

In conjunction with [World Animal Protection](#) we have developed this *Animal Welfare in Tourism Code of Conduct*, to outline to our stakeholders (local operators, employees and travellers) our expectations in regards to the treatment of animals, across all the possible encounters with animals that can be had on our itineraries.

At World Expeditions we believe that all animals should have a good life, one that is defined by the Five Freedoms, which are universally accepted principles of animal welfare.

1. **Freedom from hunger or thirst** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health,
2. **Freedom from discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area,
3. **Freedom from pain, injury or disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment,
4. **Freedom to express (most) normal behaviours** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind,
5. **Freedom from fear and distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

The following are examples of possible animal encounters you may have on a World Expeditions' itinerary and how we manage the encounter to ensure the animals' welfare.

1. Visiting national parks and reserves to view wild animals in their natural habitats

We encourage travellers to view wild animals in their natural habitats (e.g. national parks) in a responsible manner that makes animal welfare and conservation a core priority. We discourage direct human initiated contact with wild animals. These activities are not in the best interests of the animals and can negatively impact animal health and welfare. They can also be a human health and safety concern.

Travellers should not feed wild animals because they can become dependent on unreliable food sources and suffer if given inappropriate foods. Feeding wild animals can also cause them to lose their fear of humans, which puts them at a higher risk of predation, vehicle collisions, and being deemed a 'nuisance' species for extermination. It can also lead to food-seeking aggression in the animals.

2. The use of mules, donkeys, yaks, dzopkios, camels, llama or horses to carry equipment

On some extended treks in some countries we will use pack animals to carry loads for our groups of walkers. Working animals must be treated with consideration and must be given adequate shelter, care, food and water. Any condition that impairs their welfare must be treated promptly and, if necessary, they must not be worked again until they are fit. They must not be overworked or overloaded, nor must they be forced to work through ill treatment. Working animals should carry no more than half their body weight, or pull in excess of double their body weight. It is very important to ensure the load is evenly proportioned on both sides, to reduce the risk of injury. Each case should be assessed individually where factors such as terrain, altitude, temperature, humidity, inclines, hours of work, age, condition should always be considered in the equation. The weight or load that an animal carries or pulls must be significantly reduced in relation to the more physically strenuous conditions faced. If you see an animal being mistreated, make a formal complaint to your World Expeditions guide.

3. Dog-sledding

Sled dogs are a group of dog breeds that, historically, were bred for the purpose of pulling a dog sled, as a form of transportation in Alaska, Greenland and northern Canada. Sled dogs today are still used by some rural communities, and also for recreational purposes. World Expeditions offers a dog sledding experience on one of our Canadian itineraries.

While these activities can provide dogs with a suitable source of exercise, contributing to their physical and emotional health, a dog's welfare must not be compromised due to overexertion. Sled dog guardians must house, train and handle their animals humanely and ensure they are socialized to encourage appropriate behaviors toward people and other animals. Dogs must be physically fit and conditioned for the activity they are being asked to perform and of a breed that can tolerate cold weather. The dogs must still be provided with adequate shelter to protect them from inclement weather and their welfare should be safeguarded for the duration of their lives from breeding to when they are retired from this activity.

4. Visiting animal sanctuaries and shelters where animals are held captive

A shelter is a facility that provides short-term care for animals rescued from abuse, injury and abandonment. The aim is usually to place permanently as many as possible of the animals elsewhere, where welfare will also be ensured. A sanctuary is a facility that provides lifelong or long-term care for animals rescued from abuse, injury and abandonment.

We can accept the confinement of animals in shelters and sanctuaries provided that their physical and psychological welfare is assured and/or the objectives of confinement are in the animals' interests and/or likely to deliver a better future and a good quality of life, for example, by way of re-homing, rehabilitation or release into the wild.

Despite this, some degree of suffering, no matter how minor, is experienced by any wild animal that finds itself in captivity as part of the wildlife tourism industry. Captivity can severely impact on the physiological and psychological wellbeing of wild animals and is of concern in terms of numbers of animals involved and the intensity and duration of their suffering. We encourage travellers to seek to experience animals in their wild habitat (national parks) first and foremost.

Travellers should be wary of substandard facilities that masquerade as sanctuaries. We believe that existing owners of captive wild animals are under obligation to meet the psychological and physiological needs of the individuals under their care as fully as possible. They should refrain from obtaining new animals if they cannot meet this obligation and they should not breed the animals unless they form part of an official internationally recognized reintroduction program.

We recognise that some animals cannot be released back into the wild because of psychological or physical illness or because they may have a negative environmental impact (e.g. they may jeopardise genetic diversity and fitness). We believe that those individuals involved in the captive wildlife tourism industry (including rescue centre managers) have an obligation to ensure a transparent robust decision-making process relating to euthanasia, and that when it is absolutely necessary to put a wild animal to death, this is always done humanely.

5. Domestic pets encounters

Throughout the world, humans keep companion animals. This can be a mutually beneficial arrangement when there is a full personal commitment to the welfare of the animals. The animals must always be provided with shelter, exercise, care, food and water appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. Companion animal ownership can vary in different countries. These animals may be genuine strays or they may be free-roaming animals that are community owned and fed. Travellers should not feed them because it could take them away from their longer-term food source and it may encourage the animals to follow the travellers. Companion animals can transmit zoonotic diseases, such as rabies, so travellers should take great care during animal encounters, and seek immediate medical advice if they are bitten or scratched by an animal with an unknown medical background.

