

TRAVEL FOUNDATION
GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN
ANIMAL INTERACTIONS –
WILDLIFE TOURISM



Acknowledgements



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Consultees

Animal welfare organisations, tour operators, suppliers, conservation organisations, NGOs with social responsibility/development agendas, government departments, academic institutions, legal bodies/organisations wildlife consultants and vets were invited to participate as consultees in the development of the Guide to Good Practice and accompanying Checklist. Due to confidentiality reasons, those that provided feedback cannot be individually identified. A full list of those invited to participate is detailed in Appendix 1.

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Accuracy

To the best of our knowledge the information provided in the Guide to Good Practice and Checklist was correct at the time of publication. The Travel Foundation and the author cannot, however, accept any liability for errors or omissions.

Contents

A. Executive Summary

- 1. Introduction to Good Practice Guidelines**
- 2. Animal Welfare**
- 3. Customer Safety**
- 4. Education**
- 5. Conservation**
- 6. Local Communities**
- 7. Environmental Impacts**
- 8. TF Checklist**
- 9. Customer Feedback**
- 10. Responsible Tourists**
- 11. Responsible Tour Operators**

Appendix 1 List of Consultees

Appendix 2 TF Checklist

A. Executive Summary

The Aim

The aim of these Good Practice Guidelines is to improve the sustainable practices of organisations providing wildlife tourism experiences. The primary outcome sought is to improve the welfare and conservation of animals that are part of such experiences, and of the wider community and environment in which they are found.

Increasing sustainability will not only improve the welfare and conservation of the animals involved, but will also benefit suppliers of the experiences, tour operators, the environment, local people living in wildlife tourism destinations (often some of the poorest people in the world) and those employed in wildlife tourism businesses.

The Issues

a. Animal Welfare

Wildlife tourism can have considerable impacts on the wildlife visited. These impacts range from disturbance to an animal's feeding and breeding patterns, disruption of parent-offspring bonds, increased vulnerability to predators and competitors, disease transmission from visitors, death of individual animals through to impacts on wildlife habitats through tourist activities and tourism infrastructure.

The nature of the disturbance to wildlife caused by tourists depends upon a range of factors including the nature of the tourist activity.

In the wild, an animal should be free to carry out its natural behaviour, its interaction with the environment, with other individuals of the same species and of different species, without intervention or disturbance. Depriving an animal of these functions can have significant implications putting at risk both animals and humans.

b. Customer Safety

Visitors are at risk from injury/death from animal attacks in situations where a supplier allows close contact to occur between humans and wildlife. Similarly, disease transmission (zoonoses) is possible from wild vertebrate animals to humans through contact with wildlife, faeces, airborne transmission, etc. Bad practice in this area has led to injury and death of visitors, and negative publicity for both tour operators and suppliers.

c. Conservation/Education

Wildlife tourists expect good interpretation on the wildlife and local cultures they are visiting, biodiversity and the importance of conserving it. Despite this, the interpretation practised by some wildlife tourism suppliers is of poor quality and fails to communicate conservation ideas, promote sustainable tourism and enrich visitor experiences.

As the 'product' wildlife tourism suppliers are selling *is* wildlife, they have a vested interest to seek to protect and conserve it – yet some do not. Instead some adopt an unsustainable approach, exploiting the very resources that their future security depends upon for short-term financial gain.

Responsible wildlife tourism suppliers can, however, make significant contributions to the conservation of the natural heritage in which they operate.

d. Local Communities

All too often in the developing world, where the majority of wildlife tourism destinations are located, local communities suffer the negative impacts of wildlife tourism (erosion of their culture, human/wildlife conflicts, competition for scarce resources, etc.), without benefiting from the potential positives that an influx of wildlife tourists from the developed world has the power to bring.

As the tourism product uses wildlife and its habitat, it is bound to affect in some way the resources that local communities depend upon. It is important to recognise that people living in wildlife areas (terrestrial or marine) are often highly dependent on wildlife or on the surrounding habitat and the broader natural resource base. Measures that affect wildlife or its habitat will, therefore, also affect people's livelihoods. Tourism businesses need to be alert to this and should consider how to enhance or mitigate this impact.

e. Environmental Impacts

The overarching issues effecting environmental sustainability are the same irrespective of the type of tourism business operated. However, some issues are particularly salient in rural and coastal areas (water use, waste disposal etc.), where the majority of wildlife tourism takes place. Environmental sustainability takes on even greater significance in such circumstances, as the environment is inextricably linked to the wildlife product and to local communities.

Good Practice Guidelines

Each of the issues affecting the sustainability of wildlife tourism is expanded upon in the document that follows, and examples of good and bad practice given for each. This is followed by detailed 'Good Practice Guidelines' that suppliers should seek to implement to achieve good practice.

TF Checklist

A checklist has been developed as a tool for suppliers to use to assess their performance against key elements of the Good Practice Guidelines. This can also be used by tour operators to assess their own suppliers. Advice is given on what a supplier should do following completion of the checklist, if it identifies failings.

Customer Feedback

Recommendations are made on how to solicit customer feedback on issues surrounding wildlife tourism, so that tour operators and suppliers can work together to improve the visitor experience and minimise impacts on wildlife and local communities. This should also allow animal welfare issues to be identified quickly, and intervention strategies employed to address these as necessary.

Responsible Tour Operators and Visitors

Finally, recommendations are made as to how tour operators can contribute to increasing the sustainability of wildlife tourism, along with a suggested 'Code of Conduct' for wildlife tourists.

1. Introduction to Good Practice Guidelines

1.1 The Aim

The aim of these Good Practice Guidelines is to improve the sustainable practices of organisations providing wildlife tourism experiences. The primary outcome sought is to improve the welfare and conservation of animals that are part of such experiences, and of the wider community and environment in which they are found.

Wildlife tourism involves enjoying wildlife in a natural setting. It encompasses a range of activities from bird watching, wildlife viewing, photographic/walking safaris, reef diving and whale watching through to trophy hunting and sport fishing. Wildlife viewing can be achieved using many different forms of transport, including on foot, by vehicle, boat, and balloon or by using animals (e.g. elephants, camels, horses etc.).

Increasing sustainability will not only improve the welfare and conservation of the animals involved, but will also benefit suppliers of the experiences, tour operators, the environment, local people living in wildlife tourism destinations (often some of the poorest people in the world) and those employed in wildlife tourism businesses. In this respect the guidelines will address the socio-economic impacts of wildlife tourism on host communities.

As the tourism product uses wildlife and its habitat, it is bound to affect in some way the resources that local communities depend upon, particularly in the developing world. Tourism businesses need to be alert to this and should consider how to enhance or mitigate this impact.

1.2 What is Success?

Success is:

- A demonstrable, measurable improvement in animal welfare and conservation¹
- A greater respect for animals, and knowledge of animal welfare and conservation issues, by visitors, tour operators, suppliers and local host communities²
- An improvement in the social and economic well being of local communities residing in wildlife tourism destinations³
- Greater sustainability, and hence enhanced long-term prospects of the tourism product⁴

¹ Measured by a reduction in the number of qualified animal welfare complaints (pertaining to wildlife tourism) made by customers to the Travel Foundation and the Born Free Foundation year on year; by improvements year on year in suppliers' performance in this area in annual Good Practice Checklist review (see Section 8); by analysis of conservation statistics for countries of operation.

² As measured in awareness surveys undertaken with the relevant audiences over time.

³ As measured in research undertaken with local communities over time; by improvements year on year in suppliers' performance in this area in annual Good Practice Checklist review (see Section 8).

- A resultant reduction in the amount of adverse publicity surrounding wildlife tourism experiences⁵

This success will be achieved by tour operators and suppliers understanding the issues, recognising good practice, and most importantly, changing policy/behaviour to achieve good practice. These Good Practice Guidelines have hence been designed to address the key issues surrounding sustainability, but with particular emphasis on animal welfare/conservation and local community issues.

Adopting these guidelines will ultimately ensure that wildlife tourism does not lead to a decline in the animals that tourists want to see, with a resultant loss in income and waste of infrastructure.

⁴ As measured by improvements year on year in suppliers' performance in annual Good Practice Checklist review (see Section 8).

⁵ As measured by Travel Foundation members.

2. Animal Welfare

Unlike in a captive environment, the natural environment provides wild animals with all their needs. However, wildlife tourism can have considerable impacts on the wildlife visited. Responsible suppliers will at all times take action to minimise these impacts to ensure the welfare and conservation of wild animals is not compromised by tourism.

