We are aware of dealing with ranks, so we are dealing with something which could be seen as the most valuable what travelers have, the essence of their lives, decades of traveling.
- ❑ And we are aware that we are dealing with their reactions if ranks change - with personal sensitivities.
- ❑ **Therefore we want to do the overall ranking in an objective way that everybody can agree with.**



This is one of the rare trips to Bouvet. Done in 2015. Most likely on this ship, the „Ortelius“, more extreme travelers had been together than at any other occasion. The trip was initiated by the three travel clubs: TCC, MTP, TBT.

Explanations of the Lists

We see 9 lists in total, not more. We **arrange them by their magnitude**, their amount of points (sites), those with the highest points first; but the sequence has no influence on the final ranking. We don't select, we aggregate.

We treat them **all as equal**. We don't want to go into a discussion of weighting them according to their importance, because the importance is debatable, counterproductive to our goal, to buy everybody in.

To renounce weighting is not easy. Only some hints: It would be easy to argue that the official lists of the UNESCO, the World Heritage List and the Tentative List, have a higher importance than the lists of the travel clubs, because they reflect the perspective of a much smaller crowd, only the view of less than 20.000 people each, not the world or a country. On the other hand the travel clubs represent a group of people with an outstanding interest in traveling, thus for these people the travel club lists might have a higher importance. One list (Greatest Globetrotters) incorporates the perspective of budget travelers well. We treat all equally to avoid any discussion.

There is an **overlap in counting, but insignificant if you only take the top 10**.

1. **NM (Nomad Mania) TBT Series**, 29.445 "points", the biggest one by far: This is not one list but a series of several lists. 22 of them are accumulated into one ranking, making therefore a new list: They call it "general ranking", we call it "overall travel performance". This is the list we are dealing with. We take the data of Sep. 2, 2018. We just take it, no comment, no change. Only: The factual double existence of 2 websites needs a cleaning up.
2. **ISO-3166-2**, 3.978 „units". The official list of all the administrative units of the world. First released in 1974, many times revised. We take the revision published in NM as **SISO**. This list is cumbersome: Only one out of many examples: Slovenia has about 200 units counting all their villages; there is no logic to justify this subdivision for a traveler. TBT has seen this point and revised SISO to a new list „CHAD", it is more reasonable, but it is less official, less known. We go for the quasi-official, the more known. To incorporate this list was a result of our pilot project. We argued: Too much work, only for a few. But: We address the „Extremes" (thus only a few) and we have to follow official procedures. But the list has deficiencies and is old.
3. **Tentative List** of the UNESCO, 1.697 sites: This is the official list of each country of their candidates which apply for the inscription. So this view is strictly a national perception, nothing more. To get on to the World Heritage List is a long way. Per average only 20 make it per year out of 200 candidates. But nevertheless it is an important list since it is the official view of the country on the important sites worth to be protected.
4. **Nomad Mania, ex TBT (The Best Travelled)**, 1.281 regions, the focus of the NM TBT: "Their masterlist". No explanation necessary.
5. The **World's Greatest Globetrotters**, 1.272 points: The main idea is that it makes a difference if you only fly into a country or if you enter and exit the country overland. So for overland border crossing you get an extra point to match the backpacker's way of traveling. NM-TBT includes the same idea in their series, but more elaborate. The ranking of the top members leaves some questions. A streamlined list to the key data.
6. **The World Heritage List**, 1.092 sites: Needless to say more. But important in our context: We use only the figures from NM TBT, not from MPT.
7. **MTP (Most Traveled People)**, 875 regions and islands: MPT has an emphasis on islands, especially remote ones, but the definition of the regions is very inconsistent: Kazakhstan and Market Reef having one point each, just to name one example and there are so many more. We disagree with this list but that is a different discussion. Here we treat all lists equally.
8. **TCC (Travelers' Century Club)**, 327 countries: TCC is the oldest travel club. Their definition of countries is comprehensive and a true alternative to the UN list of 193 countries, which is only politically defined, not regarding geographical and ethnological perspectives as the TCC rightly does. This list is highly respected. We agree. Debatable for our purpose is its weak differentiation. The top ten group has rankings very close to each other.
9. **UN+**, 266 countries: We take this list as being defined by NM TBT, an expanded list by territories and actually independent countries. We are not taking the UN List of 193 politically independent, self-governing countries because this list has been achieved by nearly all extreme travelers and it would not change the overall ranking. A significant, although weak differentiation is only in the UN+ list.

