



# Checking out of cruelty



How to end wildlife tourism's holiday horrors

# Introduction

We want a world where wild animals live in the wild where they belong. But one of the biggest barriers to this natural freedom is global tourism.

Up to one quarter of this trillion dollar industry is driven by demand for wildlife tourism<sup>1,2</sup>. What most people don't know is the unacceptable cruelty and abuse of wild animals used in most wildlife activities. These activities include elephant riding, swimming with captive dolphins, and hugging and posing for photos with lions and tigers.

Research carried out by the University of Oxford's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), commissioned by World Animal Protection, has uncovered global suffering caused to up to 550,000 wild animals by irresponsible tourist attractions<sup>3</sup>.

They compared expert scientific reviews of wildlife tourism venues with more than 50,000 tourist reviews on TripAdvisor. This revealed that 80% of people left positive reviews for venues that are treating wild animals cruelly<sup>3</sup>.

But this doesn't mean they don't care about animals. We know that when people are told about the cruelty behind such activities most decide not to go<sup>4</sup>.

Our campaign, **Wildlife – not entertainers**, is dedicated to ending the unnecessary suffering caused by the cruel wildlife entertainment industry. And our work has already secured the commitment of more than 80 travel companies worldwide to stop selling and promoting elephant rides and shows.

But there is still so much more to be done.

This report uncovers the cruelty behind irresponsible wildlife tourism. We expose the worst attractions and celebrate the best. We also map out the solutions to developing a wildlife-friendly tourism industry highlighting TripAdvisor's critical role.





# The global scale of the problem

WildCRU's research shows that at least 560,000 wild animals are currently in wildlife tourist attractions across the world<sup>3</sup>. Any further research is likely to show the number is even higher, involving millions of wild animals globally.

They found that welfare or conservation abuses are happening in approximately three out of every four attractions included in the study<sup>3</sup>.

Welfare abuses include being taken from their mothers at a very young age, being beaten and harmed so they can be trained to give rides. They are also forced to perform tricks or remain passive for those 'all-important' holiday souvenirs - selfies<sup>5</sup>.

Some of the worst venues include bear, elephant and tiger parks, and a turtle farm.

However, it must be celebrated that 25% of all wildlife attractions have a positive impact on the welfare of animals involved. These include sanctuaries that have rescued animals from abusive conditions including wildlife tourist entertainment attractions. At least 13,000 wild animals, including bears, orangutans, elephants and lions, are being cared for in this way. These venues do not provide wildlife shows or allow tourists to directly interact with the animals<sup>3</sup>.

# Wildlife tourism at a glance

Wildlife tourism is a big and growing industry...



Globally, tourism is worth over a **trillion** \$USD and accounts for **9%** of global GDP each year

# 1.8 billion

A growing industry, it is expected to increase to **1.8 billion** tourist arrivals each year by 2030

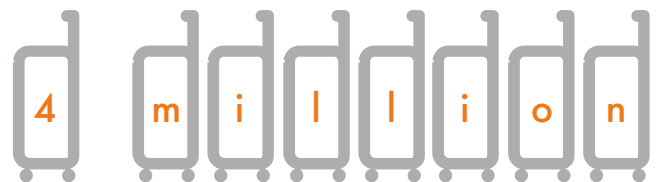
Some have estimated Wildlife Tourist Attractions (WTAs) constitute approx. **20-40%** of global tourism

Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) compared these findings with the subjective opinions of tourists



WildCRU assessed **188** different venues and **51,308** reviews left on TripAdvisor

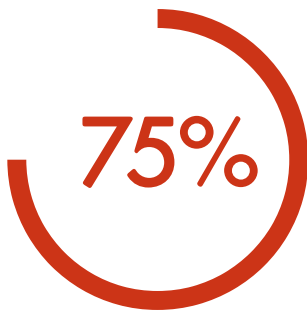
**80%** of tourists cannot see the negative impact a WTA has on animal welfare



Up to **4 million** tourists annually visit the negative welfare attractions assessed in the study

World Animal Protection estimate around **110 million** people worldwide visit cruel wildlife tourist attractions annually<sup>2</sup>

WildCRU used scientific methods to assess the impact of WTAs\* on wild animal welfare...