The nature of the disturbance to wildlife caused by tourists depends upon a range of factors including the predictability of visits, their frequency and magnitude, when they occur within the daily activity or life cycle of a particular species, and also upon the type of tourist activity e.g. foot safaris, boating, hot air ballooning. The type and magnitude of impact will also vary with the nature of the tourist activity e.g. trophy hunting has different impacts on wildlife when compared to photographic safaris. Similarly, unrealistic tourist expectations or demands placed on animals, for example in terms of proximity, may have negative impacts.

In the wild, an animal should be free to carry out its natural behaviour, its interaction with the environment, with other individuals of the same species and of different species, without intervention or disturbance. Depriving an animal of these functions can have significant implications putting at risk both animals and humans.

2.1 What are the Issues?

The following has been adapted from an IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development) publication entitled 'Take only Photographs, Leave only Footprints – The environmental impacts of wildlife tourism'. Published in 1997, this publication is as relevant today as when it was first written, covering as it does all known, key impacts of wildlife tourism to date.

a. Direct Impacts

- **Disturbance of feeding and breeding patterns**
- The pressure of tourists searching out wildlife to hunt, view or photograph can affect wildlife feeding patterns and the breeding success of some species. Cheetahs, for example, are known to suffer badly as a result of tourism pressure, because their diurnal activity pattern and relative timidity make them particularly susceptible to visitors disturbing their hunts and driving them from kills. This can have serious implications for food intake and, consequently, their long-term survival. These negative effects vary by destination, depending on factors such as numbers of visitors and visibility.

➤ Cheetahs in Amboseli National Park in Kenya suffer significant disturbance to their daily activity patterns as the high numbers of visitors to this popular park, and the good visibility, means that as many as 30 vehicles can crowd around a single group of cheetahs. Cheetahs actively try to avoid vehicles and delay hunting in this environment

➤ On the Matusadona shores of Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe, the number of wildlife viewing tourist boats and the resultant noise generated has disrupted the feeding and drinking patterns of elephant and possibly black rhino, and it is feared that further increases in boat traffic will affect the reproductive success of the hippo

- Feeding of wildlife by tourists can have severe consequences for social behaviour patterns. Artificial feeding by tourists caused a breakdown of the territorial breeding system of land iguanas on South Plaza, the Galapagos Islands. Territories were abandoned in favour of sites where food could be begged from tourists, and this had a negative effect on their breeding success. Similarly, indirect feeding of wildlife through animals scavenging visitors' waste (at park refuse sites and lodge rubbish dumps) can lead to changes in feeding behaviour and increased inter-species aggression. When this increased aggression has led to injuries to tourists, there are many examples of where the 'offending' wildlife has been shot.

➤ In Yellowstone National Park grizzly bears, who up to the early 1970s fed on waste left by visitors, have shown significant decrease in body size, reproductive rate and litter size since these refuse sites were removed

➤ Intense competition between baboons at wildlife lodge rubbish dumps in Kenya has led to stress and aggression and changes in baboon behaviour

- **Disruption of parent-offspring bonds**

Wildlife tourism can also cause disruption of parent-offspring bonds. On driving safaris, tourist vehicles can separate young antelope from parents, which if prolonged can interfere with mutual recognition bonds leading to rejection by parents. The young is also more at risk of being taken by a predator. Similarly in whale watching, if whale calves are separated from their mothers, with whom they normally maintain constant body contact, they can transfer their attachment to the side of the tourist boat with potentially serious consequences.

- **Increased vulnerability to predators and competitors**

The viewing of certain species by wildlife tourists can make them more vulnerable to predators. For example, tourists visiting breeding colonies of king shags and Magellan penguins cause an increase in the number of eggs lost to predatory gulls, as adult birds at the edge of the colony tend to move away as tourists approach. Crocodiles, if approached by tourist boats at their breeding sites, similarly move away from their nests leaving the young and eggs in the nest open to attack from monitor lizards and baboons.

- **Disease transmission**

Tourists may unwittingly pass on diseases to wildlife. Disease transmission can be direct, for example to species of great ape, or indirect from contact with products used by man (e.g. infected poultry products left in rubbish dumps). Mountain gorillas, which are highly susceptible to human bacteria and viruses, can contract TB, measles and pneumonia from close contact with tourists, which could eradicate the entire population of this highly endangered animal.

- **Death**

Tourist vehicles can kill wildlife accidentally, particularly at night. There are many reports of hotels using vehicles on turtle nesting beaches that crush eggs and present obstacles that prevent female turtles returning easily to the sea. Similarly, on safaris off-road driving has resulted in the death of young animals in hiding, whilst their parents were being observed.

b. Indirect Impacts

- Wildlife tourism can result in a number of direct impacts upon wildlife habitats, which in turn can indirectly affect the quality and quantity of the food and living space available to wildlife. Factors here include trampling, litter, off-road driving, burning of vegetation as part of park management practices for tourism, etc. For example, turtles sometimes swallow plastic bags mistaking them for jellyfish and subsequently die.
- The growth in the curio trade in wildlife souvenirs has seen increased collection of wild plants, corals and shells as well as the illegal capture and killing of wild animals for fur, feathers, skins, ivory, horn, teeth, eggs, etc. The banning or discouraging of such curios may in specific circumstances, however, affect local crafters and traders, many of whose livelihoods have traditionally depended on such trade. It is important, therefore, for NGOs, governments and the tourism industry to understand who is affected by the discouragement of such trade, and to work with them or local organisations on alternative livelihood sources. Tourism suppliers can support such initiatives, by promoting as appropriate products produced by these alternative livelihood strategies e.g. encouraging the purchase of products made from vegetable ivory, etc.
- Wildlife tourism's support infrastructure and facilities, when uncontrolled and poorly regulated, can also cause tangible problems. Road construction can cause habitat loss and present barriers to wildlife. Vehicle headlights on these roads can cause disorientation. For example, turtle hatchlings, whose evolutionary programme requires them to head for the moon reflected on the water, have been observed crawling inland, distracted by lights, instead of towards the sea and hence they die in large numbers. Dumping of rubbish inappropriately by tourist camps, hotels and lodges can attract scavengers, which, as mentioned previously, can alter

the natural feeding habits of species and increase stress/aggression levels.

2.2 Good Practice Guidelines

- Wildlife tourism suppliers should be recognised and, where appropriate, inspected and certified or licensed by the appropriate body in the country of operation
- If a tourism license is required to operate in a certain country, the supplier should have an in date license that is available for inspection
- Suppliers should be members of a professional guiding association, if one exists in the country of operation
- Visitors should be accompanied during all wildlife tourism activities by professionally trained, well-equipped, and appropriately qualified, leaders/guides
- During wildlife viewing sufficient distance should be kept from wild animals so they remain undisturbed, in order to ensure that the presence of tourists does not negatively impact on their natural behaviours. These distances will vary depending on individual circumstances (i.e. whether animals are with young, what visibility is like (habitat type), wind direction, whether male elephants are in musth, etc.). If animals appear disturbed, then the distance approached is too close
- Wildlife to be viewed should be approached at an oblique angle rather than head on, so as not to represent a threat or negatively impact on their natural behaviours
- Animals showing avoidance tactics or who are running/swimming/flying away should not be pursued during wildlife viewing activities
- When in close proximity to wildlife, tourists should be instructed to speak quietly and to not make sudden movements, so as to avoid alarming animals
- Great care should be taken when approaching wildlife with young. Parents and their offspring should not be separated
- Suppliers should abide by speed limits in protected areas, paying particular attention to driving more carefully at night
- For primate viewing, visitors should not approach closer than 5 meters to avoid the risk of disease transmission
- Breeding sites should not be approached e.g. nests, dens, burrows, etc.