The 9 Lists: Lists 1 till 6, arranged by the amount of „points“, status Apr. 28, 2018

| List 1 | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| NM TBT Series | | |
| (The accumulation of 23 lists) | | |
| Total: 29.445 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Newcomer | 7.743 |
| 2 | Runkel | 7.338 |
| 3 | Grosse-Oetringhaus | 6.925 |
| 4 | Sergeev | 6.905 |
| 5 | Newckij | 6.635 |
| 6 | Lazareva | 6.625 |
| 7 | Buechler | 6.382 |
| 8 | Arinc | 6.005 |
| 9 | Sazhin | 5.346 |
| 10 | Goldstein | 5.212 |

| List 2 | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| SISO | | |
| ISO Standard Organisation 3166-2 | | |
| Total: 3.978 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Shea | 2.392 |
| 2 | Sanchez | 2.332 |
| 3 | Grosse-Oetringhaus | 2.159 |
| 4 | Büchler | 2.012 |
| 5 | Newckij | 1.923 |
| 6 | Newcomer | 1.788 |
| 7 | Grabow | 1.628 |
| 8 | Mitsidis | 1.603 |
| 9 | Siivonen | 1.599 |
| 10 | Hartmann | 1.389 |

| List 3 | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----|
| Tentative List of UNESCO | | |
| (acc. to NM TBT) | | |
| Total: 1.697 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Grosse-Oetringhaus | 612 |
| 2 | Runkel | 539 |
| 3 | Sergeev | 469 |
| 4 | Lazareva | 451 |
| 5 | Newcomer | 420 |
| 6 | Newckij | 379 |
| 7 | Winkler | 369 |
| 8 | Goldstein | 332 |
| 9 | Arinc | 321 |
| 10 | Peixoto | 312 |

| List 4 | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Nomad Mania | | |
| NM TBT | | |
| Total: 1.281 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Sanchez | 1.157 |
| 2 | Grabow | 1.137 |
| 3 | Mitsidis | 1.133 |
| 4 | Grosse-Oetringhaus | 1.108 |
| 5 | Stücke | 1.101 |
| 6 | Junge | 1.059 |
| 7 | Brugiroux | 1.055 |
| 8 | Hardenmark | 1.051 |
| 9 | Valtari | 1.034 |
| 10 | Runkel | 1.030 |

| List 5 | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| World's Greatest Globetrotters | | |
| Total: 1.272 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Brugiroux | 1.177 |
| 2 | Grabow | 1.176 |
| 3 | Hardenmark | 1.174 |
| 4 | Brühwiler | 1.173 |
| 5 | Bonifas | 1.172 |
| 6 | Shea | 1.171 |
| 7 | Saito | 1.170 |
| 7 | Stücke | 1.170 |
| 9 | Newcomer | 1.169 |
| 10 | Srinivasaraghavan | 1.168 |

| List 6 | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----|
| UNESCO World Heritage List | | |
| (acc. to NM TBT) | | |
| Total: 1.092 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Grosse-Oetringhaus | 963 |
| 2 | Murallon | 820 |
| 3 | Roesky | 735 |
| 4 | Büchler | 728 |
| 5 | Valtari | 667 |
| 6 | Els Slots | 659 |
| 7 | Runkel | 654 |
| 8 | Newckij | 652 |
| 8 | Brugiroux | 638 |
| 10 | Sanchez | 585 |

The 9 Lists: Lists 7 to 9, also arranged by the amount of „points“, status Sep. 02, 2018

| List 7 | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----|
| MTP | | |
| Most Traveled People | | |
| Total: 875 | | |
| Data from: Aug 20, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Parrish | 852 |
| 2 | Bonifas | 851 |
| 3 | Veley | 833 |
| 4 | Bruehwiler | 822 |
| 5 | Altaffer | 821 |
| 6 | Srinivasaraghavan | 803 |
| 7 | Hackley | 794 |
| 8 | Sanchez | 788 |
| 9 | Leventhal | 775 |
| 10 | Childs | 773 |

Only in this list the data are from Aug 20, because the list was closed after this date and still is closed on Sep. 2

| List 8 | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-----|
| TCC | | |
| Travelers' Century Club | | |
| Total: 327 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Parrish | 327 |
| 1 | Veley | 327 |
| 3 | Altaffer | 325 |
| 3 | Hardenmark | 325 |
| 3 | Rainer | 325 |
| 6 | Langan | 324 |
| 7 | Lundgren | 322 |
| 7 | Sanchez | 322 |
| 9 | Siby | 321 |
| 10 | Childs | 319 |

| List 9 | | |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| UN+ | | |
| (UN + territories and quasi independent) | | |
| Total: 266 | | |
| Data from: Sep 02, 2018 | | |
| 1 | Lundgren | 266 |
| 1 | Parrish | 266 |
| 1 | Sanchez | 266 |
| 4 | Hardenmark | 265 |
| 4 | Altaffer | 264 |
| 4 | Lebedev | 264 |
| 4 | Mitsidis | 264 |
| 8 | Rainer | 264 |
| 8 | Veley | 264 |
| 10 | Grosse-Oetringhaus | 263 |



