

CODES OF CONDUCT - SUMMARY

EXO Travel does not want to contribute to the extinction of the wonderful ecosystems / animals, whether implicitly or explicitly, we are also not willing to work with sites & activities where animals are not being treated appropriately. As such, we have developed these codes of conduct with the input and support of environmental NGOs such as TRAFFIC, WCS, WWF, Elephant Asia, and other specialists to inform our travellers and our partners about the issues at stake.

The first section details the issues regarding animal conservation and welfare, we then cover each type of animal or ecosystem (Elephants, Tigers, Primates, Marine mammals and Marine environments, Turtles), what precautions to take and how to react in the event of witnessing unacceptable behaviours.

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EXO TRAVEL'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS WILDLIFE

The Global Standards for Animals in Tourism. These standards involve the five freedoms and provide guidance to ensure that animals in tourism are treated with respect. EXO Travel has committed to gradually assess all of its suppliers and to work only with tour suppliers & excursion providers ensuring these five freedoms.

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress

Aside from these basic principles, EXO Travel have developed codes of conduct and guidelines for diverse types of wildlife excursions & animal attractions, for both tourists and tour suppliers / excursion providers. These guidelines address the general rules for animals in captivity, as well as recommendations for viewing animals in the wild: elephants, tigers, marine animals, and marine turtles. These guidelines concern both captive and wild animals. Here, we address both conservation issues and animal welfare concerns that are inextricably linked.

MAJOR CONSERVATION ISSUES

Conservation issues concern endangered species or those on the fringe of extinction, meaning these codes of conduct are essential for the preservation of some certain animal species.

Animal attractions & wildlife excursions should be operating legally and in accordance with local & national legal requirements. A tour supplier, animal attraction or excursion operating with wildlife should have a valid license to operate (issued by the local authority). Animal attractions & wildlife excursions must comply with CITES requirements (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

CITES is legally binding and protects wild animals from over exploitation through international trade. There are three levels of protection afforded to endangered animals depending on the circumstance of the species, although the following always applies:

- Trade of elephants (live or dead) and elephant parts (i.e. meat & ivory) is illegal
- Trade of Tigers (live or dead) and tiger parts (i.e. meat & bones) is illegal
- Trade of Primates (live or dead) and primate parts (i.e. meat & bones) is illegal
- Trade of Marine animals (live or dead) and marine animal parts (i.e. meat & shells) is illegal
- Unless there is a conservation breeding program in place, CITES requirements also state that Elephants, Tigers Primates & Marine mammals, should not be acquired from the wild for a role in an attraction or any other reason.

MAJOR WELFARE ISSUES

For animals in captivity

Safeguarding the welfare of animals/wildlife when in captivity is a foremost priority for EXO Travel.

In captivity animals often rely on humans to provide suitable physical, social, biological and other conditions. This is not a simple task as captive animals are often held in environments not familiar to them; different climate, surroundings, society, vegetation, etc. All this is already a source of great stress for any creature. Then normal behaviour such as hunting, foraging, territorial defence and social dominance are difficult to perpetuate in captivity leading to unusual aggressiveness. Even though these are true challenges, EXO Travel reserves the expectation that animal attraction providers first and foremost ensure that no cruelty to the animals' takes place and that the welfare of the animals is their top priority. This means that:

- ✦ Animal attraction providers have a legal license for the type of attraction or activity they offer
- ✦ Animals are not held under cruel circumstances
- ✦ Animals are not 'humanized'
- ✦ Animals are not trained unnatural tricks
- ✦ Animals are not forced to join activities
- ✦ Animals are held in enclosures big enough for this type of animal that are internationally agreed
- ✦ Animals are fed healthily, enough and on regular basis
- ✦ Animals have a constant access to sufficient and clean drinking water
- ✦ Animals are regularly checked by specialised veterinarians

For animals in the wild

- ✦ Animals in the wild should remain wild, meaning that tour suppliers & providers of wildlife excursions make sure that wildlife
 - is not lured and habituated with food,
 - is not chased after,
 - is not touched,
 - is not hunted and is not scared with loud noises or bright lights.

- ✦ National Park guidelines & rules (as provided by the Parks) are respected by all visitors and excursion providers
- ✦ The Health & Safety of employees/tourist and animals/wildlife are amongst the main priorities of the tour suppliers & excursion providers. Animals/wildlife nor human-beings are put into dangerous situations:
 - Guides, mahouts & National Park rangers/guides are trained to guarantee their own as well as the clients' safety
 - Tourists are always informed about possible risks of participating in the activity and how to avoid putting themselves in dangerous situations
 - Local guides, mahouts and National Park guards are paid appropriate living wages and housed in decent conditions when living in the work place and, are not working excessive long hours resulting in exhaustion that may lead to dangerous situations.