75% of these WTA types are having a negative impact on wild animals



These negative WTA types involve an estimated **550,000** wild animals



Examples include elephant rides, tiger selfies and turtle farm/handling



WildCRU identified and assessed **24 different WTA\* types** using objective scientific methods



25% of these WTA types are having a positive impact on wild animals



These positive WTA types involve only **13,000** wild animals



Examples were all sanctuaries with no performances and direct contact (bears, orangutans, lions)



[worldanimalprotection.org/customer-not-always-right](http://worldanimalprotection.org/customer-not-always-right)

\*\* Wildlife Tourist Attractions

# Wildlife on a tightrope

The global research in this report reaffirms the findings from 'Wildlife on a tightrope' - our 2010 report into the suffering of wild animals used for tourist entertainment in Thailand. 'Wildlife on a tightrope' is one of the largest national assessments of wildlife entertainment venues ever undertaken. It found:

- 1,300 elephants held captive in Thailand in 2010 to provide rides and shows for tourists. Our ongoing research shows captive elephants at these venues continue to be chained up day and night. Baby elephants are still suffering a horrific training process called 'the crush' which kills their spirit and forces them into submission<sup>5</sup>.
- 614 tigers kept in captivity in 2010. They were taken from their mothers from an early age and confined, typically in barren concrete compounds or cages where tourists can hug them and take a selfie<sup>5</sup>. Our ongoing research indicates that the situation has not changed for the better since then.
- 290 macaques tethered to the ground, or kept in tiny cages, and only released to perform shows for tourists. Our researchers noted they were often dressed up, for example, to look like a geisha as they perform tricks<sup>6</sup>.





# Alarming lack of awareness

Around 110 million people worldwide visit cruel wildlife tourist attractions annually – a conservative estimate of 10% of all 1.1 billion international tourism trips<sup>2</sup>. Yet most were unaware of the animal abuses involved.

This was shown in WildCRU's ground breaking academic review of TripAdvisor. The aim was to learn more about the global scale of wildlife tourist entertainment, and gain a better understanding of awareness levels of tourists visiting wildlife venues. TripAdvisor is the largest online tourist review site, available in 45 countries and 28 different languages<sup>3</sup> and therefore a strong source for this research.

WildCRU compared expert scientific knowledge of animal welfare issues for wildlife at tourism venues with more than 50,000 tourist reviews on TripAdvisor. This revealed that 80% of people left positive reviews for venues that are having a negative impact on wild animal welfare<sup>3</sup>.

It is clear that most tourists simply don't know that a wildlife tourist venue they have visited inflicts cruelty on animals.

And global polling conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) for World Animal Protection in 2014 showed that 93% of tourists take part in wildlife tourism because they love wild animals or to have fun<sup>4</sup>. Eighty three percent of these same tourists said they would prefer to see wild animals in the wild if they had the chance<sup>4</sup>.

When they know about the suffering involved, tourists don't want to take part in activities like riding an elephant, hugging a tiger or lion.

Our **Wildlife – not entertainers** campaign is setting the record straight. It educates and informs tourists who love animals, but know little or nothing about the truth and cruelties of wildlife entertainment.

Stopping tourist demand for attractions including elephant rides and shows and hugs with tigers and lions is critical to our movement to end all cruel wildlife entertainment activities.

# Ten of the world's cruellest attractions

**WildCRU researchers analysed 24 different types of wildlife entertainment attractions across the world. They rated them based on welfare and conservation criteria.**

Welfare scores were allocated according to how wildlife tourist attractions fulfil the 'Five Freedoms'. These are routinely used by scientists and animal experts to assess the welfare of animals. The Freedoms relate to: freedom from hunger and thirst; from discomfort; from pain, injury and disease; to behave normally; from fear and distress.

A maximum score of +3 was given to a wildlife tourist attraction if it fulfilled all Five Freedoms. A minimum score of -3 was given to a wildlife tourist attraction if it failed to fulfil any of the Five Freedoms<sup>3</sup>.

Conservation levels were allocated partly according to their IUCN Red List status (Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Least Concern and Near Threatened). This status is routinely used (by scientists and animal experts) to determine the extent to which a species is at risk of extinction.

A minimum score of -3 was given to a wildlife tourist attraction if deemed to be placing the survival of wild populations at high risk of extinction. A score of +3 was deemed to be greatly aiding existing efforts to save wild populations from extinction<sup>5</sup>.

We have used these WildCRU ratings with our own evidence from research and investigations in Asia and Africa<sup>5,7,8</sup>. This has resulted in the following list of the 10 cruellest wildlife entertainment activities across the world.



