



ADDENDUM to be used by the Dutch outbound tourism sector in addition to the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines

Introduction:

The addendum is related to ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines together with a series of six supporting guidance manuals introducing basic welfare requirements for the most popular types of tourist activities involving animals. Specifically this addendum is linked to the guidance manual on unacceptable practices.

It is both ABTA and our aim to provide balanced and science-based information around existing tourist activities involving animals to ensure that both animal welfare and the quality of the customer experience are given a priority. ABTA (the British travel trade association) must receive all the credits for this valuable piece of information, the ANVR is really thankful they are able to share this with their members. The second edition of the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines set out basic welfare requirements and unacceptable practices. To create more clarity the 'Discouraged' category was removed. A category ANVR already removed in the previous version. ANVR – in consultation with a group of Dutch outbound tour operators and animal welfare organisations IFAW, Stichting SPOTS and World Animal Protection – previously extended their unacceptable practice list to include all direct tourist contact with elephants, walking with lions and many of the other cruel activities which are now also listed as such in the ABTA Guidelines.

Within the steering group there was a broad consensus to keep the classification unchanged for those activities already identified by ABTA as 'unacceptable practice'. In addition there was a strong support to extend the list with 'unacceptable practices' with other activities which are also widely recognised as having a detriment welfare impact to the animals involved and in some cases may present a high risk to visitors and staff safety.

ANVR's travel companies who are or will be working with the ABTA guidance manuals in addition agree that the unacceptable practices listed below should not be offered on sale to customers.

The unacceptable practices are divided into three categories:

- 1. Animals in captive attractions**
- 2. Animals in cultural events and activities**
- 3. Free-roaming animals in the wild**



Unacceptable practices	Explanation on why practice is classified as unacceptable by ANVR
1. Captive animals facilities	
<p>Animals on display in restaurants and entertainment venues involving poor practice</p>	<p>Covered by the updated ABTA welfare requirements (Page 8 of GWGAT).</p> <p>Animals should only be kept in conditions that meet their species-specific needs and where the environment or activities do not compromise the animal's welfare. Restaurants, bars, nightclubs or any facility where there is likely to be loud music, flashing lights, or revellers are unable to provide suitable environments for animals. Animals in these environments, or where animals can be fed or touched by members of the public, may become stressed, agitated and abnormally aggressive. They may also be vulnerable to direct harm and abuse. In addition, the animals may be a source of potential disease transmission (zoonosis).</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Animal breeding or commercial trade in sanctuaries and orphanages</p> <p>e.g. wild cats, great apes, reptiles, birds, spiders, scorpions, crustaceans and elephants</p>	<p>Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.</p> <p>An animal sanctuary is a facility that provides short or long-term refuge and/or rehabilitation for rescued, injured, confiscated, orphaned or abandoned animals. Animal welfare should be the primary concern and living conditions for all animals should meet their species specific needs. Sanctuaries and orphanages should not breed animals, or be involved in the commercial trade or loan of their animals to other facilities. Allowing animals to breed will divert valuable resources away from rescuing animals in need and can result in animals being kept in inadequate, overcrowded conditions.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p> <p><i>See ANVR Animal Welfare Training on how to recognise a genuine animal sanctuary.</i></p>
<p>Tourist contact and feeding of wild animals, incl using them as photo prop</p> <p>e.g. great apes, sloths, bears, reptiles, giraffes, wolfs, otters, sharks, parrots and other birds, spiders, crustaceans</p>	<p>All activities where tourist are allowed to get in close contact with wild animals, such as using them as photographic props should be regarded as unacceptable. All handling of wild animals by inexperienced people, such as tourists, can pose serious risks to the health and safety of the public and the animals.</p> <p>Unlike domesticated animals that have been selectively bred and genetically adapted over generations to live alongside humans, wild animals, whether wild-caught or captive-bred, have powerful innate instincts including the urge to flee from people. Forcing them into close contact with untrained visitors is likely to cause severe and prolonged distress to the animal. It may lead to an aggressive response and therefore also a health and safety risk. Furthermore, the close contact between visitors and wild animals bears health risks for both parties, e.g. at the popular Monkey Forest in Bali about 36% of the macaques showed indications of carrying Tuberculosis, likely contracted by visitors and possible to be transmitted back to people. ↓</p>