A group of extreme travelers on the Novo Sibirsk Islands on a trip with the legendary icebreaker Kapitan Khlebnikov, 7. 2016
 Why legendary? This ship, 25.000 HP, is the only one which completed the circumnavigation of Antarctica and here it is about to complete the arctic circumnavigation. The north of Greenland is critical. Some years ago it got stuck and was rescued by the „Yamal“ , the Russian nuclear icebreaker, the ultimate in ships: 75.000 HP.
 Left above: The ship: Note the hangars for the helicopters
 Left below: Harry, Paolo, Jeroen and I boarding.



The Procedure: The Matrix

The new idea: Turning the ranks per list into ranks per traveler: State

- We take the top ten of each list, starting with the Nomad Mania TBT Series. We list the rank of each traveler in all the 9 lists forming a **matrix**:
- **One axis** is the 9 lists with the ranks of the top ten in each list: **Ranks per list**.
- The **other axis** repeats the travelers, but now the ranks are not per list but **per traveler**. The ranks are repeated under each list. Now we can compare. On this axis the first list is mere repetition. But this group will be followed by those travelers who didn't appear on the list 1, but appear on list 2 for the first time. And so on. So now we can compare the ranks for each traveler in each list. In other words: In order to compare them we repeat their rank, but now **per traveler** and written again under each list.
- If they have **no rank** on the considered list **they get an 11**. This is logically the "mildest" form to consider that they are not on the list, in other words the highest possible rank outside of the list. We could have taken any number, like 20, as long it is higher than 10, the lowest rank on the lists. The 20 wouldn't change the ranks. This procedure – assigning a value for not being on the list - is the **key in order to make the ranks between the lists comparable**. The more 11s you have the smaller the travel spectrum is. It is by no means necessary for a "fair" ranking to be active in all lists. It is a strength of our process to measure the breadth of the travel spectrum.
- If you now add all the ranks - including the 11 for not having a rank in the respective list - than you get the **sum**.
- If you arrange the sum in an **increasing order**, then you can **assign ranks** to that order of sums. The lowest sum – the highest overall rank - for the No. 1.
- For further clarification look at the matrix, this illustrates the process.
- **Formalities**: For the reason of readability we cannot show all the tables on one page, so we show:
 - firstly - the 9 lists
 - secondly - the matrix illustrating the whole process of cross-comparison
 - thirdly - the final ranking as the result.

The Result: The Group of World's Extreme Travelers

Explanations:

- We see only 9 renowned lists. We limit the number of extreme travelers for each list by 10. If you compare all ranks you get a total group of 41.
- The total group of 41 are members of all 9 lists, each of them has participated at least in one list.
- We make a cross-comparison of all ranks in these 9 lists by a matrix and evaluate a non-appearance on a list by an 11, the highest possible.
- We think that this procedure is the most logical to determine the extreme travelers objectively, not only rankings within lists, but breadth of travel spectrum as well. But the procedure is by far more oriented towards quantity, much less on quality.
- In 3 lists (the smallest in „sites“: MTP, TCC and UN+) the top 10 travellers have similar ranks; thus some sums are equal, so some ranks are shared.
- All data are from September 2, 2018. We have not changed anything, we have not weighted the lists, all are equal.
- **Those who argue that a „fair“ ranking requires that all travelers participate in the same lists miss an essential point: The process wouldn't measure different travel spectrums and different travel concepts any longer.**
- This website is static. It needs to be updated. Because this is cumbersome it will be updated only twice a year.