## 1. Riding elephants

To make elephants submit to giving rides, they are taken from their mothers when babies and forced through a horrific training process known as 'the crush'.

This typically involves restraining them in a small cage, or tying them in ropes or chains so that they can only move when commanded. Severe pain is often inflicted with pointed metal 'bull hooks' or wooden battens to quickly establish dominance<sup>7</sup>. This process can take between a few days and a week<sup>5</sup>.

This process 'breaks' the young elephant's spirit so they will accept people riding on their back or other direct contact between tourists and elephants<sup>7</sup>.

The great trauma elephants endure during the breaking process can stay with them throughout their lives. It can also leave them suffering from post-traumatic stress<sup>9,10</sup>.

Their suffering continues once broken<sup>7</sup>. In elephant parks they are prevented from forming natural social relationships

with each other<sup>5</sup>. This is hugely damaging to their physical and psychological wellbeing, as is the size of their captive world. They are often kept on chains or in small enclosures and never allowed to roam freely as they would in the wild<sup>6</sup>.

Contrary to public perception, elephants are one of the most dangerous animals to handle<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, handlers use bull hooks to maintain control of them. These can cause serious injuries including infected sores and cuts<sup>5</sup>.

The elephants kept in these situations are typically given little veterinary care<sup>6</sup>. A relatively minor illness can quickly become a big problem, causing unnecessary long-term suffering.

The global tourist hotspot for elephant rides is Thailand, although it is prevalent in other Asian countries<sup>5</sup>. It has also emerged in Southern Africa over the past ten years<sup>7</sup>.



## 2. Taking tiger selfies

Tiger cubs are separated from their mothers at an early age so they can be used as photo props for hours on end<sup>5</sup>. They are handled and hugged by tourists and typically kept chained or in small cages with concrete floors<sup>6</sup>.

In Thailand we found 10 venues housing around 614 tigers<sup>5</sup>. Although Thailand is a hub of cruel tiger tourism it is also prevalent in other parts of Asia, Australia<sup>11</sup>, Mexico<sup>12,13</sup> and Argentina<sup>14</sup>.

## 3. Walking with lions

Lion cubs are bred and taken from their mothers typically within a month of birth to supply the growing lion tourism industry, mostly located in Southern Africa<sup>8</sup>. Tourists handle the cubs for hours and pose with them for photos. They are also often told to hit the cubs if they display aggressive or unwelcome behaviour<sup>8</sup>.

When the cubs grow too big for tourists to pick up and hug – but are still young enough to control – some are used for the relatively new walking with lions tourist experience. The lions are trained to ‘safely’ walk with tourists, sometimes on leads.

These lions face a lifetime in captivity as they cannot be released into the wild<sup>8</sup>.



#### 4. Visiting bear parks

Bears are kept in sterile barren 'pits' with minimal – if any – behavioural enrichment<sup>15</sup>. These pits are severely overcrowded. Bears are mainly solitary in the wild so this overcrowding can also lead to infighting and nasty injuries<sup>15</sup>.

The stress associated with these captive conditions can increase the susceptibility of wild animals to diseases caused by bacterial infections<sup>16</sup>. Sometimes these bears are also forced to dress as clowns and perform circus tricks such as riding a bike or balancing on a ball<sup>15</sup>.

#### 5. Holding sea turtles

The world's last remaining sea turtle farm that acts as a tourist attraction is in the Cayman Islands. Here, tourists can hold turtles and even eat them during their visit<sup>16</sup>.

Holding a sea turtle causes it to suffer a great deal of stress which can weaken its immune system and increase its susceptibility to disease<sup>16</sup>. Almost 1,300 turtles were recently killed at the farm following an outbreak of *Clostridium* infections<sup>17</sup>.

Sea turtles are naturally timid creatures<sup>18</sup>. When handled by tourists, they often panic and intensively flap their flippers which can cause fractures and detached claws<sup>19</sup>. It has also been known for tourists to accidentally drop struggling sea turtles<sup>16</sup>. This can cause significant injury, like a broken shell, which can kill the turtle<sup>16</sup>.

## 6. Performing dolphins

Millions of tourists visit dolphinariums<sup>20</sup>, but they are unaware of the cruelty and abuses the dolphins endure to perform in shows.

The United States is one of several countries<sup>21</sup> to ban dolphins being taken from the wild for dolphinariums because of the suffering involved. Dolphins are often chased by high-speed boats before being hauled on board or caught in nets<sup>22</sup>. For many, the stress is too much to take and they die during transportation to their intended destinations<sup>23</sup>.