The training and restraints required to ensure control over the animal to an extent that can provide adequate (though not complete) safety for tourists are highly likely to compromise welfare. These may include the use of a bull hook and chains on elephants, chains on tigers and other animals, elasticated bands around animals mouths and other forms of control and restraint. In addition these animals may in some cases also be declawed, have their teeth removed and/or drugged to suppress their naturally active nature. When they are not being used as props, the animals are often confined to small, barren cages where they become further distressed and frustrated.

Crocodiles or alligators - Reptiles, crocodiles and alligators are cold blooded and therefore have a limited physiological ability to control their body temperature. They often rely on external heat sources. Temperature fluctuations, particularly low temperatures, can be harmful. Practices that are designed to make crocodiles and alligators safe to handle have been known to include the removal of teeth and venom glands, and jaws wired, taped or sewn shut. Handling of crocodiles and alligators can transmit diseases, such as salmonella.

Great apes (chimpanzees, orangutans, gorillas, bonobos) - Great apes in tourist interaction programmes are often made to wear clothes, consume alcohol or smoke cigarettes and mimic other human behaviour. The training techniques used to control these animals are often based on punishment or food deprivation, as well as social isolation from other group members. As wild animals, they are unpredictable and have the potential not only to inflict severe physical injury but also to transmit harmful diseases (zoonoses), and receive them from tourists. The removal of teeth is a common practice to eliminate the potential for biting and inflicting injuries.

Bears - In general, bear species do not seem to cope well in captivity, and show many abnormal behaviours such as pacing. Bears can be used to offer close-up photo opportunities to tourists. The animals have usually been caught from the wild, or 'rescued' from bear bile farms, but again, the techniques needed to achieve the level of control with these large wild animals means that very often punishment is used, and the animals may have had surgical procedures such as teeth removal in order for them to be allowed near tourists.

Sloths - Tourist interactions with sloths are likely to cause the animals stress and anxiety, and may shorten their lifespan. When the sloths are being handled, they are more vigilant, suggesting they may be more fearful of their surroundings. They are often physically manipulated and sometimes held by their claws in order to provide the photo opportunity for tourists, and are often caught from the wild.

Suppliers should not offer or support tourist contact and feeding of wild animals, including photographic opportunities.



Tourist contact and feeding of dolphins and other cetaceans including performances, swim-with-dolphins and dolphin therapy

Dolphins and other cetaceans, including those born in captivity, must endure the artificial, restricted and barren nature of the captive environment, which is extremely poor in relation to the environments they inhabit in the wild. Even the largest captive facilities provide just one-millionth of a whale or dolphin's natural habitat range.

The majority of whale and dolphin species held in captivity (including bottlenose dolphins - the species most commonly held in captivity for human entertainment) are neither threatened nor endangered, although captures still occur from populations subject to other threats in the wild and which are in some cases in decline. Breeding occurs primarily to supply facilities with new individuals for display and entertainment purposes. Many facilities separate calves from their mothers causing stress and anxiety. Not only is this inhumane to a species where family is everything, but such breeding is undertaken with no value to conservation. Stress-related conditions such as ulcers, stereotypical behaviours including self-mutilation, and abnormal aggression within groups frequently develop in wide-ranging predators denied the opportunity to hunt – these are behaviours commonly observed in captive whales and dolphins. Neuroscientific research indicates that keeping large mammals in zoos and aquariums in an impoverished, stressful captive environment physically damages the brain.

Most behaviours performed by whales and dolphins in shows are extreme exaggerations of natural behaviours. Many are completely artificial and would never be seen in the wild. Interactions with whales and dolphins in captivity are potentially harmful to both the whale or dolphin and the human participant.

Direct interaction with dolphins has resulted in serious injury to participants. In addition, there is risk of disease transmission from dolphin to human and vice versa.