| A | B | A Overall rank, B sum of all ranks in the 9 lists |
|----|----|---|
| 1 | 55 | Frank W. Grosse-Oetringhaus |
| 2 | 63 | Jorge Sanchez |
| 3 | 69 | Don Parrish |
| 4 | 72 | Jarl Hardenmark |
| 5 | 76 | Steve Newcomer |
| 5 | 76 | Michael Runkel |
| 7 | 77 | Bill Altaffer |
| 7 | 77 | Sascha Grabow |
| 9 | 79 | Alexander Newckij |
| 10 | 80 | Charles Veley |
| 11 | 81 | Thomas Büchler |
| 12 | 83 | Bob Bonifas |
| 12 | 83 | André Brugiroux |
| 14 | 84 | Harry Mitsidis |
| 14 | 84 | Igor Sergeev |
| 14 | 84 | Jeff Shea |
| 17 | 85 | Roman Brühwiler |
| 17 | 85 | Markus Lundgren |
| 19 | 87 | Nadezda Lazareva |
| 20 | 89 | Frank Rainer |

| | | |
|----|----|--------------------------------------|
| 20 | 89 | Heinz Stücker |
| 22 | 90 | Teodoro Murallon |
| 23 | 91 | Rainer Roesky |
| 23 | 91 | Kari-Matti Valtari |
| 25 | 92 | Artemy Lebedev |
| 26 | 93 | Jagannathan Srinivasaraghavan |
| 27 | 94 | Selman Arinc |
| 27 | 94 | Els Slots |
| 27 | 94 | Gustav Adolf Junge |
| 27 | 94 | David Langan |
| 31 | 95 | Jack Goldstein |
| 31 | 95 | Bart Hackley |
| 31 | 95 | Kaname Saito |
| 31 | 95 | Gerri Winkler |
| 35 | 97 | Tony Childs |
| 35 | 97 | Larry Leventhal |
| 35 | 97 | Valentin Sazhin |
| 35 | 97 | Carl-Gustaf Siby |
| 35 | 97 | Eki Siivonen |
| 40 | 98 | Roman Hartmann |
| 40 | 98 | Joao Paulo Peixoto |

Evaluating the Procedure

Essence of the procedure: Those who have a leading position in just one list cannot compete with someone having a good position in several lists. Diversity is remunerated. Is this not exactly what we want: People good in various perspectives? So here you can only make it to the top if you have a good rank in the majority of these lists. I am sure that most people will agree on this.

- **Data:** This procedure reflects the status-quo as of Sep 02, 2018. If the data change, the ranking will change. In the "NM TBT Series" not all travelers participate. The NM Series shock because of the workload. But not participating in the World Heritage List shows a restricted perspective.
- **Quantity vs quality:** Most of the lists are quantitative, only a few are qualitative, and even fewer have a concept for quality, only the World Heritage List does, because of their 10 criteria. The NM TBT Series want to move into quality, but instead of being selective, they go for (too) high numbers; this can be counterproductive to quality.
Overall: The ranking is a ranking on quantity far less on quality. The winner is closer to "the most" than to "the best".



The most effective combination to reach extremes:
A helicopter and an icebreaker

Result: We present an important result because it is based on all lists in existence (Sep 02, 2018): **One list of 41 travelers, the "Extreme travelers"** - high performance travelers, a hybrid performance of quantity and quality.

Update: Please accept that this is a static website for the time being. The update procedure will only be done every 6 months. For each update the prints of the published data together with their date will be stored in Berlin.

Personal Comments about the Procedure

Our goals: It has been my goal to be No. 1 in travel quality. I only want to be within the top 10 of quantity. In other words: In quantity we want to be equal with the top group, but we want to excel in quality. Since quality is a term of several dimensions and since our list of 5000 highlights has not been published yet, the position of no. 1 in quality can only convince if you are among the top in quantity and if quality is an add-on. **This is the only reason why we did this procedure.**

Our position: Manipulated in order to become No. 1? What an argument! We take all the lists in existence, we don't change anything, just add them up. The result cannot be manipulated. The lists have been published. And we show the exact date for the time we took the data. Now at the third update: Sep 02, 2018. Yes, if you establish a list or a club it is not good to be a No. 1, people might get wrong ideas, but we can't change the mathematics. 2 blame me to be vain, but use the wrong arguments ("random selection" - no all; "secret formula" - no just adding). Quite a few are fascinated by the straight logic of the process. Two are trying to copy the procedure (without quoting), nobody has improved it yet.

The reason for my position: My position is the result of our travel style. We travel with different perspectives. We go for many sites, all with high importance, for the best possible experience, we go for a broad spectrum. Remote islands are secondary. "Points" in clubs are not even secondary: What's the point to go to Rockall and Market Reef? One point each, and one point for Kazakhstan! But North Island, Fregate Island, Tetiroa – no point??

The benchmark: In the light of world-class going for only 875 is by far not enough. To call this "everywhere" is unacceptable; as it is to market that as "The Most". We test (not build) our position based on **the largest data base** around (NM TBT). But that is not our **benchmark, it is 5000 highlights**, a list of travel objectives, which represents the "whole world" and which can be done in 10 years – but you have to follow some guidelines.