- 'Playback' tapes of bird sounds should not be used to attract birds so they are more easily viewed, as this can displace birds from their natural territories and affect their survival success
- Suppliers should actively discourage and advise visitors not to feed wildlife
- Suppliers should actively discourage and advise visitors not to touch wildlife
- Suppliers should respect protected area opening hours e.g. not view wildlife at night if prohibited
- For wildlife viewing at night, spotlights should not be shone directly into the eyes of wildlife for prolonged periods. Red filters should be fitted on spot lights
- Tourists should be advised not to use flash photography if this will disturb the wildlife being viewed
- When using open vehicles to view wildlife, tourists should be instructed to remain still, and not to make sudden movements, when close to wildlife
- There should not be more than 3 vehicles/boats viewing an animal for a prolonged period. If further vehicles are waiting to view, time spent viewing should be limited to 10 minutes before giving way to other vehicles
- Small group sizes should be maintained e.g. max of 12 people on drives/walks
- Where hunting safaris are permitted, suppliers should not bait with prey to attract trophy animals
- 'Canned hunting', where wild animals are bred in captivity and then used for hunting, should not be supported
- Suppliers should not drive off-road in protected areas when this is prohibited in the protected area
- Walking product suppliers should use different routes so as to avoid repetitive trampling of vegetation
- Suppliers should not sell curios using wildlife products and other threatened natural materials and should actively discourage visitors from purchasing them elsewhere. This includes:
 - coral - soft and hard
 - shells - of any kind, marine or land

- any kind of reef animal - particularly popular are starfish and seahorses
- ivory
- skins - anything made out of animal skin (unless sure it is legal), belts, handbags, drums, etc.
- hard woods - although it may not be illegal to export certain kinds of hard woods, the craft 'tourist' industry is destroying forests
- bushmeat - fresh or dried
- anything made with a part of an animal - such as quills, bones, teeth, feathers
- tortoiseshell (either a whole shell or made into other items)
- traditional medicines with animal products
- good luck charms made out of animal parts
- live animals for pets (e.g. tortoises)
- plant parts - seeds, flower heads, roots, etc.

If livelihoods are affected by such a policy, tourism suppliers should understand who is affected by the discouragement of such trade, and encourage NGOs/governments etc. to work with them or local organisations on alternative livelihood sources. Tourism suppliers should support such initiatives by promoting, as appropriate, products produced by these alternative livelihood strategies e.g. encouraging the purchase of products made from vegetable ivory etc. Suppliers could also work with local people directly to support them in securing new livelihood strategies

- Tourists should be instructed not to drop litter nor cigarette ends (which can cause fires). Suppliers to provide mechanisms for tourists to dispose of litter responsibly whilst undertaking wildlife tourism activities e.g. bins, bags on vehicles etc.
- Suppliers should not dispose of waste in uncovered pits

In marine-based wildlife tourism, along with the above:

- Whilst viewing cetaceans boats should minimise their speed (no-wake speed) and avoid sudden changes in speed, direction and noise
- Boats should maintain an appropriate distance away from cetaceans so as not to disturb them
- Noise should be minimised from all sources
- Cetaceans should never be pursued, encircled or separated

- An appropriate angle or direction of approach (implement no-approach zones) should be determined by suppliers
- There should not be more than 3 boats viewing cetaceans for a prolonged period. If further boats are waiting to view, time spent viewing should be limited to 10 minutes before giving way to other boats
- Allow cetaceans to control the nature and duration of the 'encounter'. Suppliers should implement a policy of letting cetaceans approach humans if they so choose (and not vice versa) e.g. in 'swim with' dolphin encounters etc.
- Bow-riding dolphins - running through groups of dolphins to solicit bow riding should be banned. If dolphins choose to bow ride, boats should maintain original course and speed

2.3 Sources of Further Information

- Take only Photographs, Leave only Footprints – The environmental impacts of wildlife tourism. IIED Wildlife and Development Series No 10 (Oct 1997)
- Voluntary Codes (Marine): Project AWARE Go ECO – Explore, Conserve, Observe available from Project AWARE or PADI; www.projectaware.org, www.padi.com
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society. www.wdcs.org

3. Customer Safety

The safety of visitors whilst on wildlife tourism holidays is paramount. Bad practice in this area has led to injury and death of visitors, and negative publicity for both tour operators and suppliers. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the potential risks of customers interacting with animals, whether **directly** or **indirectly**, and that suppliers have preventative measures in place to guarantee customer safety. Visitors on wildlife holidays should also be properly informed of what the risks are and how to minimise them. Emergency and security procedures should be in place, and regularly tested, to ensure their efficiency in every eventuality.

3.1 What are the Risks?

Animal Contact

Visitors are at risk from injury/death from animal attacks in situations where a supplier allows close contact to occur between humans and wildlife. Examples include 'swim with' dolphin and shark experiences, visiting habituated wildlife, feeding of wild animals, hunting safaris and approaching wildlife too closely on foot or in vehicles.

One reason that animals that are habituated to contact with humans occasionally attack, is that habituation allows them to lose their fear of humans and, in situations of close proximity, this may lead to an animal asserting itself. For example, monkeys that are fed, quickly learn that if they threaten humans who have food, they will be able to win that food for themselves.

The use of food to attract wildlife so that it can be more easily viewed is a practice that is growing. It should be actively discouraged as it carries significant risks to visitors.

Wild animals are unpredictable and demand respect and space. There have been a significant number of cases reported where people have been killed or badly injured during wildlife viewing holidays. In most cases people have inadvertently frightening animals by moving too quickly, approaching too closely, making loud noises, or by staring at them (which is provocative or challenging behaviour in many species). In other situations visitors have been injured when accidentally disturbing animals whilst moving about their camp (particularly at night), when accommodation is located in, or close to, a National Park or reserve.

- Swimming with and feeding of dolphins in the south-eastern United States has resulted in people being bitten and swimmers being pulled under the water, resulting in injuries severe enough to require stitches and hospitalisation
- Macaque monkeys in Gibraltar are aggressive towards people because of feeding by tourists

- The common feeding of fish at a number of marine parks has resulted in injuries to feeders. For example, at Hanauma Bay in Hawaii, lifeguards treat 4-5 visitors a day for injuries resulting from fish bites. More dramatically, divers feeding larger fish, such as barracudas, moray eels, groupers and sharks have had fingers, earlobes, lips, face and even arms injured and sometimes bitten off
- Two dingoes mauled a 9 year old boy to death and bit his 7 year old brother on Fraser Island in Australia (2001). This was attributed to tourists feeding the dingoes
- Bears at Denhali National Park, Yellowstone National Park and other locations in North America have attacked people and become a major safety concern for park visitors through not respecting the bears' 'comfort zone' and approaching too closely
- An employee was killed by a hippo at Mfuwe Lodge in South Luangwa National Park when returning at night to their accommodation unescorted (2003)
- A visitor was killed by an elephant whilst trophy hunting in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia, when walking too close to a herd of elephants (1998)

Zoonoses

Zoonosis is the transmission of disease from vertebrate animals to humans resulting in illness and death. Particularly at risk are children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those people with compromised immunity.

Birds can carry *psittacosis*, *salmonella* and *TB*, primates can carry *HIV*, *Ebola* and *Herpes B*, and mammals can carry *rabies*, all of which can be lethal to humans. Other common diseases carried by animals include *influenza*, *Ovine Chlamydiosi*, *ringworm*, *shingles* and *toxoplasmosis*.

Disease transmission is possible from wild vertebrate animals to humans through contact with wildlife, faeces, airborne transmission, etc. This can be avoided by wildlife tourists being accompanied and briefed by professionally trained and accredited guides and by respecting wildlife 'safety' zones (minimum distance to safely approach an animal).

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten (HLK)

This German operator is part of TUI, AG and specialises in expeditions and Antarctic tours. HLK has produced a handbook for Polar Travellers e.g. for reasons of animal protection and personal safety to keep certain distances from animals, be careful when moving on land, never carrying any food, keeping quiet when encountering an animal and never alarming an animal to take a photo etc.

Luangwa Safari Operator's Association

Safari lodges in and around South Luangwa National Park in Zambia run, in partnership with the Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA), a safari guide's

training and accreditation scheme that covers all aspects of guiding including animal behaviour, ecology, conservation, first aid and visitor management/safety. On walking safaris clients are accompanied by both an appropriately qualified safari guide and an armed ZAWA scout.