Suppliers should not offer or support this tourist contact and feeding of cetaceans, including performances. Marine parks, zoos and aquariums including accredited facilities offering these activities should be avoided.¹

¹ Accreditation/affiliations alone can't be relied on as a measure of good welfare and advice from independent animal welfare experts should be sought.



Tourist contact, feeding of and “walking with” wild cats

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Experiences offering close-up contact and feeding with wild cat species, such as lions, tigers, cheetahs and leopards, are popular in many tourist destinations. The methods involved in controlling the animals for these interactions include separating young from their mothers days after birth in order to hand-rear them, thus depriving them of their mother’s nutritious milk. This can lead to deficiencies in vital minerals as well as abnormal behaviours from the lack of a maternal presence; most wild cats naturally stay with their mothers for 18 months. Whether wild-caught or captive-bred, these animals retain innate wild behaviours and therefore have the potential to compromise human safety. To reduce the risk of human injury, they may be declawed, chained, have their teeth removed and/or drugged to suppress their natural active nature.

The same control approaches can be used in attractions offering “walking with lions” (and other wild cats), where tourists walk alongside the animals with or without touching them. Often the animals have first been used as photographic props but have become too dangerous for direct handling by tourists. Many of these places claim that once matured the animals will be placed back into the wild. However, these hand-reared animals can never effectively be released as their chances of survival cannot be guaranteed (Hunter et al. 2013). It is also highly irresponsible to release a dangerous, large predator familiar with people back into wild lands where local people live. When a lion has also become too dangerous for walking with tourists, they may sometimes be sent to canned hunting camps, and cubs and adult lions may also be sold to zoos or wealthy collectors of exotic animals.

To continue to meet the tourist demand for handling and photo opportunities they are replaced with newly bred cubs who too spent their days in a relentless cycle of paid-for handling and photo opportunities.

Any tourist contact, feeding or walking with wild cat species as an Unacceptable practice that should not be offered by suppliers.



<p>Canned hunting</p>	<p>Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.</p> <p>A canned hunt is a hunt in which the animal is kept within a confined area. Such hunts provide the animals with no chance to escape and must be regarded as unacceptable. Reportedly many of the lions that are being used for canned hunt come from lion farms where they have been used for petting, photo and walking activities.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Performances with wild animals</p> <p>e.g. wild animals in circuses, shows with parrots, bears, primates, elephants and tigers</p>	<p>Performances that exhibit unnatural behaviour and/or involve adverse training techniques classified as unacceptable by ABTA.</p> <p>All performances, including those that exhibit natural behaviour, are by default unnatural as there is no longer free choice involved. Parrots and orangutans riding bicycles, elephants standing on their heads or walking a tightrope, chimpanzees smoking cigarettes and tigers jumping through hoops of fire all provide very obvious examples of unnatural behaviours that have been associated with wild animal performances. While the action itself may pose a risk to the animal's welfare (e.g. smoking a cigarette), it is often the training methods that generate the greatest concern for animal welfare. These methods may include training through food deprivation, use of physical force or emotional coercion. These techniques can lead to abnormal behaviour or cause injury, disease and early mortality. These training techniques are unacceptable.</p> <p>Wild animals must not be trained to undertake tasks that are not necessary to ensure their good welfare and have no relation to their natural behavioural repertoire unless deemed necessary by a veterinarian for veterinary procedures. While some performances may be based on humane training methods such as positive reinforcement, animal welfare concerns persist due to the stressful environment, the intensity and/or frequency of displaying certain behaviours, and/or the demeaning quality of the performance. Additionally, the speed and frequency at which animals are forced to perform trick movements is associated with physical issues including premature degradation of the joints, muscles and tendons.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>



Elephant shows or performances for tourists

e.g. Elephant polo, elephant football, elephants shooting darts at balloons, and elephants painting pictures

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Based on the same concept and rules as horse polo, elephant polo involves two teams of elephants each carrying two people: a rider and a mahout. The mahouts often use bull-hooks or ankus to manoeuvre the elephant, while the rider hits a ball towards the goal posts with a wooden mallet. Elephant polo tournaments are a relatively new phenomenon and are known to take place in various countries.

