



# Animal

# WELFARE POLICY

## Policy statement

A major drawcard of nature-based tourism is wildlife experiences. At Intrepid Travel, we believe that wild animals should be left doing what they do best: living in the wild.

Animals are an essential part of our natural ecosystem, and we are responsible for protecting their habitats and ensuring their longevity. Doing this will ultimately result in better wildlife tourism experiences for all – people, animals and the planet.

## Purpose and scope

This policy is designed to provide overarching guidance for activities involving animals on Intrepid trips.

These guidelines are to be used by Intrepid staff, customers, and other stakeholders and partners to assist with:

- Understanding how animal welfare can be compromised in the tourism industry.
- Establishing Intrepid's stance on animal-related tourism.
- Incorporating animal welfare best practice into all animal-related activities on Intrepid trips.
- Auditing Intrepid trips and experiences to ensure animal welfare is considered.
- Encouraging customers to undertake best practices when interacting with animals on Intrepid trips and throughout their travels.

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## Animal welfare basics

Animal welfare encompasses all aspects of an animal's physical and mental wellbeing. The following Five Domains of the animal welfare model (the universally known principles for defining basic welfare needs) have been considered in forming these guidelines:

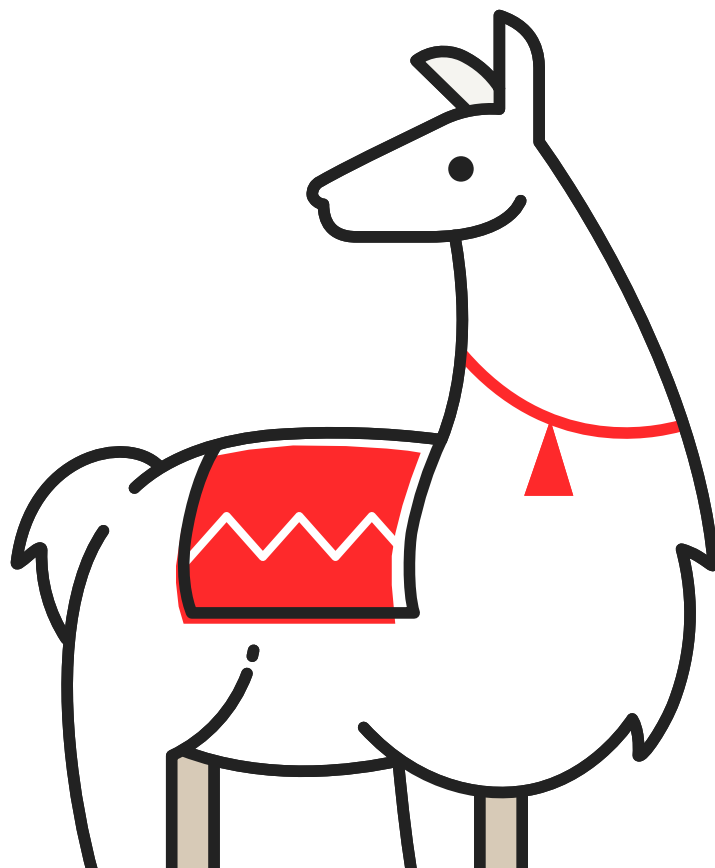
- **Nutrition** – the animal's access to a sufficient, balanced, varied and clean diet and unrestricted access to water.
- **Environment** – comfort for the animal, including temperature, terrain, space, air, odour, noise and predictability.
- **Health** – good health through the absence of disease, injury, impairment and maintenance of a good fitness level.
- **Behaviour** – enabling varied, novel and engaging environmental challenges through sensory inputs, exploration, foraging, bonding, playing, retreating and other activities.
- **Mental State** – supporting an animal's positive mental state through pleasure, comfort or vitality, while reducing negative states including fear, frustration, hunger, pain or boredom.

## Difference between wild and domestic animals

Intrepid Travel recognises that there is a difference between wild and domesticated animals. Domesticated animals, such as dogs, horses and other livestock, have undergone selective breeding over many generations to be notably and genetically different to their wild ancestors. As a result, domesticated animals adapt more readily to captive conditions and are generally easier to handle than their wild counterparts.

This domestication process has not happened for wild animals, such as elephants, tigers and monkeys. Even when these types of animals are kept for tourism and entertainment purposes, or become tame, they are still wild.

Intrepid Travel accepts that the welfare of wild animals is compromised in captivity and captivity is only acceptable when it is in the animal's best interests and the highest possible standard of care is given. (See *Sanctuaries for wildlife* on page 5.)



# ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

## Viewing wildlife in the wild

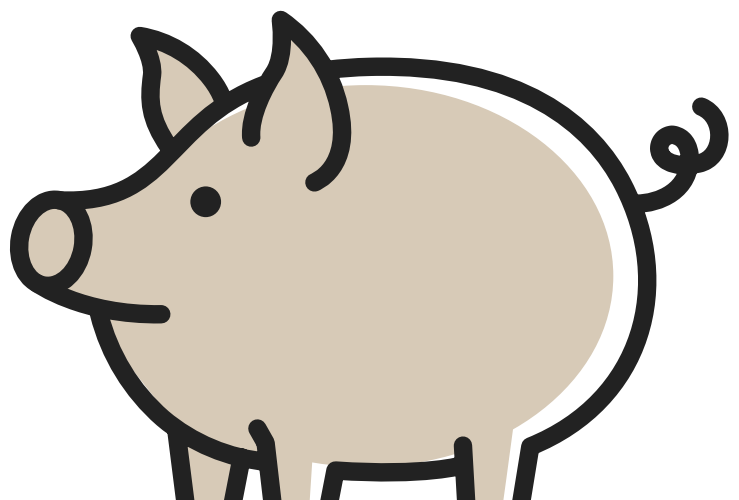
Intrepid Travel believes wild animals should be viewed responsibly in the wild.

### On land: general

- **Keep your distance** – keep a safe and respectful distance from the animal. Stay in designated viewing areas, adhere to signage and do not chase animals to get a better look, or lure them with food or otherwise.
- **Be respectful** – speak quietly and avoid sudden movements - do not call out, whistle or try to attract the attention of animals.
- **Do not feed animals** – feeding animals attracts them to humans and to human food, which upsets their natural diet and can shorten their life. It can also be dangerous and make animals unnaturally aggressive.
- **Do not touch wild animals** – there is a risk of transmission of diseases both from and to the animal, and the animal may be aggressive.
- **Do not interact with wild animals** – do not participate in experiences that offer the ability to get closer to a wild animal than would typically be possible or safe (e.g. lion walks, elephant bathing, holding wild animals). These animals are likely to have undergone serious mistreatment, including drugging to make them safe to interact with humans. Participating in these experiences encourages them to continue.
- **Be mindful of lights** – do not use flash photography or shine light directly into animals' eyes when night viewing. Use a red-light torch when possible. Never illuminate prey, as this gives the predator an unfair and unnatural advantage.

### On land: safari

- **Stay in the vehicle** – always stay in your vehicle as directed. Predators may be present.
- **Be mindful of others** – be sensitive to other visitors viewing experience. Pull to the side of the road so that others can pass when viewing wildlife from a vehicle.
- **Be slow and safe** – do not exceed the maximum speed limit. In most National Parks this is 40kph / 25 mph. Observe local rules regarding whether night game driving is permitted.
- **Stick to the road** – do not drive off-road. This can severely damage animal habitat or animals themselves. In reserves that allow off-road driving, drivers and guides need to be aware of and adhere to local regulations. If on foot, stay on designated walking tracks and paths.
- **Don't overcrowd** – control the number of vehicles at a sighting wherever possible and ensure you are not crowding an animal on the move or blocking its path to move away from visitors. Animals always have a right of way in their wild environments.
- **Don't interfere** – never use your vehicle to get an animal to move and guests should not request that the driver or guide breaks rules to have better access to wildlife.



# ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY



## Viewing wildlife in marine environments

Intrepid Travel believes marine animals should be viewed responsibly in their natural habitats.

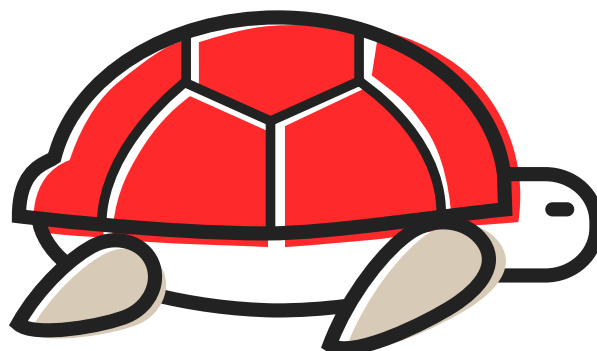
### Marine environments: general

- **Keep your distance** – give space to marine life when swimming, diving, snorkelling or doing other water activities.
- **Do not touch marine life** – avoid touching the bottom of fragile marine environments, kicking coral, stirring up silt or disturbing marine animals with your fins, flippers or other equipment. Some corals grow only 2 centimetres (.07 inches) or less per year. An accidental kick or pinched-off branch can instantly destroy 50–100 years of growth.
- **Leave it be** – do not remove seashells or take other tokens. Removing shells can negatively impact the ocean by decreasing the number of essential chemical compounds in the water along with the number of animals that rely on shells.
- **Do not attempt to attract marine life** – do not feed or attempt to attract wildlife with food, decoys, sound, or light. This disrupts normal feeding cycles, may cause sickness or death from unnatural or contaminated food items, and habituates animals to people, putting both at risk.
- **Do not pollute** – wear reef-safe sunscreen or long sleeves for sun protection for water activities.