3.2 Good Practice Guidelines

In order to reduce the risks to visitors, wildlife tourism suppliers should:

- Have a current and valid license to operate a wildlife tourism business, issued by the appropriate body in each country
- Have adequate insurance covering public liability in case of injury or death caused by a wild animal or any equipment used during the wildlife tourism activity (e.g. scuba diving equipment, guns, etc.)
- Issue clear safety guidance to clients
- Carry out a risk assessment to evaluate the potential for *direct* contact between wild animals and visitors and put in place procedures to minimise this
- Actively discourage voluntary free contact between visitors and wildlife
- In the context of marine-based wildlife tourism, uphold and promote a policy of wildlife approaching humans, not of humans approaching animals (e.g. swim with dolphin experiences etc.), so as to avoid stressing animals and hence making them more dangerous to humans
- Discourage the feeding of wild animals
- Have robust, tested and proven emergency procedures to deal with incidents involving attacks by wild animals
- Clients to be accompanied in the wild by professionally trained, well-equipped and appropriately qualified guides, who, along with expert knowledge in their specialist field should have a sound knowledge of first aid and what to do in emergency situations
- Where the wildlife experience is on foot and may involve dangerous wildlife, two professionally trained staff to accompany clients – one an appropriately qualified guide to look after clients in an emergency situation, the other a fire-arm specialist who is qualified to deal with the animal should an emergency situation arise
- Maintain small group sizes of less than 12 on walks/drives etc.
- Maintain a safe distance from wildlife (varies depending on species and whether on foot, in vehicle or in a boat etc.) so they remain undisturbed, and hence less liable to be provoked

- Ensure all equipment used during the wildlife tourism activity is regularly maintained and serviced, so as to avoid break-downs in potentially dangerous situations
- Guests to be escorted to rooms at night if situated in, or close to, areas with dangerous wildlife
- Accommodation suppliers to dispose of rubbish responsibly (i.e. not in uncovered pits) so as to not attract wildlife into camps etc.
- Suppliers based in remote areas should have radio communications and/or satellite phones and be able to access medical personnel during daylight hours by emergency flight evacuation

3.3 Sources of Further Information

- Whale Watch Operators Association – North West, Good practice Guidelines. www.nwwhalewatchers.org/guidelines.html
- Ecotourism Codes of Conduct – Northwest Yunnan. www.northwestyunnan.com/codes_of_conduct.htm

4. Education

Responsible wildlife tourism suppliers have positive education agendas, which aim to inform visitors about the natural world, biodiversity and the importance of conserving it. They actively encourage conservation through learning and engender positive attitudes and values towards animal welfare, nature and its conservation.

4.1 What are the Issues?

Research into motivations of wildlife tourists reveals that the visitor is concerned not with simply looking at wildlife, but with feeling and realising some of its *value*. In this way, interpretation and education in this natural, wild setting has the potential to raise awareness, enhance understanding and, hopefully, clarify or enlarge each visitor's perspective and attitude towards nature and its conservation. Despite this, the interpretation practised by some wildlife tourism suppliers is of poor quality and fails to communicate conservation ideas, promote sustainable tourism and enrich visitor experiences.

Regulations and restrictions have been shown to not necessarily change people's attitudes or behaviour towards the environment. Interpretation and education is effective in this respect, as rather than regulating and enforcing practices, it works *with*, rather than *against* the visitor.

Wildlife tourism suppliers should, therefore, seek to provide education to visitors as a means of changing attitudes and behavioural choice that will assist in conserving the environment. Fundamentally, the interpretation provided needs to be of such a standard that it encourages visitors to shift their conservation ethics. For the successful supplier, this also provides an opportunity to offer something extra that may lead to market advantage and enhanced reputation.

Wildlife tourism suppliers should provide interpretation about the natural and cultural heritage of the area they are operating in, including threats to wildlife (e.g. poaching, disturbance, habitat destruction, impacts of tourism, etc.), conservation activities in the area and issues facing local communities that live with wildlife (e.g. animal/human conflicts such as devastation of harvests through crop raiding, injury and death of people by wildlife, poverty, etc.). There is also the opportunity to inform visitors of how their actions impact on the environment and cultures they are visiting and how to minimise these.

People learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process and using as many senses as possible. Insights that people discover for themselves are the most memorable as they stimulate a sense of excitement and achievement. Techniques used should embrace these factors and leave the visitor with a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction, and a perception that environmental conservation and the principles of sustainability are worthwhile.

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Robin Pope Safaris, Zambia

Professional trained and accredited safari guides lead small groups of visitors on walking safaris in the South Luangwa National Park. Guides encourage clients to listen for animal calls, check spoor, search for footprints, etc. along with interpreting the natural heritage area of the area, and traditional uses of plants, etc. In this way visitors have a sense of anticipation, high involvement, and learning takes place in a fun and relaxed way.

Dolphin Discovery Tours, Port Philip Bay, Australia

DDT operates a luxury charter yacht, which takes tourists out into the bay to view marine animals. The tour has been designed specifically to educate and develop awareness about the environment in the bay and the need to protect the area and its wildlife populations. The delivery of information is achieved through comprehensive commentary and access to professional trained guides, all of whom are actively involved in the Dolphin Research Institute. Following a safety briefing, passengers are provided with information on the biology and behaviour of the animals viewed, and informed about the detrimental effects of sealing etc. All interpretation is approached in a relaxed and informal way. DDT provides an excellent example of a partnership between conservation and tourism interests.

4.2 Good Practice Guidelines

- Wildlife tourism suppliers should actively promote public education and awareness in relation to the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage
- Wildlife tourism suppliers should employ professionally trained and appropriately qualified guides/leaders to interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the area visited by tourists
- Interpretation to include low impact travel practices and compatible conservation and cultural practices including ecological and cultural sensitivity
- Wildlife tourism suppliers should actively educate visitors about the threats to wildlife (and other natural elements) of purchasing curios made from wild animal products, etc.
- Suppliers should prepare tourists for each encounter with local cultures, native animals and plants by providing appropriate information
- Interpretation to centre on the active involvement of clients (rather than passive listening), making maximum use of the senses, seeking to foster self-discovered insights

4.3 Sources of Further Information

- The International Ecotourism Society's Summary of Guidelines for Nature Tour Operators. www.ecotourism.org
- 'Tour guides and interpretation in ecotourism'. In D. Weaver (ed.) The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism. Oxford: CABI Publishing

5. Conservation

If they are to operate responsibly, wildlife tourism suppliers should demonstrate measurable performance in providing a service/benefit to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the area they operate.

5.1 What are the Issues?

As the 'product' wildlife tourism suppliers are selling *is* wildlife, they have a vested interest to seek to protect and conserve it – yet some do not. Instead some adopt an unsustainable approach, exploiting the very resources that their future security depends upon for short-term financial gain.

Responsible wildlife tourism suppliers can, however, make both *direct* and/or *indirect* contributions to the conservation of the natural heritage where they operate. This may be achieved in a variety of ways including donating money to *in-situ*⁶ conservation programmes in their area, providing conservation education for local communities who live with wildlife, implementing their own conservation activities (anti-poaching or de-snaring patrols, removal of garbage from marine environments, etc.), and by upholding and promoting protected area rules and regulations with visitors. Given the militaristic record of many anti-poaching patrols in Africa, it is important, however, that the wider impacts of this activity be considered. In many instances where local people threaten the conservation of an area, often it is because they have little or no alternatives. In such circumstances, consideration should be given to how local people's livelihoods can be adapted e.g. poachers retrained as guides, forest-based livelihoods around honey and the export of medicines developed, wood carvers trained to apply their skills to furniture making for lodges and to using more sustainable wood species, etc.

Similarly, suppliers should be aware of the broader issues surrounding the use of the area and its natural resources. In this way, they can seek to ensure that their operations allow for the sustainable use of the area by multiple users, so that the interests of each are served. For example, in trophy hunting areas, local people are often entirely banned for the whole season. With good planning and consultation, access can be managed that enables women to collect their grasses/reeds/medicines/honey etc. at times when no hunting is taking place. In this way important local access to natural resources is achieved without interfering with the hunting. If everyone has a stake in the natural resources of an area, then equally they have a stake in ensuring they are used sustainably.

Finally, local people's knowledge and commitment is invaluable to conservation measures. Many suppliers have harnessed this by raising awareness of conservation issues in local schools and by providing local communities with opportunities to benefit financially from the wildlife resources with which they live (e.g. by supporting local community-run tourism

⁶ *In-situ* conservation – conservation carried out in the wild where the wildlife naturally lives.

enterprises; by working in partnership (and sharing profits) with communities on tourism developments).

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Rocktail Bay Lodge in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

A portion of guest revenues is contributed to the KN Nature Conservation Services, a 20 yr old turtle monitoring and satellite-tracking programme

Norman Carr Safaris, Zambia

Carry out anti-poaching activities in South Luangwa National Park. Its safari guides deliver conservation education in local schools and take local people into the National Park on game drives.

Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA)

ZAWA's Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) policy dictates that meat from trophy hunting activities should be distributed amongst the local community in trophy hunting areas. Similarly, 50% of the sale of trophy hunting licenses is distributed to these local communities in transparent, open community forums. The local communities then decide how this money is to be spent. As a result, much development has taken place in poor, rural areas of Zambia e.g. boreholes sunk, local schools and health clinics upgraded, etc. Local communities have also used part of 'their wildlife money' to build dams and to employ local community scouts in order to conserve the wildlife that has provided them with these tangible benefits. Trophy hunting tourism in certain areas of Zambia is hence improving the lives of many, poor rural communities and at the same time contributing towards conservation.

