

Khiri Travel Wildlife Policy

1. Animal Welfare

When travelling with Khiri Travel, there are many opportunities for our guests to experience or interact with animals. We must be vigilant and careful with these kind of experiences as they can go both ways; they can have a negative impact on local wildlife or they help raise awareness for the plight of the animals we encounter along the way. Khiri Travel makes the conscious decision to utilize each opportunity to educate and in addition, make efforts to protect the wildlife around us. As the welfare of these animals is put under further pressure from diminishing habitats, sustainable travel experiences can help safeguard their fragile ecosystems.

By creating meaningful and responsible travel products, we can support the local rehabilitation and conservation efforts of threatened and endangered animals.

Khiri Travel does not promote any activities, which exploit or harm animals, both in the wild and in captivity. This Wildlife Policy serves as a fixed guideline for all Khiri Travel products and is always factored in in the assessment of wildlife-tourism suppliers. We ensure that the best possible welfare conditions and management of captive and/or wild animals are provided. Moreover, these guidelines ensure customers engage in responsible interactions with animals and have the best possible experience when encountering wildlife.

Key aspects of animal welfare are the **Five Freedoms**, internationally accepted standards of care that affirm every living being's right to humane treatment:

Freedom from hunger and thirst by having easy access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full vitality and vigor

Freedom from discomfort by providing a nurturing environment that includes proper shelter and a comfortable resting area

Freedom from pain, injury, or disease by providing routine health checks and rapid treatment and diagnosis of injuries and diseases

Freedom to express normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animals' own kind

Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring living conditions and treatment are free from mental suffering

Embracing the Five Freedoms supports the health and welfare of animals in captivity or in the wild. This ensures that animals are treated in a humane way free from unpleasant states.



A. Captive Animals

While Khiri Travel believes that animals belong in the wild, we also understand that due to the loss of habitat, excessive poaching, and the domestication of animals, captive animals represent a large part of wildlife tourism in Asia. Encounters with captive animals, when done in a responsible way, can have positive and beneficial impacts on the conservation of animals and help educate both tourists and locals alike. When working with captive wildlife suppliers, we strictly adhere to the following rules:

- Animals are not trained to perform unnatural behavior or tricks
- Animals are in no way humanized (e.g. dressed up, ride bicycles, etc.)
- Animals have constant access to food and clean water
- Animals have adequately sized enclosures
- Animals have free time and opportunities to socialize and roam freely with other animals
- Animals have easy and constant access to veterinarian care
- Strong safety regulations are in place to protect both animals and visitors



2. Elephants in Captivity

The treatment and use of captive elephants are very much an ethical concern in Asia's tourism industry. Over the last 25 years, the rapid growth in the tourism industry has increased the demand for elephant interactions across Asia. Coupled with a severe lack of government regulations, these elephants have suffered from poor treatment while being exposed to harsh conditions that often inflict unnecessary pain and suffering on them.

With over 3,000 years of captive elephant history – and given that there are over 10,000 captive elephants in Asia – it is important to establish elephant management and care guidelines while respecting the local culture and tradition. As we lay down solid foundations that ensure the welfare of captive elephants as well as their traditional mahouts, we can continue offering optimal health care and safeguard captive elephants. The truth of the matter is that the majority of elephants born and raised in captivity cannot simply be returned to the wild, and will always require professional care throughout their long lives – a huge expense that must be met.

We believe that responsible tourism and correct practices encouraging responsible elephant experiences of the highest standard are the most immediate, viable solutions. As these standards become widely-adopted, we believe that eventually more can be done by engaging stakeholders to seek holistic improvements and upholding unified standards across the whole industry that actually protect captive elephants and ensure their welfare. Incremental changes are more effective rather than staging boycotts or signing pledges. Khiri Travel actively collaborates with independent auditing organizations, who provide training possibilities and support towards a more responsible elephant camp management.

Travelife for Tour Operators in partnership with PATA, Animondial and the Asian Captive Elephant Working Group (ACEWG) have therefore started promoting a framework to set up a widely supported set of standards and criteria as guidelines and references for elephant camps. The so-called Elephant Camp Animal Welfare and Sustainability Standard and Assessment Initiative will provide tour operators as well as their clients with an ethical choice when interacting with elephants.

Asian Captive Elephants Standards (ACES) has created best practices and standards of welfare, living, and working conditions for all elephants engaged in tourism. ACES works alongside camps, governments, mahouts, universities and local communities to ensure all captive elephants are provided with the best care and conservation outcomes possible. Experts in the field provide support for elephant tourism providers in order to improve and monitor elephant welfare conditions.

