

IMMERSIVE TRAVEL ASIA



Animal Welfare

CODES OF CONDUCT

INTERNAL & SUPPLIER STANDARD

FOREWORD

Why this exists

Most of what draws travellers to Asia, elephants moving through the treeline, a reef alive with colour, a troop of macaques by a temple wall, exists because it hasn't been consumed. That's the part we take seriously.

Wildlife and nature-based experiences are popular, and when they're done properly they fund conservation and support the communities living alongside these animals. Done badly, they cause real harm, to the animals, to the ecosystems, and eventually to the destinations themselves.

This document sets out how we work: which activities we'll put in front of a client, which we won't, and the standards we hold our suppliers and guides to on the ground. It draws on internationally recognised welfare guidelines and the expertise of the specialist conservation partners we work with across the region.

It isn't a marketing statement. It's the standard we hold ourselves to before a booking is ever confirmed.

OUR COMMITMENTS

Four principles, applied across every itinerary

- 01** **Safeguarding animal welfare.** Respecting the physical and mental welfare of animals involved in our experiences and supply chain, and insisting on species-appropriate conditions wherever animals are in human care.
- 02** **Preventing the disturbance of wildlife.** An observation-only approach to wildlife viewing that protects the welfare of animals and the safety of travellers alike.
- 03** **Halting biodiversity loss.** Sourcing responsibly, holding suppliers accountable, and taking a firm line on illegal wildlife trade and invasive species.
- 04** **Restoring nature.** Recognising that travel has an impact, and putting resources into community-led conservation that gives destinations something back.

We review these commitments regularly and treat external welfare guidance as a working standard, not a formality.

GUIDELINES

The framework we work within

Endangered species need revenue attached to their protection, not just rules on paper. Any wildlife excursion or animal attraction we offer must comply with CITES, the international agreement regulating trade in endangered species, and with national wildlife protection laws wherever they apply. The trade of endangered animals, alive or dead, or of their parts, ivory, shells, skins, is not something we will ever be associated with, directly or through a supplier.

Where local laws govern the keeping of animals in zoos, sanctuaries or riding operations, we expect those laws to be followed in full, and we assess every supplier against the internationally recognised Five Domains model of animal welfare.

THE FIVE DOMAINS

- **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
- **Freedom from discomfort**
- **Freedom from pain, injury or disease**
- **Freedom to express normal behaviour**
- **Freedom from fear and distress**

Where a supplier falls short, we raise it directly and work with them on the improvements needed. If those improvements don't materialise within a reasonable period, the activity comes off our offering. That's not a threat we make lightly, and it's one we're prepared to follow through on.

SAFEGUARDING ANIMAL WELFARE

Animals in human care

We believe animals belong in the wild. Where a well-managed sanctuary or facility exists, its purpose should be conservation and education, not entertainment.

Captive animals depend entirely on the people caring for them, for space, for social contact, for an environment that doesn't strip away their natural behaviour. We don't offer any activity involving direct contact with a wild animal unless every one of the following is true:

CONDITIONS FOR ANY DIRECT CONTACT

- The activity is proven not to compromise animal welfare or public health and safety
- It doesn't involve a high-risk species, bears, sloths, primates, wild cats, wild pigs, cetaceans, snakes, crocodilians or elephants among them
- Hygiene protocols are enforced before and after contact, to limit disease transmission in both directions
- A trained handler who understands the species supervises the interaction throughout
- The provider holds a valid legal licence for what they're offering
- Animals aren't humanised, trained to perform unnatural tricks, or forced to take part
- Animals are checked regularly by a qualified veterinarian

PREVENTING DISTURBANCE

Watching without interfering

A wildlife encounter is often the most memorable part of a trip, and one of the easiest things to get wrong. National parks, marine and terrestrial, support conservation, but only if the people visiting them respect the fragility of what's inside.

Whether the viewing happens on foot, by boat, from a vehicle or on horseback, the same principles hold:

WHAT WE REQUIRE OF EVERY EXCURSION

- Vehicles and walking groups keep to designated routes, paths, or viewing areas, so nesting birds and sensitive habitats aren't disturbed
- Animals are never chased, touched, baited, hunted, or startled with noise or bright light
- Boat engines stay away from reefs and high-biodiversity areas, and slow down rather than speed up near marine life
- Local regulations are communicated to every traveller and every excursion provider before departure
- Health, safety, and emergency procedures are followed by suppliers and guides, for travellers and staff alike

Done properly, wildlife viewing funds the conservation work that keeps these places intact. That's the outcome we build every itinerary around.

SUPPLIER COMPLIANCE

Where the real risk sits

Most of the risk in this area doesn't sit with us directly, it sits in the supply chain, the excursion providers, camps and guides we book on a client's behalf. It's a pattern seen across the industry, most of the negative impact tends to sit within a company's supply chain rather than its own operations, which is why supplier engagement isn't a side task for us, it's most of the job.