Wilderness Safaris, Namibia

At Damaraland Camp in Namibia, Wilderness Safaris negotiated a partnership agreement with the local Damara community. The local community are joint owners of the lodge and receive 10% of all income. After 10 years of operation the lodge will be fully owned by the community. As a result, the local community is realising the benefits of its wildlife and see the value of conserving it for their clients to enjoy. Elephants and rhinos have now returned to the area after many years of absence.

Safari Garden Hotel, Gambia

The owner of this hotel has introduced many activities run by the local community as a way of encouraging them to secure alternative livelihood strategies e.g. African dance classes for visitors, batik making classes, etc.

5.2 Good practice Guidelines

A responsible wildlife tourism supplier should:

- Ensure that the natural resources used for tourism activities are managed so as to allow sustainable access by local communities

- Contribute a proportion of net profits, or make a stated donation, or an 'in kind' contribution towards activities/projects that aim to conserve the area's natural resources/wildlife, e.g.
 - allow researchers/scientists a regular place on board tourist boats to carry out research (marine wildlife);
 - for anti-poaching activities in the area of operation;
 - to fund/assist conservation/wildlife organisations or *in-situ* conservation projects;
 - to fund/run conservation education programmes in local community/schools;
 - by supporting the evolution of alternative livelihood strategies for local people e.g. poachers retrained as guides, forest-based livelihoods around honey and the export of medicines developed, wood carvers trained to apply their skills to furniture making for lodges and to using more sustainable wood species, etc.
- Adhere to local protected area tourism guidelines and policies and actively promote these to visitors
- Advocate conservation and sustainable tourism by demonstrating exemplary behaviour above and beyond any rules and regulations
- Pay relevant entrance fees for access to protected areas and encourage customers to make additional, personal contributions to support conservation

5.3 Sources of Further Information

- Ecotourism Codes of Conduct – Northwest Yunnan.
www.northwestyunnan.com/codes_of_conduct.htm

6. Local Communities

For tourism to be sustainable and responsible, local communities residing in wildlife tourism destinations, particularly in the developing world, need to benefit economically from the wildlife tourism that takes place in the area where they live. Suppliers should also implement fair and equitable local labour practices and help provide employees with a sustainable future.

6.1 What are the Issues?

Whilst the broader issues pertaining to benefits from tourism accruing to local communities are relevant to the tourism industry in general, they are, however, particularly important to wildlife tourism suppliers as:

- There is a close interdependence between local communities and the wildlife/natural resource base upon which wildlife tourism depends
- The majority of wildlife tourism takes place in rural areas where the lack of other opportunities means that opportunities or problems arising from wildlife tourism can make a real difference to people's lives
- The costs of living with wildlife fall heavily on local people (e.g. crop raiding by elephants, deaths of people)

All too often in the developing world, where the majority of wildlife tourism destinations are located, local communities suffer the negative impacts of wildlife tourism (erosion of their culture, human/wildlife conflicts, competition for scarce resources, etc.), without benefiting from the potential positives that an influx of wildlife tourists from the developed world has the power to bring. Wildlife tourism experiences need to ensure that local people benefit financially and/or in terms of their quality of life from tourism and that any socio-cultural impacts are minimised.

For local communities, wildlife tourism can offer new opportunities for jobs, enterprise and skills development. Responsible suppliers will ensure that their employment practices are fair and equitable and that local people are offered training to secure promotion. They will also, where possible, purchase their supplies locally so as to maximise the benefits of tourism to the local economy and minimise leakages (i.e. money leaking unnecessarily out of the local economy).

Many conservationists now recognise the crucial role played by local people in managing wildlife and habitats, and acknowledge that suitably motivated local people are well placed to protect wildlife if they derive a benefit from it. This can be achieved through tourism, if sufficient benefit (jobs, new enterprises, contributions to community development funds, improvements in infrastructure, etc.) accrues.

Similarly, suppliers are increasingly recognising the need to work with local people because of the vital role they can potentially play in maintaining the very resources that tourists come to see, both natural and cultural. It can also give them a competitive edge amongst today's more discerning wildlife

tourists who believe that tourism should be socially, as well as environmentally, responsible.

Donors are increasingly interested in funding projects that combine tourism development with community involvement or local participation, as such projects fit within strategies to use tourism as a tool to alleviate poverty.

One of the problems with writing a single set of guidelines on community involvement in wildlife tourism is that in different situations, different levels of involvement are appropriate. Some communities may decide not to be actively involved in tourism, or at least to keep contact with tourists to a minimum, because they fear the negative impacts that tourism can have on their culture and society. In these cases the right of the community to say 'no' should be respected. Sometimes it is more appropriate for a tourism company to simply arrange to pay out an agreed amount of cash to communities rather than encourage them to be involved in tourism management or to receive tourists in the community itself; in other cases full involvement is welcomed.

Finally, it is important to understand that people living in wildlife areas (terrestrial or marine) are often highly dependent on wildlife or on the surrounding habitat and the broader natural resource base. In rural areas, they use the same bush/savannah/forest/jungle/water sources etc. for their food, fuel, artisanal and traded goods, livestock etc., and in coastal areas many local people depend in some way on the sea, sealife or coastal resources. Measures that affect wildlife or its habitat will, therefore, also affect people's livelihoods. As the tourism product uses wildlife and its habitat, it is bound, therefore, to affect the local communities' livelihood resources in some way. Tourism businesses need to be alert to this and should consider how to enhance or mitigate this impact. For example, when a marine protection area or exclusive wildlife/tourism zone is demarcated, this can directly affect local people's access to natural resources. Similarly, if wildlife is disturbed and/or provoked by tourists, it is often local people who suffer most from more aggressive animals.

- White, ex-patriate safari guides are paid significantly higher than local, black safari guides in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia. Local women are also discriminated against, accounting for less than 2% of employees in the area's safari lodges and camps (Mvula, 1998)
- Tortuguero National Park, Costa Rica – An area was set aside to protect turtles in 1997. Wildlife tourism grew, but standards of living of local people declined, as benefits of tourism did not make up for loss of access to the natural resources which they traditionally harvested in the park, and the price of goods increased
- Nsendimila Cultural Village, Zambia – Wildlife tourists brought to this 'staged' cultural village to experience culture. Dancers performed dances from the girls initiation ceremony, which caused great conflict within the local community as traditionally these dances should only be seen by women (1996)

Examples of Good Practice in Action

Premier Tours

Premier Tours markets wildlife safaris. It chooses lodges/camps that provide a direct spin-off to local communities and/or conservation projects e.g. Damaraland Camp in Namibia where the local community benefits directly from tourism by earning 10% of the bed-night revenues; Makololo Plains Camp in Zimbabwe which is jointly owned by a local, rural family that runs a small trading store just outside the National Park

Phinda Game Reserve, South Africa

Farmland has been restored and restocked with game for tourism. Local communities now benefit from new business ventures and alternative livelihood strategies in the harvesting of wood and medicinal plants, transport, butcheries, charcoal manufacture, brick making, and vegetable, poultry and fish production

Robin Pope Safaris, Zambia

This safari operator works in collaboration with the community owned Kawaza Village Tourism Project (cultural tourism experience). RPS markets Kawaza actively, thereby combining a wildlife and cultural product. RPS has a competitive edge over other wildlife tourism suppliers in the area and a small, rural village like Kawaza has gained access to an international market base

Norman Carr Safaris, Zambia

Encourages clients to contribute towards the development of the local school and funding orphans to school

Safari Garden Hotel, Gambia

The owners of Safari Garden Hotel in Gambia are working with the local community at Kartong to build and run an Eco-Lodge. The community are providing the land and people resource and Safari Garden are supplying people resource, technical know-how and capital. The lodge will be run as a joint venture and after so many years (yet to be decided) the lodge will be wholly owned and run by the local community

6.2 Good practice Guidelines

- Ensure that the natural resources used for tourism activities are managed so as to allow sustainable access by local communities
- Not all communities want to be involved in tourism – their right to say ‘no’ should be respected
- Where communities wish to be involved, their decisions on the level and form of involvement should be respected
- Wildlife tourism suppliers should offer communities the opportunity to participate in the planning and development of tourism in an area