The nature of the tournaments requires the elephants to perform behaviours that do not bear a resemblance to that of their wild counterparts. Animals are trained from a young age, and training methods involve adverse technique and therefore, compromise welfare. In addition, the control and restraint of such large animals is difficult in captivity and may be achieved using a combination of negative reinforcement training (e.g. applying painful or aversive stimulus, such as the ankus) and physical restraint, such as chaining and shackling. Both the game and the harsh training methods severely harm the psychological and physical wellbeing of elephants.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.



Elephant riding and other activities that involve direct human-elephant contact²

As elephants have never undergone the domestication process, they instead have to undergo a taming and training process. Training an elephant to be used for riding or any other activity that involves direct contact between humans and elephants, always requires exertion of direct control, linked to punishments and pain experiences. This starts already at a young age by a breaking-in process, intended to permanently establish human dominance over the elephant. This 'breaking of the spirit', also known as Phajaan or crushing, is exceptionally cruel and involves physical restraints and withholding food and water. After being broken the elephant is being trained using adverse technique and continues to have to endure negative reinforcement, such as the ankus (bullhook) and constraining by chaining and shackling.

Many incorrectly presume that elephants are docile animals. They are, however, one of the most dangerous wild animals to handle. The number of people severely injured by captive wild elephants is estimated to be the highest rate among captive wild animals used by people.

Further evidence that elephant needs cannot be met in captivity is the limited reproductive success of captive wild elephants. Even with advancements in artificial insemination, the captive elephant population globally is not self-sustaining. Consequently, animals continue to be taken from the wild. While gender imbalance and diseases play a role, recent studies link poor reproduction with the serious welfare issues facing captive wild elephants.

Both taming, training and living conditions severely harms the elephants psychological and physical wellbeing. Combined with the negative impact that the use of elephants in entertainment has on the population of elephants in the wild makes it an unacceptable activity.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.

For further information on the welfare concerns around training and keeping of elephants for entertainment see section 3 of manual 'Elephants in Captive Environment'

Ostrich riding and racing (observing or participating)

Ostrich riding already classified as unacceptable by ABTA. ANVR has added racing as the same welfare concerns apply.

These activities usually take place on ostrich farms where members of the public have the opportunity to ride ostriches or watch ostrich racing. The ostrich is usually caught using a long pole with a hook at one end, and a hessian hood is placed over the bird's head while the rider mounts. The jockey holds down the bird's wings (by sitting astride).

The ostrich skeleton is not designed to support a jockey's weight on its back and this practice is likely to harm the physiology of the animals and have negative welfare implications.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.

² Contact World Animal Protection to acquire a set of criteria aiming to assist travel companies in choosing to offer and promote elephant friendly elephant experiences to their customers. Find contact details below.



<p>Unlicensed zoos</p>	<p>Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.</p> <p>By law many countries require specific licences for the operation of zoos and it is illegal to operate a zoo without the required licences. Unlicensed zoos are therefore considered unacceptable. In some cases, legislation requires a minimum standard in animal welfare (e.g. all zoos in member countries of the European Union should adhere to requirements of the European Zoos Directive).</p> <p>All zoos should be licensed in accordance with local legislative requirements.</p>
<p>The feeding of animals with live vertebrate prey</p>	<p>Feeding of live vertebrate prey in the presence of the public is always unacceptable.</p> <p>Where it has to be undertaken, for example in the case of animals that will be (re-)introduced into the wild, a written justification and ethical review process must have been undertaken and agreed by senior staff weighing up the welfare of predator and prey; feeding must be observed and live prey not left in the enclosure.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Surgery or physical modification of the skin, tissues, teeth or bone structure of an animal other than for the purpose of genuine medical treatment</p>	<p>Covered by a minimum requirement, detailed in the ABTA Animals in Captive Environments manual.</p> <p>Surgery or physical modification of the skin, tissues, teeth or bone structure of an animal, other than for the purposes of genuine medical treatment, is regarded as an unacceptable practice.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Wild animals that have been bred between species, known as hybrids</p> <p>e.g. a liger or a tigon</p>	<p>Venues allowing tourists to interact with wild animals that have been bred between species, 'Liger' or 'Tigon', for example offspring of a lion and tiger, are unacceptable.</p> <p>These hybrids do not exist in the wild and are purely bred for entertainment. The animals often suffer from physical deformities, stress and have shortened lifespans.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>