We won't work with an operator that doesn't treat animals appropriately, regardless of how popular the excursion is or how well it photographs. Every supplier agreement includes clear welfare requirements, and we expect our partners to understand them, not just sign them.

Where we have concerns about a specific attraction, we raise them, request improvements, and remove the activity from our offering if those improvements don't happen within a reasonable period.

SENSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Elephants

Wild Asian elephants survive in fragmented pockets across as many as a dozen countries in the region, and face real pressure from illegal hunting, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict. They're herbivores that spend most of the day foraging leaves, stems, fruit, and bark, females weigh around two tonnes, males up to five.

In the wild

WHAT WE REQUIRE

- **Keep distance at all times**
- **Never support feeding or touching a wild elephant**
- **If an elephant approaches a vehicle, stay calm and quiet rather than reacting; move away if possible**
- **Never chase a wild elephant, including to stage an encounter with a calf**
- **Never eat elephant meat or encourage the purchase of ivory or items made from elephant parts**

In captivity

We believe elephants belong in the wild, but recognise that well-run rescue and conservation camps, properly audited, can offer a genuine and ethical alternative for travellers who want to see them closely. Camps should exist for rescue and conservation, not tourism alone, and revenue from a visit should demonstrably support that work. Riding is not something we offer, an elephant's spine isn't built to carry sustained weight, however docile the animal appears.

SENSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Primates

Seeing a wild primate is a genuine highlight for a lot of travellers in Asia, and with at least 97 recognised species in the region, the chances of an encounter are good. Primates share enough of our biology, genetically and behaviourally, that the connection people feel toward them is real, and so is the risk that comes with it.

Disease moves both ways between humans and primates, reason enough on its own to keep a clear distance. Feeding also does lasting harm, it shortens natural foraging time, alters diet in ways that increase disease susceptibility, and increases competition and aggression between animals. Primates that grow used to human contact tend to become more aggressive toward each other and less predictable around people, a safety issue as much as a welfare one.

OUR RULES FOR ANY PRIMATE VIEWING

- Groups stay under ten people
- Visits are timed to be memorable without becoming prolonged, a clear point of arrival and departure
- No feeding, no touching, especially not of infants
- No flash photography, loud noises, or sudden movements
- No staring or smiling directly at primates, which can read as a threat display
- Keep personal belongings secured, and don't carry anything that could be mistaken for food

SENSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Marine life, diving & snorkelling

Some of the best diving and snorkelling in the world sits in Asian waters, and some of the most fragile ecosystems anywhere sit right alongside it. Coral reefs take decades to grow and moments to damage.

We favour dive and snorkel operators with recognised certifications, such as Green Fins, wherever they're available, and we expect the following from every operator we book:

WHAT WE REQUIRE OF EVERY OPERATOR

- A valid operating licence, checked before we work with them
- A safety briefing for every traveller before entering the water
- No touching anything with hands, feet, or fins, corals, marine life, or the seabed
- Boats approach marine animals from the side, never head-on or from behind, and never force bow-riding
- Engines stay in neutral, or off, once marine animals approach closely
- No more than thirty minutes at any one site before making way for the next group
- No solo diving, no straying from designated areas, no feeding marine animals or leaving food behind

SENSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Turtles & fishing

Turtles

Marine turtles breed near the shore and lay their eggs on the beach, extraordinarily vulnerable while doing it. Eggs take roughly two months to incubate, and under natural conditions only around one hatchling in a thousand survives to adulthood, numbers that make every nest matter.

We only work with organisations approved for turtle conservation work. Releases happen at night, in small groups, and nests are never opened early or exposed to light to encourage a viewing. Hatchlings are never disturbed on their way to the sea, and we ask every traveller not to buy souvenirs made from turtle shell, or turtle meat from a restaurant menu.

Fishing

Where fishing appears on an itinerary, it's justified by food or by supporting a fisherman's livelihood, not staged for entertainment. We avoid fishing in the wild where endangered or protected species could be caught, and prefer fishing farms or closed areas run alongside local farmers or conservation organisations. We don't offer any activity that injures and releases fish purely for sport.

GUIDANCE FOR GUIDES & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Building this into the experiences we sell

When we build a new experience involving animals, our first questions are the same every time: does this generate revenue that genuinely supports conservation, and does it meet the welfare standard set out in this document. High-risk activities are reviewed before they're ever offered for sale, and that review sometimes means an in-person inspection rather than a desk check.

Guides working in national parks or conservation areas are always paired with a specialist ranger, and are trained to pass the same standards on to travellers:

WE DO

- Brief every traveller on local rules before entering a protected area
- Leave only footprints
- Keep to recommended trekking routes

WE DON'T

- Touch or feed animals, plants, trees, or corals
- Scare, chase, or hunt wildlife
- Offer motorised activities, quad bikes, jet skis, 4WD tours, in marine or riverside areas



None of this is about denying travellers a good story. It's about making sure the story doesn't come at the expense of the animal, the ecosystem, or the community living alongside it.

Every excursion we put on an itinerary has been through this filter first, and we'd rather leave something off the trip entirely than compromise on it.



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