6. Animal Husbandry

Throughout the world animals are farmed. World Expeditions believes that these animals should receive shelter, exercise, food, water and care in a manner appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. World Expeditions is opposed to any methods of husbandry that do not fulfill these criteria.

World Expeditions does not include the following activities in our itineraries and we encourage travellers to avoid them:

1. Riding an elephant

It's difficult for travellers to resist the temptation to take a ride on these beautiful and incredibly intelligent creatures. But if you really care for these wonderful animals you'll avoid riding on their back and having contact with them

To 'train' an elephant, they are taken from their mothers at an early age and their spirit is broken through both physical and psychological pain, including isolation, starvation, beating and being chained up in small enclosures.

Elephants are highly intelligent and socially developed animals and can develop post-traumatic stress disorders. In elephant camps they are prevented from forming social relationships with each other – this is hugely damaging to their physical and psychological wellbeing.

Contrary to public perception, elephants are one of the most dangerous animals to handle. Bull hooks (pointed and sharp metal hooks on long sticks) are used during rides with tourists to maintain control of the elephants, which can result in serious injuries such as infected sores and cuts.

Most elephants have very little access to veterinary care, meaning that a relatively minor illness can quickly become a big problem, causing unnecessary suffering. The best elephant experience is a wild one, as part of a wildlife safari, viewing elephants free in their habitat displaying their natural behaviours.

2. Petting lion cubs, walking with lions, and canned hunts

Lions are wild animals. They retain their wild behaviours and natures despite close contact with human owners in captivity. Lion cub handling, walking with lions and photo opportunities with lions are most common in southern Africa – particularly South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, and in Mauritius. These facilities depend on the supply of a continual stream of young lions – usually captive bred and taken from their mothers shortly after birth.

Separation can be very stressful for both cubs and lionesses. In the wild, they would normally stay together for at least two years. Wild lionesses would usually have one litter every two to three years, but those breeding for the industry can be forced to have up to two to three litters per year.

Once cubs are taken from their mothers at just a few weeks old they are subjected to frequent handling by their owners until they are able to feed themselves and are ready to attract tourists. Their days are spent in a relentless cycle of paid-for handling and photo opportunities. This is so different from the cubs' wild existence where they are fiercely protected by their mothers and depend on them for reassurance. Handled cubs can lose their hair and become ill with diarrhoea and other illnesses because of the chronic stress and sleep deprivation inflicted on them. Then, once an unwieldy size, lions are reportedly drugged and abused until they become compliant enough for photo opportunities or lion walks with tourists.

Sometimes they may be sent to canned hunting camps to be shot by trophy hunters in small enclosures.

3. Animals subjected to cruelty for the purpose of entertainment, such as animal circuses, dancing bears, dog or cockerel fights, running of the bulls and any festival that causes suffering to animals

We are opposed to the use of animals in entertainment, including sport, when such use is contrary to the animals' nature, or may involve suffering or adversely affect the animals' welfare, including animal circuses, dancing bears, dog or cockerel fights, running of the bulls and any festival that causes suffering to animals.

We recognise that some of these inhumane tourist attractions have well entrenched cultural significance specific to a particular country and/or region. We are respectful and mindful of the importance of cultural practices to local, national and regional identities. However, we believe that cultures are not static and it is necessary to adapt and modify cultural practices and traditions where they have a negative impact on animal welfare.

Entertainment and culture are not an excuse for animal cruelty. Voice your dislike of these antiquated activities through non-participation.

4. Visiting aquariums or marine parks where large mammals like dolphins or whales are kept in captivity.

These environments are unnatural for these far-roaming, socially complex and intelligent mammals and cause much stress to the animal since they can only swim in

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endless circles in tanks that are small in relation to their size. They are denied the opportunity to engage in most of their natural behaviours and many die far short of their natural life spans.

Captive animals are often taken from their families. Many wild animals have complex social structures that cannot be recreated in captivity. These animals are exploited for entertainment and forced to perform unnatural behaviours.

5. Purchasing souvenirs made from wild animals, including fur, ivory, shells, seahorses, teeth, rhino horn and turtle shell products, as well as traditional medicine derived from endangered or threatened species, such as tiger bone.

Wild animal derivatives may be offered to tourists (e.g. as food, traditional medicine and souvenirs). We believe that tourists should not visit facilities that farm wild animals (commercial production) or buy products derived from wild animals that have been held in captivity or slaughtered, in the wild or captivity, for commercial gain irrespective of the intended purpose of the item.

When deciding on a souvenir to bring home to remind you of your latest adventure, choose an item that doesn't endanger the survival of an animal species.

And remember that at least 36 different species of animal are used in traditional medicines, including the endangered species the tiger, the rhinoceros, and the sea horse. Buyers beware! There are humane, herbal, synthetic and modern medicinal alternatives available.

If you see an animal in distress, here's what you can do.

- Make a note of the date, time and location,
- Make a note of the type and number of animals involved,
- Take photos and/or videos as proof,
- Make a complaint locally, and report what you've seen to:
 - Local tourist offices
 - Local police
 - Local animal protection organizations
 - Your World Expeditions guide

When you return home, please contact the nearest World Expeditions office and report the abuse or mistreatment. It's through the communication of issues that they can be pinpointed and addressed. We welcome your comments in relation to this important aspect of your travel experience.

World Expeditions would like to acknowledge the guidance provided by World Animal Protection in the development of this document.

World Animal Protection, formerly known as WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals), works to end the needless suffering of animals, influence decision makers to put animals on the global agenda, help the world see how important animals are to all of us, inspire people to change animals' lives for the better and move the world to protect animals. www.worldanimalprotection.org