<p>Euthanasia practice which do not comply with current best practice</p>	<p>Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.</p> <p>Euthanasia, or intentional ending of an animal’s life, should not be used as a convenient method to address a lack of captive space, to remove unwanted or surplus animals, and it should not be undertaken for cosmetic reasons (for example, when an animal may look less than perfect for public display).</p> <p>Other forms of intentionally ending an animal’s life, for example culling (the reduction in numbers of wild animals, usually confined to limited wild habitats as a result of human activities), should only be contemplated once all alternatives, such as contraception, relocation, range expansion etc. have been exhausted.</p> <p>They should be conducted in the most humane manner possible (e.g. by a trained marksman).</p>
<p>Bird of prey displays and falconry centers using tethering</p>	<p>Keeping and using birds of prey for display, and falconry where birds are tethered is unacceptable.</p> <p>Tethering often involves a leather anklet around one leg, which is attached to a length of cord (a jess), fixed to a block or bow. This prevents the birds from taking a flight and greatly restricts movement.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Acquisition of animals from the wild</p>	<p>The removal of animals from the wild (where it is not for demonstrable conservation need or the welfare of the animals) is an unacceptable practice. It undermines the conservation efforts aimed at protecting species in the wild and effects the welfare of the particular animals.</p> <p>When travel businesses consider offering or promoting a particular animal experience or attraction to their customers the respective venue has accurate animal stocklists, veterinary records and any appropriate and up-to-date licences or permits available for inspection. The required paperwork should be in place for animals which have been acquired.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support venues that cannot meet these requirements.</p>



2. Animals in cultural events and activities

Animal used for begging
e.g. dancing bears, snake
charming, great apes and other
primates, individual elephants.

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

While we recognise that tourism businesses have no direct control over the use of animals by beggars, they can influence the situation and help to stop begging practices from operating near to tourist businesses (for instance on the beach in front of, working in the boundaries of, or next to a tourist business). Tourists should be discouraged from being photographed with, feeding or encouraging in any way activities where animals are exploited by beggars.

Suppliers should not offer or support these activities.

Bear-bile farms or facilities
where products are sold
containing bear-bile

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA. ANVR has added 'facilities where products are sold containing bear-bile'.

These so called farms keep moon bears in tiny cages (barely longer and wider than the animal itself) and, using e.g. a catheter surgically inserted into their bile duct, continually milk their bile. The bile is used in traditional Chinese medicine despite widely and inexpensive synthetic and herbal alternatives to bear bile being readily available. The bears endure a life of pain; they are often emaciated and have terrible, sometimes incurable wounds.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity through the sale of products containing bear-bile.

Bear pits

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Bear pits may be found in Japan and China, as well as some locations in Central Europe. Often containing large numbers of bears of different ages, they are sunken concrete lined enclosures, usually devoid of furniture and vegetation. Rarely able to find refuge or shelter, animals can be exposed to severe weather conditions and may have limited access to clean drinking/ bathing water. Bears are naturally inquisitive animals and therefore require a complex environment to stay active and healthy. Bear pits cannot meet these needs.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity



Animal fighting (against other animals or humans)

e.g. bullfighting (and bull running), bear baiting, cockfighting, dog fighting, crocodile wrestling

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Fights that involve animals, regardless of whether they are seen as cultural tradition, sport or art, inflict severe pain, stress and often result in the slow and painful death of the animal or leave them with injuries that are rarely allowed to heal fully. Although 'fighting' could be seen as a natural behaviour, staged fights between animals of the same or different species, or humans, are unnatural in that they are in enclosed spaces and humans may limit the animals' capabilities. The settings for such fights usually involve crowds of people who, depending on the species, may be present in the arena and goad the animal. Below are more details on a few of the most common animal fighting scenarios.