### Marine environments: whale & dolphin activities

The following standards should be met when choosing or participating in an activity involving whales or dolphins:

- **Do not swim with them** – avoid swimming with and touching dolphins or whales.
- **Keep your distance** – always keep the legislated distance, maintain a steady direction and no wake speed when around dolphins and whales.
- **Be careful and considerate** – take special care around mothers and young, and around whales that are feeding or resting, as they are particularly sensitive to disturbance.
- **Follow regulations & standards** – choose an operator who can demonstrate that they comply with local whale watching regulations and guidelines, as well as meeting, or exceeding, required safety and licensing standards.
- **Choose your guide** – preference tours that include an experienced naturalist or guide and have links with a research group, educational facility or conservation association.



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## Sanctuaries for wildlife

Intrepid Travel itineraries should only include visits to facilities involving wild animals in captivity if the rationale for the sanctuary operation is in the best interests of the animals involved.

### An animal sanctuary is not:

- A petting zoo.
- An animal temple, where animals are held captive for worshipping purposes.
- An animal cafe.
- Marine entertainment parks or aquariums.
- A zoo that participates in any of the following practices to buy, sell, interact or breed wildlife.

### Genuine wildlife sanctuaries:

- **Do not buy or sell wildlife** – wild animals or wild animal parts should not be bought or sold.
- **Do not interact with wildlife** – do not use the animals for interactions with customers, including in performances or shows. Do not allow visitors to touch or feed animals.
- **Do not breed wildlife** – do not breed wild animals unless they are part of an officially recognised breeding program in which animals are responsibly released back into the wild (and may otherwise be extinct or endangered).
- **Care for wildlife** – allow for appropriate veterinary care according to animals' specific needs.
- **Do not keep wildlife without reason** – do not keep animals without a good reason (i.e. they must have a defined conservation benefit to keeping animals long term).

## Domestic animal sanctuaries

Genuine domestic animal sanctuaries should follow the same guidance when supporting retired or surrendered domestic animals, such as racehorses or other working animals, dogs, cats, and livestock.

## Animal products

Travellers should avoid buying products made from wild animals or wild animal parts (including endangered species), produced by cruel practices, or collected in ways that destroy vital habitats, such as:

- Skins (including fur, reptile skins)
- Horns (i.e. rhino, antelope)
- Insects (including spiders, butterflies)
- Turtle shells
- Seashells, coral, starfish
- Ivory
- Civet coffee (kopi luwak)
- Traditional medicines or medicinal foods (i.e. turtle or shark fin soup, snake whiskey, bear bile products, birds' nest, tiger or lion bone wine)



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## Other unacceptable practices involving animals

In addition to the above, Intrepid Travel does not visit, support or engage in any of the following activities as part of our trips:

- Sports and cultural activities that cause animal suffering or death, such as rodeos, bullfighting and running, elephant polo, ostrich riding and racing, cock fighting.
- Animals used for begging, such as dancing bears, snake charmers, and buying bananas for elephants and monkeys.
- Trophy or game hunting of wildlife. Fishing for recreational purposes (i.e. not as a means of procuring food).
- Any cage diving where baiting is used (e.g. shark or crocodile cage diving).
- Restaurants or hotels that display captive wildlife.
- Cultural festivals with an animal focus that have been co-opted for tourism (e.g. Golden Eagle Festival in Mongolia).

## Any questions or concerns?

**For customers:** if you have concerns about a supplier we use or an included activity, please advise your leader and provide details in the feedback survey sent to you at the end of your trip.

**For leaders & operations staff:** if you have concerns about an animal experience offered as an included or optional activity, please alert your manager directly so the issue can be addressed.

If you are still unsure whether the facility has an appropriate standard of care for its animals or have any other questions on animal welfare, please contact us at Intrepid Travel for further guidance:

[accountability@intrepidtravel.com](mailto:accountability@intrepidtravel.com)