Those kept in dolphinariums, whether wild caught or captive bred, face a lifetime of suffering. They spend their entire lives in a space not much bigger than a swimming pool – completely unnatural and restrictive compared to their natural open sea environment. The pools are often treated with chlorine which can cause painful skin and eye irritations<sup>22</sup>.

Pool-bound dolphins often suffer from sunburn because they can't escape to the ocean depths. Their highly tuned echolocation – used for navigating – is interfered with by the level-sided tanks which are so unlike the rocks and corals which form their natural ocean landmarks<sup>24</sup>. Many dolphins also face stress-related illnesses and can suffer from heart attacks and gastric ulcers<sup>25</sup>.

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## 7. Dancing monkeys

Many species of primates are used for street entertainment but we have also uncovered the systematic abuse of 290 macaques housed in venues offering macaque shows in Thailand<sup>5</sup>.

Young macaques are trained aggressively and painfully, to make them walk, behave and appear more human<sup>5</sup>. They are often dressed up to look like geishas and repeatedly forced to dance and perform tricks for groups of tourists<sup>5</sup>.

When they're not performing, the macaques are often kept chained in small barren cages or outside on short chains<sup>26</sup>. As the macaque grows, the chain can become embedded in the skin leading to painful infections and disease<sup>26</sup>.





## 8. Touring civet coffee plantations

A single cup of civet coffee or Kopi Luwak, fetches up to \$100<sup>27</sup>. Civets love to eat coffee cherries and Kopi Luwak coffee is made from the beans within the cherries that the civets excrete in pellets.

When the pellets are collected from civets in the wild, no cruelty is involved. But in an attempt to produce more civet coffee, farmers have started catching the civets and keeping them in small, crowded barren cages<sup>27</sup>. Caged civets are encouraged to gorge on an unbalanced diet of coffee cherries.

This unnatural captivity and forced feeding results in injuries, disease and poor nutrition<sup>27</sup>. Many show signs of great stress, including pacing and self-mutilation<sup>27</sup>.

There is now a growing civet coffee plantation tourism industry in Indonesia where tourists visit caged civet cats and sample the coffee<sup>29</sup>. This is causing more and more civets to be caged and abused<sup>29</sup>.

## 9. Charming snakes and kissing cobras

Snake charming has been a street entertainment activity for hundreds of years<sup>30</sup>, and the latest twist on this includes kissing a cobra in Thailand.

Cobras are commonly used for performing even though they are venomous and their bites can be fatal to humans<sup>30</sup>. The cobras are usually captured from the wild, then they are defanged with metal pliers and their venom ducts are either blocked or removed – often with un-sanitised equipment. This often results in painful infections, and can kill the cobras<sup>30, 31</sup>.





## 10. Farming crocodiles

Crocodile farming involves large numbers of crocodiles being kept on farms and intensively bred – mainly to supply the fashion industry with their skins, but also for their meat<sup>32</sup>. These farms are also now a more common wildlife tourism experience. People come to see the crocodiles then eat them in on-site restaurants.

The conditions on the farms are often so appalling that they can actually kill the crocodiles<sup>33</sup>. The animals are usually housed in concrete pits and conditions are often severely overcrowded and unhygienic<sup>33</sup>.

Crocodiles are very sensitive to stress<sup>33</sup>. And severely stressful situations – like the intense farm environment – can lead to septicaemia<sup>33</sup>. If a crocodile remains in a stressful environment, it may not be able to fight the infection and fatal diseases can develop<sup>33</sup>.

Because of competition for limited space in the pits, and also for food and water, the crocodiles will fight each other, sometimes to the death. They also rip off one another's legs – such serious injuries can eventually kill them too<sup>32</sup>.

Two of the worst



# Exposing the worst... celebrating the best

## Nong Nooch Garden, Thailand

Unlike in genuine elephant sanctuaries, the elephants at Nong Nooch Garden are kept chained and often isolated from other elephants. This stops these highly intelligent animals expressing their natural behaviours.

They are also mentally and physically abused from infancy to make them submissive and obey their mahout's (keeper) commands.

Nong Nooch Garden holds about 60 elephants. They are ridden, used for souvenir pictures and forced to entertain tourists by playing football, painting, riding tricycles, throwing darts and dancing.