Both standards include more than 160 assessment criteria divided into seven themes and 24 sub-themes. The framework provides detailed guidelines for the camps – covering not only the elephants but also the staff, mahouts, and business practices of the camps.

The standards considered amongst other things:

- Fair working conditions for mahouts should include health care benefits, fair wages, and annual leave
- Training and first aid courses for mahouts and camp staff are mandatory
- Conservation efforts should be coordinated with local communities
- Type of interaction: rides, bathing, feeding etc.
- Working hours and working times for elephants, number of rides (if applicable): Elephants should not work or interact with tourists more than 4 hours a day. Rides should not interfere with their normal rest and feeding times
- Route of rides and terrain: elephants have very sensitive skin, they should not walk on hot concrete, rocks, or gravel. Shade should be provided to protect the animals from the sun: they are prone to sunstroke
- Access to food and clean water: elephants eat around 200 kg per day. Due to their sensitive digestive system, they need to have constant access to a wide variety of foods, not limited to bananas or sugar cane
- Access to veterinarian care
- Time for socializing and free roaming: elephants are extremely social animals: they should always be able to stay in their herds and have time to roam freely
- Daytime and nighttime enclosures must be adequately sized. When male elephants are in heat, they must be kept separate from the other animals: in certain circumstances it might be deemed necessary to use chains or to build an enclosure. If chains are used, they should be at least 20 meters long. Male elephants in heat are extremely dangerous not only to humans, but also to other elephants, therefore they will need to have a separate enclosure
- Training methods of animals: many elephant camps use positive reinforcement techniques to get the animals accustomed to interacting with humans
- Health & safety guidelines should be clearly defined for both animals and humans
- The facilities must be aware of their environmental impacts and have proper waste management systems for the elephants

When you travel with Khiri Travel you can, therefore, rest assured that any elephant experience is held to the highest of international standards and practices. In this way, we believe we are contributing to the protection and preservation of elephants in Asia. We wish to set the standard that can then be adopted by ASEAN and other regional governments: in hopes that eventually such policies are implemented as law and enforced—thus creating the first-ever regulations for captive elephants and their welfare in the region.

The DMCs and tour operators involved in this initiative will also no longer work with any elephant camp that refuses to be audited or assessed. Complete transparency is required in all aspects of their operations in order to gauge and ensure responsible practices are indeed in place. Thus, financial gains are directed to those working on improving and ensuring the long-term welfare of their captive elephants and staff. We do not support those operating unethically, or purely for profit under false pretenses.

Elephants in captivity are an ethical concern under current circumstances, but by working together and using responsible tourism as a powerful tool in the right way, we can ensure the long-term survival of thousands of captive elephants throughout Asia and provide clients with an inspiring experience. These animal excursions will improve the lives of everyone involved while preserving local culture and heritage.



3. Captive Horse/Buffalo/Donkey Riding

Captive animals used for transport or farm work in traditional Asian society, deserve the best possible welfare conditions. In order to guarantee decent living conditions, we work closely together with our local partners to ensure the implementation of the following guidelines:

- Animals should have constant access to food and clean water
- Animals should be well fed and healthy
- Coats/fur/skin should be in good condition without any sores or wounds.
- Animal enclosures should be adequately sized and clean
- Animals should get enough rest throughout the day and not be required to work during the hottest hours of the day
- No beating or other physical force should be used to control or coerce the animal
- Riders should only choose an animal appropriate to their size: horses should carry less than half their body weight
- Strong health & safety guidelines must be in place and enforced. Tourists must receive a formal introduction and instruction before interacting with said animals
- Under no circumstances riding sick/underweight animals (if eyes are cloudy, bones or ribs are showing, visible wounds or sores)



4. Animals in the Wild

Captive animals used for transport or farm work in traditional Asian society, deserve the best possible welfare conditions. In order to guarantee decent living conditions, we work closely together with our local partners to ensure the implementation of the following guidelines:

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5. Marine Wildlife

Southeast Asia offers some of the most incredible diving and snorkeling spots in the world. Our guests have a good chance of spotting dolphins, turtles, sharks, manta rays, and even whales. In order to protect coral reefs along with the marine species that depend on the coral, Khiri Travel follows the guidelines below to make sure we protect this fragile aquatic habitat at all times:

- When swimming, snorkeling, or diving, always keep adequate distance and do not approach the nearby marine life
- Always stay close to the boat and follow your guides' instructions
- Do not feed any marine wildlife
- Do not touch any wildlife or coral - you are at risk of not only contracting diseases, but also passing them onto the corals
- Do not collect anything from the water: coral, shells, animals, plants
- Watch out for your fins - make sure not to touch anything or stand on any coral
- Do not chase marine wildlife - let them swim away freely
- Do not approach marine wildlife from behind or the front, always from the side
- Turtles: Most turtle species are endangered due to habitat loss and noise/water pollution. Turtles are extremely fragile: therefore, interaction must always be kept to a minimum. Never touch turtles, their eggs, or hatchlings, unless supervised by an official research or conservation program. When releasing turtles, never touch them with your bare hands, wear gloves at all times. Diseases can easily be transmitted
- Be extra careful around turtle nesting grounds, try to avoid entering the beach when you see them. Never interfere with the movement of turtles. Don't shine intrusive lights at them or on their nests. Flash photography is also prohibited. Do not make any sudden movements or loud noises - turtles can easily be scared
- Bring back all your plastic waste: marine wildlife can mistake plastic bags for food or shelter
- Avoid sunscreen with Oxybenzone as it can harm wildlife and coral reefs
- Avoid any marine parks or aquariums using animals for entertainment purposes, e.g. dolphins. Cetaceans are often taken from the wild and their confinement is both physically and psychologically harmful for their wellbeing



6. Fishing

Many communities in Asia rely on fishing for their livelihood. Fish and seafood represent a big part of Asian cuisine and culture. Khiri Travel promotes and supports traditional lifestyles by offering community-based tourist activities wherever possible.

- Traditional fishing methods serve a purpose on top of preserving the local culture. The fishermen eat what they catch and sell them in the local markets: these activities can be promoted to help the local town's community.
- No catch and release fishing activities for the sole purpose of entertainment should be allowed
- Respect local fishing quotas and breeding seasons
- Make sure not to fish in marine parks or protected areas
- We work with suppliers which uphold and respect the fishing ban of any protected species according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- Khiri Travel only works with suppliers that promote local marine wildlife conservation. With rules and regulations in place to maintain a healthy fish population, they can continue to fish in a sustainable manner

7. Animal Products

Khiri Travel does not support the purchase of any animal products or animal souvenirs, especially from endangered species, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species or CITES:

- Sea shells, corals, turtles, turtle shells, starfish, sea urchins, snails
- Fur or skins
- Rhino horn, ivory or pangolin scales
- Traditional medicines containing parts or products of endangered species
- Food products or medicinal products: shark fin soup, turtle soup, snake/tiger/pangolin whiskey, snake blood, bear bile, tiger bone wine, dog/cat meat

The trade in endangered wildlife products is illegal in all countries that Khiri Travel operates in; however, it might not be enforced sufficiently. Khiri Travel ensures regularly training of all staff and tour guides on appropriate souvenir and gift purchasing to ensure that we do not promote or engage in any trading of endangered species' products.

Khiri Travel is also a signatory of the WTTC Buenos Aires Declaration "Travel & Tourism Declaration on Illegal Trade.

Khiri Travel is an active supporter of Too Rare To Wear, a campaign educating locals and tourists about the protection of sea turtles and increasing awareness about products made out of turtle shells.

Being a sea turtle is hard enough. Don't make one your souvenir.



It is **illegal to buy** hawksbill products most places yet it is still **frequently sold worldwide**.

THE PROBLEM: TURTLESHELL JEWELRY | THE IMPACT: WORLDWIDE

Hawksbill sea turtles are **critically endangered**, and the use of their shells to make souvenirs like **jewelry** are one of their **top threats**.

15,000 REMAINING
adult females **worldwide**.



4,000 BABY TURTLES
won't hatch when **one female is killed**.



1,000 LBS OF SPONGES
are eaten by a hawksbill per year, helping **coral reefs grow**.



MILLIONS OF PEOPLE
inspired by seeing them in a coral reef or on the beach.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1 DON'T BUY THEM

Help save this turtle by **avoiding stores and vendors** who sell these products.

2 SIGN OUR PLEDGE

Get more information at www.TooRareToWear.org

3 SHARE

Spread the word on social media and **follow @TooRareToWear** on Facebook.

WWW.TOORARETOWEAR.ORG