Bear baiting is a staged contest between a bear, which is often tied to a post, and dogs that are trained to attack it. Both animals usually suffer horrendous wounds which are rarely allowed to heal. When not fighting, bears may be chained to a post and they may suffer malnutrition.

Bullfighting is a traditional spectacle in Spain, Portugal, southern France and in some Latin American countries. The fight between the animal and a human contender usually results in the painful and protracted killing of the bull in front of an audience (except in Portugal, where the bull is slaughtered outside the arena). In 2011, the Spanish region of Catalonia banned bullfighting.

Cockfighting is a well-documented and sometimes lethal blood sport between two roosters (cocks) that are forced together in a ring called a cockpit. The gamecocks are specially bred and conditioned for increased stamina and strength. They are congenitally aggressive toward all males of the same species. In some regions, the birds are equipped with metal spurs or knives tied to the leg, which can result in significant physical trauma and even death. Now illegal throughout the USA, Brazil, Australia and most of Europe, cockfighting is still allowed (although reportedly controlled) in Central and South America, south-east Asia and parts of India.

Crocodile wrestling is a spectacle offered to tourists by some crocodile farms. This involves men manipulating, provoking and abusing the animals. Reports describe crocodiles being hit with sticks, sat on with their jaws wrenched open, or being dragged and swung around by the tail. Many crocodiles are reportedly injured during these performances.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.



<p>Reptile farms involving bad practice(e.g. crocodile farms, snake farms or turtle farms)</p>	<p>Covered by ABTA's minimum requirements.</p> <p>Crocodile, snake and turtle farms keep large numbers of animals, usually bred for their skins and meat. Often housed in concrete pits, conditions may be severely overcrowded and unhygienic and – due to competition for limited space, water and food – animals may suffer severe injuries inflicted by cage companions. Some crocodile, turtle and snake farms may claim to provide a conservation breeding facility but many of the negative welfare issues already mentioned dominate.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Tiger farms</p>	<p>Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.</p> <p>Known to exist in some Asian countries, farms keep and breed thousands of tigers in often inadequate and overcrowded conditions. The use of tiger body parts in traditional Chinese medicine is currently banned. However tiger farms seem to anticipate a relaxation in the law that will legitimise these overtly exploitative and commercial operations.</p> <p>Some of these farms are also tourist attractions, often under the false pretence that they contribute to the conservation of the species in the wild. A feature of such farms, for example, is that there is a possibility to touch the animals and to take photos with the animal. (see above, unacceptable practise 'animals used as photographic props).</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>
<p>Ritual animal slaughter as a tourist attraction</p>	<p>Every year hundreds of thousands of animals are sacrificed as part of religious festivals in popular tourism destination. Tourists are increasingly encouraged to visit and view these sacrifices, which often take place at sites of religious significance, as part of their tourism experience.</p> <p>While upholding respect for diverse cultural beliefs, tourism businesses offering ritual animal slaughter as part of a tourist experience is unacceptable. Also they should strongly advise tourist to avoid these practices which their attendance may perpetuate.</p>
<p>Rodeo e.g. calf-roping (also called tie-down roping), chuckwagon racing, team-roping, steer wrestling, bareback riding/bull riding, wild cow milking, Wild horse racing and wild pony racing, horse-tripping, steer-tripping.³</p>	<p>Animals are induced to perform in rodeos by various means, allowing human competitors to test their skills in handling, roping and riding.</p> <p>All these rodeo means can involve risk of injury or death to animals and can subject them to fear, pain or stress to make them perform. Therefore all of these practices must be considered unacceptable.</p> <p>Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.</p>

3 A description of various rodeo activities can be found on page 26 in ABTA's Specific Guidance Manual for Working Animals.