- Suppliers should consider the impacts of their tourism activities on local communities and work to enhance or mitigate these
- Where possible suppliers should maximise the positive effects of tourism on host communities e.g. employment of local staff, using local suppliers and developing sustainable businesses
- Local people should be offered employment in all areas of the business and be paid fair and competitive wages i.e. which may often mean above minimum wage guidelines for tourism employees in a particular country
- There should be no discrimination in the supplier's employment practices according to gender, ethnicity or colour e.g. between indigenous, national and ex-patriate employees
- Training should be offered and career progression opportunities presented to local people
- Locally produced goods that benefit the wider local community should be purchased where possible, as long as their production does not put an unsustainable strain on the natural resources in an area
- Community-based tourism initiatives/enterprises should be supported by suppliers e.g. by encouraging tourists to visit these, by helping to market them, etc.
- Suppliers should minimise the negative economic effects of tourism on local host communities e.g. by ensuring that tourism does not divert resources away from local communities or drive up the prices of local resources to the disadvantage of local people
- Suppliers should contribute financially towards projects that improve the welfare of the local community. Where possible they should engage in partnerships with local agencies or community groups to develop such projects. This may include support for health, education or environmental protection initiatives. The community itself should make the decisions about how financial contributions will be channelled and what they should be used for
- Financial contributions should be made public so that all community members – not just the leaders – know how much money is involved, who is managing it, and how it is being used. In this way the commonest cause of breakdown (lack of transparency on how money is distributed) in agreements between suppliers and local communities can be avoided. Each payment should be made, or at least announced, in a public forum and the use of community meetings, noticeboards, etc. utilised fully to achieve transparency.
- Suppliers should present visitors with opportunities to make contributions to local community development projects/programs

- The sensitivities, values, traditions, practices and protocols of other cultures in the area should be respected at all times
- Opportunities for cultural exchange, where visitors and local communities can learn from one another, should be encouraged where the communities are interested in doing so. These exchanges should only occur in authentic settings with willing participants
- Visitors' knowledge of the destination should be maximised in order to encourage appropriate behaviour and minimise any negative cultural impacts or offence (e.g. dress code, asking permission to take photos, public displays of affection, etc.). This can be achieved by the supplier offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective action where necessary
- Suppliers should be aware of their operation's actual and potential impact on local cultures and attempt to minimise these through their own policies and practices
- Suppliers' employees should have access to programs that will upgrade their ability to communicate with and manage clients in culturally sensitive environments
- Suppliers should ensure that employees know and participate in all aspects of company policy to minimise negative impacts on local cultures
- Suppliers should address any complaints or concerns raised by the local community about the behaviour of visitors, and provide a clearly identified opportunity (approachable forum) to allow this to happen
- Re trophy hunting - Hunting safaris should not be supported where the local community living in and around the hunting area do not benefit e.g. local communities receive a share of the income from the sale of trophy hunting licenses; receive meat from trophy animals etc.

6.3 Sources of Further Information

- Enhancing community involvement in wildlife tourism: Issues and Challenges. IIED Wildlife and Development Series No 11 (1998). www.iied.org
- Tourism Concern. www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- Social Responsibility Forum. www.csrforum.com
- Ecotourism Codes of Conduct – Northwest Yunnan. www.northwestyunnan.com/codes_of_conduct.htm
- responsibletravel.com
www.responsibletravel.com/Copy/Copy100261.htm
- Friends of Conservation. www.foc-uk.com
- WWF International (2001). Guidelines for community-based ecotourism development. www.icrtourism.org/Publications/WWF1eng.pdf

7. Environmental Impacts

Wildlife tourism can be a powerful force for environmental preservation and protection. The amount of land set aside for the protection of wildlife (National Parks, reserves and wildlife sanctuaries), for example, has expanded considerably over the last 40 years, and many of these areas are totally dependent for their survival on income from wildlife tourism. Similarly, wildlife tourism suppliers are increasingly adopting environmentally sensitive, responsible policies and managing their business along sustainable principles.

Despite this, however, many wildlife tourism businesses still operate in ways that continue to damage the environment, diminishing the benefits of tourism for host communities, for tourists and ultimately for the industry itself.

Key to achieving good environmental practices is that suppliers are aware of the impact of their operations on the environment and that they take proactive steps to minimise this.

The overarching issues effecting environmental sustainability are the same irrespective of the type of tourism business operated. However, some issues are particularly salient in rural and coastal areas (water use, waste disposal etc.), where the majority of wildlife tourism takes place. Environmental sustainability takes on even greater significance in such circumstances, as the environment is inextricably linked to the wildlife product and to the local communities that live in wildlife areas. Both depend on the natural environment for its survival, so it is vital that wildlife tourism suppliers operate in sustainable ways.

As many guidelines⁷ and codes of practice covering environmental sustainability already exist, these should be referred to and used by wildlife tourism suppliers to improve their performance in this area. These guidelines cover only those issues that are specifically pertinent to wildlife tourism businesses.

7.1 What are the Key Issues?

Energy Management

Wildlife tourism suppliers use energy supplies from firewood, collected on a daily basis from outside or inside reserves, to mains electricity supplied through power lines which may often be provided specifically to serve an individual hotel or game lodge. The collection of firewood can cause habitat disturbance or degradation and vegetation loss, whilst power lines produce a visual, aesthetic impact in the case of overhead lines, as well as impacts associated with vegetation loss where pylons are erected or cables buried.

⁷ E.g. Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development. www.toinitiative.org

Water Use Management

In many wildlife destinations, the demand for water far exceeds supply, and the activities of tourism businesses can cause a serious further drain on available water resources. In many instances local communities have very limited water supplies, particularly where the peak tourist season coincides with low rainfall. While local people may struggle to find sufficient water for themselves and their animals, visitors to hotels and game lodges expect to have water on tap for daily baths and showers, and many of these facilities have luxury facilities including swimming pools and artificially watered gardens and lawns.

Reducing water use by adopting more sustainable practices can help conserve and protect water resources upon which the tourist operation and local community depend, as well as enhancing an operation's reputation amongst guests.

Wastewater Management

Inefficient wastewater treatment can lead to a contamination of local drinking and agricultural water supplies, and may cause serious illness amongst tourists and local people who unknowingly become infected after drinking, bathing or swimming in contaminated water. When untreated wastewater or sewage is discharged, it can degrade marine habitats (e.g. coral reefs) and cause coastal pollution – affecting the very resources that many wildlife tourism destinations depend upon. Similarly, if discharged into enclosed inland water bodies, sewage can result in excessive algal growths.

Efficient wastewater management practices not only minimise negative impacts on the environment, but also protect the visitor's and local people's health against *gastro-intestinal disease*, *leptospirosis* and *cholera*.

Waste Management

Wildlife tourism businesses produce a range of solid waste. In some cases this waste is disposed of inappropriately e.g. out of sight in uncovered pits. In a wildlife tourism area this can cause a serious threat to resident wildlife and attract scavengers. This may not only alter the natural feeding habits of these species, but may also present a threat to tourists.

An effective waste management system based on the four R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Replace) can help to conserve the environment, reduce handling and disposal fees, enhance public image, and improve destination appeal.

Purchasing Policy

The majority of wildlife tourism suppliers operate in coastal and rural areas of the developing world, where local people live in abject poverty. In these areas local communities have limited opportunities to trade outside of the local

tourism industry. Purchasing a significant proportion of supplies from local suppliers can hence provide much needed benefits for local communities, as well as demonstrating a company's social responsibility and enhancing reputation.

Purchasing products that have a minimal environmental impact can serve to conserve environments and enhance reputation. This includes providing biodegradable soaps and shampoos to clients in accommodation and camping facilities.

Supporting the trade in curios made from wildlife products has an adverse affect on the conservation of many wild species, and suppliers should not support or encourage such trade. For some local communities, however, the production and sale of these products provides them with their livelihoods. If livelihoods are affected such a policy, tourism suppliers should understand who is affected by the discouragement of such trade, and encourage NGOs/governments etc. to work with them or local organisations on alternative livelihood sources. Tourism suppliers can support such initiatives, by promoting as appropriate products produced by these alternative livelihood strategies e.g. encouraging the purchase of products made from vegetable ivory etc.

Visitor Activities/ Tourism Infrastructure

Activities and infrastructure specially provided for tourists should not have a harmful effect on the environment nor redirect vital resources away from local consumers. Examples in the case of wildlife tourism include damage to vegetation through off-road driving in sensitive areas, building of roads and trails, built facilities (lodges etc.) and camping sites. All activities and their associated infrastructure should be planned so as to minimise impacts on the environment.

Visitors, if not managed effectively, can have serious impacts on the environment. All suppliers of wildlife tourism experiences should formulate and implement visitor management strategies that minimise a tourist's impact on the environment. Impacts include litter, water wastage, purchase of souvenirs made out of endangered species, environmental damage e.g. coral, etc.