These shows often involve the animals repeatedly holding unnatural positions when performing. This causes health problems such as joint deformities<sup>34</sup>, lameness<sup>35</sup> and hernias<sup>36</sup>.

More than 20 elephants are forced to perform six times daily, every day. In between shows adult elephants are forced to lift tourists up in their trunks; elephant babies are made to stand upright or 'dance' for photo opportunities.

To make them obey commands, elephants are repeatedly hit with a bull hook. They also have their sensitive ears pinched and pulled by their mahouts.

Most elephants, both adults and juveniles, are chained individually at Nong Nooch Garden when not made to work. In elephant camps, baby elephants are separated at an early age from their mothers to be trained for show performances. Being separated from their mothers causes young elephants intense anxiety and abnormal development<sup>37</sup>. Individual chaining also causes them increased stress and young elephants show the highest frequency of abnormal behaviour as a result<sup>38</sup>.

## What TripAdvisor users say about Nong Nooch Garden.

A recent visitor described the venue as 'a happy place to visit'<sup>39</sup>. Another said 'I feel a bit sorry that the animals are in captivity.... Still I would go back again'<sup>40</sup>. It currently has a rating of 4.5/5 stars, has received TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence and is ranked #1 out of 19 things for travellers to do in the region<sup>41</sup>. The animal cruelty at Nong Nooch is so apparent that TripAdvisor users sometimes comment on it, however this rarely affects the score they give.

## Cayman Turtle Farm, the Cayman Islands

The Cayman Turtle Farm holds more than 9,500 green sea turtles. It is the last sea turtle farm on earth that breeds sea turtles for human consumption<sup>41</sup>. It is also a tourist attraction.

The turtles are housed in small, shallow, overcrowded concrete tanks and typically have no shade<sup>16</sup>. Tourists of all ages are encouraged to pick up and hold the turtles, use them as photo props and paddle among them in tanks<sup>16</sup>. This unnecessary handling of the turtles is a severe animal welfare concern<sup>16</sup>.

Sea turtles are wild animals so this unnatural interaction with tourists causes them great stress. It can weaken their immune system making them more susceptible to disease<sup>18</sup>.

Handling often causes frightened turtles to panic - triggering intense flipper and body movements which can cause self-injury including detached claws, fractures, bleeding and bruising<sup>19</sup>. This struggling also makes them susceptible to being dropped - especially if held by an untrained individual<sup>19</sup>.

Dropping a turtle can damage its shell, or cause other serious injuries<sup>16</sup>.

Wild sea turtles are normally solitary creatures unless they are breeding<sup>16</sup>. They swim thousands of miles and can dive to depths of over 100 metres<sup>42</sup>. At the Cayman Turtle Farm, a single tank may house hundreds of sea turtles. Such confinement and overcrowding stop turtles from expressing natural behaviours<sup>41</sup>.

The conditions also put the turtles under unnecessary stress, resulting in increased risk of injury, disease and cannibalism - all of which have been observed at the farm<sup>16,41</sup>.

In their natural environment, turtles present very little health risk to humans, but the same is not true of intensively farmed turtles<sup>43</sup>. Like other reptiles, sea turtles harbour a variety of bacteria, viruses and parasites - many of which can be transmitted to people. Infection-causing bacteria, including *Salmonella* and *E.coli*, has been found in the farm's water system, and in the touch tanks<sup>41</sup>.

These bacteria can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhoea and vomiting to life-threatening conditions like septicaemia, meningitis and pneumonia<sup>41,43</sup>. Children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems or recovering from illness are most at risk<sup>41,43</sup>.

## What TripAdvisor users say about Cayman Turtle Farm

A recent visitor commented:

“Wonderful way to get in touch with sea turtles. A lot of hands-on interaction with them”<sup>44</sup>. Another said it was an “awesome place to spend the day!”<sup>45</sup>

Cayman Turtle Farm currently has a rating of 4/5 stars on TripAdvisor, a Certificate of Excellence and is ranked #2 out of 26 things to do in the area<sup>46</sup>.



## Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation: Samboja Lestari Eco-Lodge

The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) is a leading orangutan rescue organisation.

BOSF takes in and cares for orangutans who have lost their habitat, been orphaned in the wild, used in the entertainment industry, or kept illegally as pets. Since it was founded in 1991, it has rescued more than 2,200 orangutans and now provides care and rehabilitation to around 700.

Its ultimate goal is to release orangutans back into forests. Sadly, some of them can never be returned to the wild due to illness, disease, disability or age<sup>47</sup>.