3. Free-roaming animals in the wild

Unregulated animal and plant collection from the wild

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Customers visiting wild places should be encouraged to respect the environment and not to capture, collect or remove animals or plants or their derivatives. This includes shells, coral and sponges from marine environments, and flowers, plants, fruits and seeds from terrestrial habitats. The import of numerous wild plant or animal specimens (e.g. tortoises, monkeys) by tourists returning home – even if they are for personal and not for commercial use – may be illegal and severely punished by confiscation, fine or imprisonment.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.

Direct human-initiated contacts with and feeding of free roaming animals

e.g. swimming with dolphins and whales

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Customer initiated direct contact with free-roaming wild animals (e.g. swimming with dolphins and whales), and the feeding of wild animals, should be prohibited. Free-roaming wild animals can be unpredictable and potentially dangerous.

Wild animals, in particular, can be severely distressed by the proximity of people, and contact of any kind not only runs the risk of human injury but also possible disease transmission (zoonosis).

Other wild species may be naturally inquisitive and approach people of their own accord. Every effort should be made to protect and respect wild animals, like dolphins and whales, in their natural environment, ensuring the animals' freedom of choice is not restricted.

Swimming activities with wild dolphins should be discouraged. At the very least (in destinations where it is not already regulated against) must be carefully managed to prevent swimmers from approaching or doing anything that intrudes or affects the animals.⁴

Swimmers must not approach animals, but animals may approach swimmers. This is usually accomplished by having swimmers hold onto an anchor line of some design, as snorkellers do in Australia, where they swim with dwarf minke whales. In this sense, this is more 'in-water observation' than swimming as participants are in effect, inanimate objects to the dolphins.

It is sometimes suggested that habituated wild animals are, to some extent, tame. However risks may apply, namely distress to the animals, the potential for physical injury and/or disease transmission, not only from humans to the animal involved, and vice versa, but via the animal to local wildlife populations. Other free-roaming species e.g. horses, cattle, dogs, birds, may also cause injury and in some cases may also carry transmissible diseases.

Any direct interaction between visitors tourists and wild animals such as touching is unacceptable both in captivity and in the wild.

⁴ Responsible wildlife watching where tourists observe animals in their natural environment, from a safe and respectful distance, without luring or chasing them or in other ways interrupting their natural behaviours or routines. E.g. whale watching operators and destinations (Whale Heritage Sites) certified by the World Cetacean Alliance (WCA).



Trade and sales of endangered wildlife products

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

An increasing number of animal and plant species are under threat and, in many cases, faced with extinction. Any trade in or sale of wildlife and wildlife products should be carefully managed and controlled to ensure that wild populations are protected from over-exploitation. International wildlife trade is regulated under the terms of CITES (the Convention on International Trade In Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), a treaty signed by 182 countries worldwide.

There are more than 35,000 plant and animal species regulated by CITES. CITES lists species on one of three Appendices to the convention, and regulates trade by a permitting system (depending on which Appendix the species appears). For permits to be issued, countries should first ensure that trade in the animal or plant concerned will not cause detriment to the survival of the local, regional or global population of the species (the Non Detriment Finding or NDF). The NDF is imperative to CITES.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.

Trophy hunting

Already classified as unacceptable by ABTA.

Trophy hunting of wild animals by customers who pay to shoot an animal and take its remains home as a trophy remains legal in many countries. However, there is a growing belief that trophy hunting poses a serious threat to the future of certain species. Despite declining African lion populations, up to 600 wild lions a year – predominantly males – continue to be killed for trophy hunting. This figure does not take into account the wider impact that removal of male lions can have, for instance, the killing of existing cubs when a new male takes over a pride after the previous male's death in a hunt.

The ethical, social and biological problems associated with trophy hunting would seem to far outweigh any positive economic contribution claimed by the hunting industry. Given increasing pressure from threats such as habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, the illegal bushmeat trade and poaching, trophy hunting appears to pose an additional and entirely avoidable threat to the future survival of some species. The real solution lies in a compassionate conservation agenda – finding solutions to the conflicts which arise between wild animals and people and ensuring that communities benefit from participating in wildlife conservation.

Suppliers should not offer or support this activity.