Examples of Good Practice in Action

TUI Nederland

TUI provides tips for environmentally sound practices to dive visitors to Curacao and Bonaire in the Caribbean. These are contained within a voucher booklet provided to visitors before they travel. Tips include taking nothing (except garbage) out of the water whilst reef diving, avoiding all contact with the bottom and marine life etc. TUI also only uses reef dive suppliers who promote a strict 'no contact' policy, don't offer coral or other marine life for sale to visitors, have adequate garbage facilities on board boats and promote and explain eco-diving standards to divers.

Premier Tours

This US-based tour operator specialises in wildlife safaris in Southern and East Africa. It uses only those safari operators that are committed to sustainable practices on a day-to-day basis and that support conservation and local community development. It also favours camps that employ full-time ecologists whose job it is to make sure the camp is as environmentally friendly as possible. This includes providing electricity through solar-powered panels or having generators that run only whilst guests are out of camp, having lined tanks for sewerage processing and removing garbage to appropriate places for disposal.

Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Costa Rica

Requires all tourists who enter reserve to be accompanied by a trained guide. This has reduced visitor impacts and at the same time provided much needed employment for locally trained guides.

Other examples of good practice can be found in 'A Practical Guide to Good Practice – Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodation Sector' produced by the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development and the Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business.

7.2 Good practice Guidelines

Energy Management:

- When feasible use renewable energy sources (solar, wind or biogas)
- If using generators, ensure these are turned off when clients are out of camp
- Keep usage of firewood to a minimum
- Do not collect firewood from within protected areas
- Collect only dry wood – do not cut down trees

Water Use Management:

- Use and install water saving devices e.g. low-flush toilets and low-flow shower heads
- Use technologies that recycle water
- Avoid wasteful landscaping practices such as watering grounds during the day, etc.
- Native plants that require less water, pesticides, fertilisers etc. should be used for landscaping
- Provide guests with water saving tips

Wastewater Management:

- Wastewater and sewerage to be disposed of responsibly using 'best practices' appropriate for each area (recycling, composting etc.)
- If used, dug-out toilets should be located so waste filters naturally through sand or well drained soil before it reaches natural water systems
- All wastewater to be properly treated before it is released into the environment. If no municipal system is available make sure that wastewater is treated on site – if feasible use natural wastewater treatment options that use plants and natural bacteria to purify water rather than chemicals
- For overnight guests, provide biodegradable soaps/shampoos

Waste Management:

- The 4 R's of consumption - Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, Replace – should be followed
- Waste should not be disposed of in uncovered pits

Purchasing Policy:

- Locally produced products and services should be purchased where possible, as long as their use does not put an additional strain on the natural resources in an area
- Visitors should be actively discouraged from buying products/curios made from CITES listed threatened and endangered species and species being depleted at an unsustainable rate by local consumption (see 2.2 for full list of products). Supplier's gift shops should not stock such products. However, where the banning of such trade adversely affects local communities' livelihoods, suppliers should encourage governments/NGOs to work with communities to develop alternative livelihood strategies. Suppliers can also play an active role in developing such alternative livelihoods

Visitor Activities/ Tourism Infrastructure:

- Tourists on wildlife tourism holidays should be accompanied by a professionally trained and accredited guide whilst in the field, so as to reduce visitors' environmental impacts
- Visitor impacts on the environment should be minimised by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective action
- When guests are camping and washing in streams, rivers etc. biodegradable soaps/shampoos should be used at all times
- Visitors should be briefed and given a copy of any codes of conduct produced by protected areas visited

- On wildlife viewing experiences, small group sizes (less than 12) should be maintained. Under managed and over visited areas should be avoided
- Off-road driving should be discouraged in sensitive environments (e.g. national parks, reserves)
- Suppliers should be aware of and in compliance with the carrying capacity or visitor number restrictions of a visited area
- Visitor behaviour should be kept compatible with the fragility of visited environments and suppliers should work with protected area managers and /or NGOs to implement impact monitoring plans when possible
- Visitors should not be allowed to take any 'souvenirs' or specimens from the wild
- Visitors should be encouraged to not litter the environment but to put rubbish in designated places
- Employees should have access to programs that upgrade their ability to communicate with and manage clients in sensitive environments
- Employees should know and participate in all aspects of company policy to prevent impacts on the environment
- Tourism facility and/or accommodation should be site sensitive, not wasteful of local resources nor destructive to the environment in its design, build and maintenance, and provide ample opportunity for visitors to learn about the environment
- Wildlife tourism supplier should be aware of its operational footprint, and endeavour to keep it as small as possible
- As the introduction of exotic species into an environment can be very damaging to native species (which may be out competed), only native species should be used when developing tourism infrastructure and landscaping sites. This will help maintain the environment in as natural a condition as possible and guard against the introduction of aliens that may cause damage to native species

7.3 Sources of Further Information

- Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development. www.toinitiative.org
- Centre for Environmental Leadership in Business. www.celb.org
- Take Only Footprints Leave Only Photographs – The Environmental Impacts of Wildlife Tourism, IIED Wildlife and Development Series No.10, ISSN 1361 8628. www.iied.org
- The Ecotourism Association of Australia (EAA) Code of Practice for Ecotourism Operators. www.bigvolcano.com.au/eaacode.htm

- Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association's Ecotourism Guidelines. www.alaska.net/~awrta/meminfo/ecoguidelines.html
- Renewable Energies for the Tourism Industry. UN Environment Programme. UNEP. www.uneptie.org
- Environment Action Pack for Hotels. International Hotel Environment Initiative. UNEP. www.ihei.org
- A Manual for Waste Management: What the Tourism Industry Can Do To Improve Its Performance. UNEP, 2003.
- Benchmark Hotel program. www.benchmarkhotel.com

8. TF Checklist

A checklist has been prepared to enable wildlife tourism suppliers to assess their performance against key elements of the Good Practice Guidelines (see Appendix 2). This will allow suppliers to establish whether they are achieving good practice in relation to animal welfare, conservation, education, customer safety with relation to wildlife, local communities and environmental issues that are particularly pertinent to wildlife tourism.

The checklist is designed to provide a 'top line' assessment and as such is quite general, covering in one checklist all types of wildlife tourism experiences. However, it aims to identify where good practice is taking place and where improvements are needed.

Sharing the findings of the checklist with tour operators will enhance a supplier's reputation with these organisations, as it demonstrates a commitment to improving standards and an intention to meet good practice guidelines.

8.1 Process

Suppliers can use suitably experienced employees, who have knowledge of the issues covered, to conduct the checklist e.g. safari guide, owner, manager etc. Alternatively in-country wildlife tourism experts /conservationists /NGOs could be employed to conduct the checklist on the supplier's behalf. Tour operators marketing the supplier could also be invited to participate in completing the checklist, again demonstrating the supplier's commitment to the good practice agenda, and cementing the on-going relationship between supplier and tour operator. Clients could also be surveyed/consulted in the process, commenting on those items in the checklist that are relevant to them.

Suppliers should review their performance against the checklist on a regular, preferably annual, basis. If a supplier uses more than one location/site for wildlife tourism, all sites should be audited. In this way, both suppliers and tour operators can be assured that good practice is being achieved, or worked towards, and will hence enhance their own reputations with clients and minimise the risk of any potential negative publicity.

The Good Practice Guidelines should be referred to and read before conducting checklists.

Those items in the checklist that are not relevant to a specific type of wildlife tourism experience should be marked as so.

Where the checklist identifies issues that need addressing, it is advised that the supplier takes pro-active steps to rectify these within the timescales indicated on the checklist against each issue. The different timescales employed reflect the degree of priority that needs to be given to the various issues raised in the checklist, enabling suppliers to improve their standards over time, but with critical issues being addressed first.

Issues that are central to customer safety and in guaranteeing a minimum level of animal welfare are given greatest priority and should be addressed immediately. All other issues identified should be addressed within the timescales indicated (range from 1 month to 1 year).

Suppliers that carry out the checklist and address the issues raised within the given timescales, can confidently claim that they are committed to achieving good practice in relation to animal welfare, education, conservation, customer safety and local communities, and as such will be rewarded with enhanced reputation with both tour operators and customers.

Finally, suppliers should detail/attach evidence of their good practice against the various items covered in the checklist to the completed checklist itself. In this way, suppliers can use this self-assessed checklist as proof of their performance with external bodies, customers and tour operators.

If tour operators wish to use these checklists as a way of auditing their suppliers, it is recommended, however, that either:

- Tour operators conduct the checklists jointly with their suppliers

or

- Tour operators validate a supplier's own self-assessed checklist by randomly auditing 10 items on the checklist to ensure that the supplier's assessment of its own performance is accurate

9. Customer Feedback

Effective systems should be in place that encourage visitors to feedback their views and thoughts on their wildlife tourism experience, along with any complaints they may have, to both suppliers and tour operators. In this way, tour operators and suppliers can work together to improve the visitor experience and minimise impacts on wildlife and local communities. Animal welfare issues can also be highlighted quickly, and intervention strategies employed to address these.