BOSF's Samboja Lestari site provides a home for some of these orangutans. Many live freely on seven designated man-made islands or Forest Schools<sup>48,49</sup>. They enjoy trees and vegetation and are frequently provided with environmental enrichment to help them remain mentally and physically active<sup>49</sup>.

Tourists can stay at BOSF's Samboja Lestari Eco-lodge nestled in a 1,850 hectare reserve of regenerating rainforest<sup>50</sup>. Here, they can see the permanent orangutan residents and support the Foundation's work.

Volunteers also support BOSF by making behavioural enrichment devices for them, preparing their food and collecting observational data<sup>50</sup>.

On the guided nature tours of the surrounding habitat volunteers and visitors can also spot wildlife including eagles, snakes, gibbons and other primates<sup>51</sup>.







## The Romanian Bear Sanctuary

The Romanian Bear Sanctuary is a safe haven for former captive bears used for entertainment. More than 25,000 visitors annually see rehabilitated bears in semi-natural conditions while learning about the threats they face and work being done to protect them.

In Romania, bears were once caught as cubs and illegally kept in small barren cages in venues such as restaurants and petrol stations to attract and entertain customers.

To address their plight and give them sanctuary after confiscation we founded the Romanian Bear Sanctuary with our local partner Asociația Milioane de Prieteni (AMP).

The sanctuary is currently home to 82 bears in large forested enclosures of around 30 hectares. There are hibernation dens, large fresh water pools, hundreds of trees and lush natural vegetation. Because it mimics the wild as much as possible bears are free to behave naturally.

Well-informed guides take groups of tourists around the sanctuary to view the bears. They also educate them about the problems of captive bears used in entertainment, the sanctuary's history and rescued bear success stories.

Bear welfare is protected at all times and visitors have guidelines on how to behave in the sanctuary. This includes not feeding the bears, not making a noise, not smoking, eating in public, feeding the bears, playing music, dropping litter or drinking alcohol.

Visitors leave the sanctuary having had a true wildlife experience, and a sense of appreciation for these wild animals. In return, they are supporting bears' ongoing care.

# Big business. Big cruelty.

The tourism industry is worth more than a trillion dollars and provides one in every 11 jobs globally. More than 1.1 billion people travelled abroad for their holidays in 2014<sup>2</sup>. Travel experts predict that the industry is set to rise by at least a further 50% before 2030<sup>2</sup>.

Many people will visit local wildlife tourist attractions while on holiday<sup>52</sup>. When done well, this tourism can help protect wild animals<sup>53</sup>.

By spending their tourist dollars wisely – on responsible wildlife watching or in genuine rescue centres – people can often help to provide local communities with vital sources of income<sup>54</sup>.

But many wildlife tourism experiences have a harmful impact on the animals<sup>6,55</sup>. Most people are blind to the extreme cruelty these animals undergo in the name of tourist entertainment<sup>56</sup>. Some of this wildlife tourism may also be helping to push endangered species closer to extinction<sup>57</sup>.



# Tourism tackling cruelty

The big challenge in tackling cruelty to wild animals used for entertainment is to transform the tourism industry. It must become part of the solution to end cruelty and protect wildlife rather than causing the problems wild animals face.

The tourism industry as a whole must take more responsibility for where it sends unknowing tourists. And there is no global regulation regarding how wild animals are used in tourism.

We are encouraging and working with both the travel industry and tourists to end the cruelty of wild animal entertainment.

And our research shows that people want holiday experiences that are good for wild animals; they expect tour operators to change how they do business involving wildlife.

We are telling the tourism industry about our concerns and the cruelties of irresponsible wildlife tourism. We are encouraging them to change their policies and to only promote wildlife holiday experiences to their customers that are good for the animals.

As many as 83% of people have said that they would prefer to see wild animals in the wild<sup>4</sup>. And a further 85% said that tour operators should avoid activities causing harm for wild animals<sup>4</sup>.

# The tourism industry is part of the solution

Fortunately many tour operators see a great opportunity in changing their wildlife tourism practices. Following our approaches over the past four years, 87 companies across the world have committed to stop selling elephant rides and shows.

## Elephant-friendly tour operators

These travel companies have boldly moved away from the dirty profits associated with cruel elephant tourism entertainment and more are following their lead. Many have committed to finding ways to provide wildlife-friendly holiday experiences for their customers.