The work load: The data base for this test comes with a price. The NM TBT Series with presently more than 29.000 plus the SISO list with almost 4.000 sites took me at least 12 full days in order to determine the sites which I have seen. I have done it thoroughly. I have looked up many sites in the Internet. Very cumbersome and still I am not sure if I got it all. This this update took 5 days. Only two remarks: Travel statistics can be carried too far. And I have not updated them fully because I have no time and I have seen too many deficiencies.

SISO: The first process is difficult: Try it for the coastal road of Libya, for all the councils of UK, and for Slovenia. Ezilon maps are a great help but only for about 60%, you have to google a lot, many times the old terminology of SISO and the maps don't match. Sometimes it is frustrating. Often Wikipedia helps, but it is not official. But the update is easy since you only have to concentrate on the visits in the meantime.

For further explanation on our travel concept see: frankgrossoetringhaus.com

The Future Program

Expanding the website

- 1) Collecting **Biographies** of the defined extreme travellers
- 2) Finding extreme travelers which are not on our list of the Top 44, especially those not in Travel Clubs: The **externals**
- 3) Communicating** with the externals
- 4) Collecting the **personal selection of extreme travel goals**:
The perspective of the extreme travelers
- 5) Collecting their **assessment** of the extreme goals: Quality beyond remoteness? Is the way the goal?

Extreme Travelers not on our List of the Top 41

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Please add your candidate and missing data and send the copy to Grosse-Oetringhaus@web.de

The following „list“ is only rudimentary, an illustration; we want to supplement it with your most appreciated help.

| Name | Performance | Particularities | Sources | Contact |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Babis Ch. Bizas | Probably the most traveled person on earth | Very strained relationship with the clubs | Member of the Russian Society, Wikipedia, one of my best travel friends | http://www.babisbizas.com |
| Graham Hughes | All countries without using an aircraft, writes and teaches how to travel with almost no money | | | |
| Pamela Barrus | Travels by public transportation and crossed continents | Travel writer, especially hotels | President of TCC | |
| Terry Last | | One of the few „genuine travelers“ | Quote of Babis Bizas | |
| Wojciech Dabrowski | | | | 77kontynetow@wp.pl |
| Willem & Christina Beekenkamp | Sailing and camping with mobil home for years | One of the rare couples who traveled extremely | | |
| Hubert Weissinger | Most borders in 7 years | | Guinness Book | |
| David Stanley | | | | |
| Kolja Spöri | Travel book „Ich war überall“; traveling with style to unusual places | „Gentleman Adventurer“, keen on marketing. Founder of ETIC „Extreme Traveler Intern'l Cong“ | https://about.me / kolja .spori luxury brand marketing, high level interviews, F1 sponsoring | http://gentlemanadventurer.travellerspoint.com/ |
| Jacob Oster | | | | www.expedition-everywhere.com |
| Johnny Ward | The million dollar blogger | His slogan: Dream big. Travel far. Live full - almost like ours | | www.onestep4ward.com |
| Henrik Jeppesen | Youngest to see all countries in the world (but watch for William S. B.) | Travels extremely economically and efficiently | | www.henriktravel.com |
| Torbjorn C. Pedersen | Every country in the world without flight – in one continuous journey | | | www.onceuponasaga.dk |

We Welcome your Contribution

All of you who are in the defined group of „extreme travelers“ please send us:

- ❑ Your **biographies** with a photo, if possible at your favorite extreme site.
We will not write about other people, thus the biographies must be written by the travellers themselves. If we would do it we are not sure if it wouldn't reflect personal preferences, this wouldn't fit in our concept of objectivity.
We only collect original contributions. We only would like to propose that the biographies should emphasize interesting travel ideas for others. They should be no longer than one page.
- ❑ Your **short list of external travelers**,
travelers who have not been captured by the lists and their comparison, but travelers who should be on the list of extreme travellers, especially those who could enrich the debate of travel concepts and be inspirational for others because of their experiences and their readiness to share.
- ❑ Your **list of extreme places**
and reasons why you have selected them, why you rate them as „extreme“. We want to get a full understanding of all the perspectives of possible „extremes“. But we would propose that subjective experiences should not be a primary criterion, otherwise the list would be endless. We want to get a small list of „extremes“ true to the word in the sense that they cannot be surpassed and a definition understandable for others, something others can experience as an extreme place as well.

Please send your contributions to our email: Grosse-Oetringhaus@web.de

Your contributions are very much appreciated. This project can only be enlivened by your contributions.