Tour operators and suppliers should encourage visitors to feedback to them directly via establishing, and actively promoting in their literature/websites/briefings etc., customer feedback mechanisms. A concerted effort by tour operators and suppliers to raise the profile of animal welfare and local community issues will help identify hotspots and assist in promoting high industry-wide standards. As a starting point, all tour operators and suppliers should issue customers with a 'Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct for Wildlife Tourism' (see Section 10). Feedback mechanisms include the provision of end of visit surveys in destination, email and postal surveys post holiday, together with the promotion of email and telephone customer initiated feedback routes (both by suppliers and tour operators).

Additionally, The Travel Foundation has a customer feedback form on its website (www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk) along with information on animal welfare issues and advice for customers in this area. If the customer supplies the name of the tour operator that the wildlife tourism experience was booked with, the Travel Foundation will field such complaints/feedback to the tour operator in question for its attention and action. This information will also be used to keep the industry abreast of animal welfare issues pertaining to tourism. Animal welfare issues identified in this way will also be notified to the Born Free Foundation⁸ so that representations can be made in severe animal welfare cases, in an attempt to address the suffering of the animals in question without delay.

Tour operators and suppliers should promote this website to all customers taking wildlife tourism holidays.

In order to improve animal welfare and achieve greater sustainability, tour operators and suppliers will need to act on all customer feedback.

⁸ Born Free Foundation – an international animal welfare and wildlife conservation charity, based in the UK.

10. Responsible Tourists

Tour operators and suppliers may wish to adopt the following 'Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct', or an adapted version, to give to tourists who book wildlife tourism activities with them.

Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct for Wildlife Tourism

The guidelines below are for responsible tourists engaging in wildlife tourism activities. By following these guidelines you can help to:

- Ensure your own personal safety
 - Maximise the welfare and conservation of the wildlife you are visiting
 - Show respect to the local communities that live in wildlife areas
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- Do not feed wildlife as this can have severe consequences for an animal's social behaviour patterns and lead to increased aggression
- Do not touch wildlife as you can unwittingly pass on diseases to wildlife, as well as placing yourself at risk
- Do not encourage guides to move so close to wildlife that your presence disturbs it or interferes with its natural behaviour
- Do not encourage guides to pursue wildlife that is showing avoidance tactics e.g. displaying threatening/alarmed behaviour or is moving away
- Do not encourage guides to drive off-road in protected areas when this is prohibited in the protected area
- Speak quietly and do not make any sudden movements when close to wildlife so as not to alarm it
- When viewing primates (monkeys, gorillas, etc.) do not approach closer than 5 meters to help prevent the transmission of disease between humans and wildlife (and vice versa)
- Do not approach breeding sites (nests, burrows, dens, etc.) as this can affect the breeding success of wildlife
- Be aware that the use of flash photography to take photos of wildlife can sometimes alarm it leading to increased aggression
- Do not purchase souvenirs that are made out of wildlife products or other threatened natural materials e.g. coral, shells (marine or land), starfish, seahorses, wild animal skin (handbags, belts, drums, etc.), ivory, hard wood, bushmeat, parts of wild animals (bone, feathers, quills, teeth, etc. used in traditional medicines, good luck charms, etc.), tortoise shell, plant parts (seeds, roots, flower heads), etc.
- For marine wildlife, when contact with animals is permitted and controlled e.g. in swim with dolphin experiences, do not approach the animals but allow them instead to approach you if they so choose
- Do not drop litter or cigarette ends – this can cause fires and litter can harm wildlife - dispose of responsibly

- Ensure that the company you have booked with briefs you on how you can minimise your impact on the local environment you are visiting
 - If you are able, put something back into the conservation of the area/wildlife you have visited by making a personal contribution to support conservation in the area
 - Ensure that the company you have booked with briefs you on the cultural sensitivities in the area you are visiting and how you can minimise any negative impacts of your behaviour on the local community (e.g. most appropriate dress code when in local villages, etc.)
 - Visit community-based tourism initiatives in the area you are visiting. Ask the company you have booked with to arrange this for you or find out from them what exists in the area
 - Take up opportunities to exchange culture with the local community in authentic settings and with willing participants
 - If you are able, make a personal contribution to a local community development project in the area you have visited (e.g. local school, clinic, farming project, etc.). Ask the company you have booked with how you can do this
 - Report all incidents of poor animal welfare/conservation and negative impacts/exploitation of local communities to your both tour operator, wildlife tourism supplier and the Travel Foundation in the UK (www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk)
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11. Responsible Tour Operators

Responsible tour operators should only use wildlife tourism suppliers that are committed to achieving good practice. It is recommended they should:

- Follow those elements of the Good Practice Guidelines that are relevant to their own business, hence demonstrating their commitment to sustainable practices
- Encourage their suppliers to achieve good practice by following the guidelines and using the checklist as a tool to raise standards
- Use suppliers that have conducted a 'Good Practice Checklist' and have demonstrated they are achieving good practice
- Participate with suppliers in conducting 'Good Practice Checklists'
- Maintain an up-to-date list of suppliers indicating those who have carried out a 'Good Practice Checklist', noting the issues that need to be addressed and the timescales for improvements to be made
- Put on hold pending improvements being made, and ultimately de-list if improvements are not made, those suppliers that show poor performance in animal welfare/conservation and local community standards as evidenced by the 'Good Practice Checklist'
- Provide customers with information on animal welfare/conservation and local community issues and employ effective customer feedback mechanisms
- Provide customers with a 'Responsible Tourist Code of Conduct for Wildlife Tourism' prior to departure
- Promote the Travel Foundation website to customers (re customer feedback and information on animal welfare/conservation and local community issues)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of Consultees

Below is a list of organisations, NGOs, individuals, institutions and authorities that were invited to participate as consultees in the development of one or both of the Good Practice Guidelines and Checklists for Animal Interactions - Captive Animal Attractions and Wildlife Tourism. Due to confidentiality reasons, those that provided feedback cannot be individually identified.

■ Members of the TFIU

■ Animal Welfare Organisations

- Born Free Foundation
- WSPA
- Captive Wild Animals Protection Coalition (CWAPC - US)
- International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH)
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- League Against Cruel Sports
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDACS)

■ Legal Bodies/Organisations

- CITES Secretariat
- CIEL (Centre for International Environmental Law)

■ Governmental Organisations

- DEFRA Zoo Forum (UK)
- DEFRA Animal Health & Welfare Strategy Team
- DFID
- Kenya Wildlife Service
- Kenya Tourist Board
- Zambia Wildlife Authority

■ Conservation and/or Development NGOs

- Care for the Wild
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDACS)
- Marine Conservation Society
- RSPB
- Birdlife International
- Species Survival Network
- Friends of Conservation
- WWF
- Born Free Foundation
- British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR)
- Colobus Trust
- Wildlife Protection Society of India
- Tourism Concern UK

- Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- ACT (Action for Conservation through Tourism)
- Centre for Environmentally Responsible Tourism (CERT)
- Gambia Tourism Concern
- NACOBTA (Namibian Community Based Tourism Association)
- UCOTA (Uganda Community Tourism Association)
- Tambopata Reserve Society, Peru
- The Institute of Social & Ethical Accountability
- Ethical Trading Initiative
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- Project African Wilderness
- Survival International

■ **Academic Institutions**

- DICE, University of Kent at Canterbury
- Oxford University
- University Federation for Animal Welfare
- Indian Institute of Wildlife
- WildCru (Oxford University)
- British Veterinary Association

■ **Animal Attractions & Wildlife Tourism Providers/Organisations**

- Federation of Zoological Collections of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (BIAZA)
- EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria)
- Zippos Circus
- National Bird of Prey Centre
- Robin Pope Safaris, Zambia
- Norman Carr Safaris, Zambia
- Luangwa Safari Operators Association, Zambia
- Malawi Tourism Association
- Safari Club International
- Holland & Holland
- American Sport Fishing Association
- BTCV
- Earthwatch
- Wildlife Worldwide
- Sunvil Africa
- Discovery Initiatives

■ **Other Interested Parties**

- Paul Sponge (expert on wild cetacea)
- John Gripper (vet & former Zoo Inspector)
- Greg Rasmussen (wildlife consultant, Zimbabwe)
- Johan Joubert (vet – Shamwari Game Reserve, South Africa)
- PADI International
- Health and Safety Executive
- CIEH (Chartered Institute for Environmental Health)