As of early 2016, the Dutch Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (ANVR) - with more than 280 affiliated companies - launched guidelines categorising most poor welfare wildlife tourism attractions as 'unacceptable', including elephant rides and shows<sup>59</sup>. This makes The Netherlands the most elephant-friendly country in the world today.

We are working for the same breakthrough with travel companies in every country across the world. This will be vital in stopping the supply of tourists to cruel elephant entertainment venues.

And when companies refuse to work with us and continue selling or promoting elephant rides or shows, we want their customers and World Animal Protection supporters to know.

Knowledge is power. For example in October 2015, when Thomas Cook Group refused to listen to us, an overwhelming 174,091 people signed our petition calling on them to do so. It was this public outcry that led to the company removing elephant rides and shows from its promotions.

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### Netherlands

333Travel  
Baobab Reizen  
BETje individuele reizen  
Better Places  
de Jong Intra Vakanties  
Djoser  
Diogenes Reizen  
Fair Mundo Travel  
FOX Verre Reizen van ANWB  
Green Canyon Reizen  
Holland International  
Koning Aap  
Kras  
Sawadee  
Shoestring  
SNP Naturreizen van ANWB  
SRC Cultuurvakanties  
Stip Reizen  
Tenzing Travel  
Tiara Tours  
TUI  
YourWay2Go

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### Belgium

Jetair  
Sunjets  
VIP Selection  
VTB Reizen

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### Sweden

Apollo (HQ in SE and offices in DK, NO, FI)  
Fritidsresor  
Jambo Tours  
Kenzan Tours  
Kinalotsen  
Lejonresor  
Naturresor  
Odd Explorer  
Odenresor  
Rosa Bussarna  
Swed-Asia Travels  
Ving  
Volontärresor

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**Denmark**

Albatros Travel (HQ in DK and offices in SE, NO, FI)  
C&C Travel  
Jysk Rejsebureau (part of Kilroy Group)  
Spies  
Star Tour

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**Norway**

Ving Norge AS (NO)

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**Finland**

Tjäreborg (FI)

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**USA**

Contiki (Offices also in EU, Russia, Egypt, AUS, NZ, South America, Asia)  
GET  
Islands in the Sun  
Lion World  
Qantas Vacations (offices also in AUS and NZ)  
Trafalgar (offices also in AUS, Canada, China, NZ, Singapore, SA, UK)  
Uniwold (offices also in NL, Switzerland, FR, China)

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**United Kingdom**

African Travel (offices also in SA)  
Haggis  
Insight Vacations  
Shamrock

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**Canada**

Comfortable Hiking Holidays  
G Adventures (other offices around the world)  
Merit Travel Group  
World Expeditions (and offices in USA, UK, NZ, AUS)

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**New Zealand**

Air Tickets  
Atlantic Pacific American Express  
Go Holidays  
United Travel  
World Aviation (offices also in AUS)

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**Australia**

AAT Kings (offices also in NZ)  
Adventure Destinations  
Adventure World Travel  
Atlantic Pacific Travel  
Better World Travel  
Creative Holidays  
Helloworld Limited (offices also in NZ, USA, Fiji, Asia, UK and SA)  
Helloworld for business  
Harvey World Travel (offices also in NZ)  
Insider Journeys (Previously Travel Indochina-)  
Intrepid Travel (HQ in AUS, selling in 147 countries worldwide)  
Jetset Travel  
Qantas Holidays  
QBT  
Rail Tickets  
ReadyRooms.com.au  
Scenic Tours (offices also in NZ, UK)  
Tempo Holidays (part of Cox and Kings group) (offices also in UK, NZ, Middle East)  
Travelscene American Express (AUS)  
Travelworld (AUS)  
Viva! Holidays (AUS, UK, USA, NZ, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia)

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**China**

W Travel

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\*This list is not exhaustive and is regularly updated. Do you know or are you a travel company that does not offer or promote elephant rides, show or other forms of direct contact between tourists and elephants? Please contact World Animal Protection via [info@worldanimalprotection.org](mailto:info@worldanimalprotection.org) so we can tell the world.

Have you been traveling with one of the listed travel companies and were you offered (at own expense) an elephant ride or a visit to an elephant show during your holiday? Please make your complaint to the travel company directly, and report this to us via [info@worldanimalprotection.org](mailto:info@worldanimalprotection.org).

# Building on our legacy

Our vision for elephant and other wildlife-friendly tourism is achievable. We've done it before with bears.

By working with local partners and wildlife officials in Pakistan we have almost abolished bear baiting events. Bear baiting is a gambling activity where bears are tied up and set upon by dogs.

The bears we rescue from this horrific cruelty are given safe havens in sanctuaries. And we support their owners to make their livings differently.

Dancing bears were also once regularly used for tourist entertainment in Greece, Turkey and India. They had their noses pierced, were tied up in chains, often fed poorly and badly abused. We campaigned against this for years alongside local animal welfare organisations, and thankfully were able to put a stop to this cruel practice. The demise of bear dancing has not affected the numbers of tourists visiting these countries.



# Making TripAdvisor wildlife friendly

WildCRU's research into wildlife tourism highlights the role TripAdvisor - the world's largest online review website - can play in educating tourists about wildlife cruelty.

As this research reveals, 80% of people who leave a review on TripAdvisor are unaware of the cruelty inflicted on the wild animals in tourist entertainment venues<sup>3</sup>.

The evidence shows most travellers do not recognise or respond to the signs of negative welfare at wildlife tourist attractions.

If they do, this isn't reflected in their online reviews. This leads to a misconception about the quality of life for animals at such places. Other TripAdvisor users will then be inspired to visit these venues, based on the positive feedback, continuing the cycle of abuse.

## So how can TripAdvisor help wildlife?

TripAdvisor isn't afraid to reward a business that does the right thing. They already promote eco-friendly hotels, for example, and call these businesses 'GreenLeaders'. Such businesses are 'committed to green practices like recycling, local and organic food, and electric car charging stations'<sup>58</sup>.

If TripAdvisor can endorse a hotel that offers organic fruit for breakfast or other forms of eco-tourism, they could provide similar endorsement of the best wildlife tourism attractions. A 'WildlifeLeaders' Programme will make it easier for potential tourists to seek out and find venues with high animal welfare and conservation standards. This will reduce the number of visitors to poor welfare attractions.

A WildlifeLeaders Programme would also encourage wildlife tourism attractions to implement better practices for animals.

We are raising tourists' awareness about the cruelties of riding elephants and other wildlife entertainment activities through our campaigning across the world. Once people know about the welfare abuses, we will ask them to inform other tourists about these as part of the reviews on TripAdvisor.

We are in discussions with TripAdvisor to inform them about the animal cruelties and abuses outlined in this report. We want to work with them to find solutions so it is no longer possible for cruel wildlife venues to receive misleading endorsements, such as a Certificate of Excellence.

# Moving the world for wildlife

Our **Wildlife – not entertainers** campaign is exposing the cruelty wild animals suffer for tourism globally. And while we are working hard to convince the tourism industry to change we want tourists to take some simple actions to help protect wildlife too.

Most people visit wildlife tourism attractions because they love wild animals and want an authentic wildlife experience.

An authentic wildlife tourism experience will not allow contact and interactions between wild animals and tourists. Authentic experiences mean:

- ❖ never riding a wild animal
- ❖ never swimming with a captive wild animal
- ❖ never petting, holding, or hugging a wild animal
- ❖ never washing a wild animal
- ❖ never keeping a wild animal on a chain or leash
- ❖ never watching a wild animal dance, play sport, perform tricks, give massages, or paint pictures.

Tourists can also download our guide to becoming a wildlife-friendly traveller.

## **We say**

**If you can ride it, hug it or have a selfie with the wild animal, the chances are it's a cruel venue. Don't go.**



# Join the movement now

Our movement to end the use of wild animals for tourism entertainment is growing. In 2015, almost 250,000 people across the world and more than 80 travel companies joined our wildlife protection movement. Please join the movement too and find out how you can help. Your support, whether you are part of the travel industry or a member of the public, is critical. Together we can end cruel wildlife tourist entertainment.

Join the movement to protect wildlife at  
[www.wildlifenotentertainers.org](http://www.wildlifenotentertainers.org)

Download your full guide to being animal friendly on holiday and make positive choices for wildlife on your next trip  
[www.worldanimalprotection.org/tourismguide](http://www.worldanimalprotection.org/tourismguide)

## Wildlife. Not Entertainers.

Our campaign **Wildlife – not entertainers** is building a worldwide movement of wildlife protectors to stop wild animals being used for entertainment.

We have a long history of campaigning to stop such abuse, including ending bear dancing in India, Turkey and Greece through our work with local partners and government officials.

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