All our animal attractions & wildlife tour suppliers and excursions suppliers are asked to commit to basic requirements, and EXO Travel holds the right to cancel the contract if there is clear evidence they are not respected. If you encounter some improper activity or behaviours please report to contact@exofoundation.org.

GENERIC CODE OF CONDUCTS FOR WILDLIFE VIEWING

ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY

Whilst EXO Travel believe that animals are better off in the wild than in a captive environment, we also believe that if care is taken regarding the animal's welfare, animal attractions can provide an important learning experience. However, many wild animals are taken from their natural environments to be exploited for entertainment and profit. There are occasions where animals that belong in the wild are being used in live shows or being offered for transport, rides, or being displayed in cages. EXO Travel believes that tour suppliers or animal attraction suppliers are responsible for the animals they use to attract visitors/tourists. EXO Travel requires that animal attraction providers must adhere to the five freedoms mentioned previously, along with respecting their welfare as described above.

- ✦ The general advice is that visitors should avoid visiting any wild animal attraction (where they are captive) if its sole purpose is tourism and not conservation. Tourism activities should be developed to provide revenue for conservation efforts or to care for and nurture endangered species. Some attractions may claim they are contributing to conservation efforts but in reality are not, so always be aware.
- ✦ Choose attractions carefully, do some research about the health of the animals and the reputation of the attraction and/or ask your travel agent to look for responsible options. In Asia, some attractions need more attention. These involve wildlife attractions with animals near extinction, such as the Tiger temples and Elephant camps.
- ✦ Do not work with the attraction if it breaches any of the five freedoms or if your own safety cannot be assured. If you leave, you may lose what money you have paid for your entry, but you will maintain your dignity and pride!
- ✦ Report any inappropriate animal activities to your guide and also contact@exofoundation.org (if you can provide some evidence such as pictures this is even better); bear dancing, abused primates, or shops/restaurants trying to sell you threatened live or dead animals.

EXO recommends that providers of wildlife activities involving elephants, tigers and cetaceans gradually adjust their activities and interactions with tourists to focus on delivering more natural experiences (i.e. bigger enclosures & less human interaction). Western customers are growing increasingly aware of their negative impacts on the animals and are more frequently considering other options, so it is important to start seriously looking at these issues and develop more wildlife-friendly activities.

WILDLIFE IN THE WILD

It is believed that tourists are often attracted to destinations because of wildlife. Wildlife encounters are often the 'memorable' highlight of one's travel experience. Although tourist visits to National Parks (Terrestrial & Marine) often support conservational efforts, they can also be quite damaging for the wildlife living in these fragile ecosystems if not properly conducted. In many developing countries, wildlife-related activities form an important source of income and as such should be protected. The good news is that by taking part in responsible travel, holidays may be memorable whilst at the same time encourage and support wildlife conservation by avoiding unnecessary damage to the precious regional biodiversity.

If planning a visit to Asia's National Parks (terrestrial or marine) and would like future generations to enjoy the same unique beauty of Asia's wildlife and nature, then please read the following information on what you can do to support the conservation of these destinations. These guidelines include a list of simple rules to help minimize the negative and sometimes irreversible impacts and maximise the positive contribution of your visit for wildlife & biodiversity conservation.

We all admire the natural beauty of wildlife - Enjoy the extraordinary experience and pride yourself for being an actor of biodiversity conservation and part of the solution, rather than enabling the problem.

Look with your eyes wide-open, bring back extraordinary memories, but leave behind everything the way it was before you came.

Wildlife sensitive excursions or activities involve activities along coasts, rivers, inside the water, and in highly vulnerable ecosystems such as rainforests, waterfalls and mountain areas.

❖ In any natural areas

- ✦ Respect National Parks rules and guidelines where available; these rules and guidelines are meant to protect you as well as the surrounding nature
- ✦ **Always dispose of waste in appropriate bins** (even when in urban areas). All waste should be kept until thrown into appropriate bins; some animals do not understand the difference between food and litter, and when animals eat litter, i.e. plastic, this may cause a slow and painful death
- ✦ Refrain from smoking, breathe fresh air, but if it really can't be helped, keep the cigarette butts with you to dispose of them when back at your hotel or outside protected areas.
- ✦ Under no circumstances should any wild animal, fish, etc. be fed (It is likely to disturb their natural diet and health, as well as distort their natural social behaviour). Gently express your disagreement to the guide if they encourage tourists to feed wildlife; this is not an acceptable behaviour.
- ✦ Do not touch wild animals
 - It is dangerous! Animals may bite you! Small animals may die because of your touch, however soft
 - Wildlife should be kept wild! Touching wild animals habituate them to human-beings, and paradoxically often result in aggressive behaviour and once habituated to humans, they become an easy targets for hunters
- ✦ Do not touch plants, trees & corals (on land as well as underwater)
 - Some plants are highly toxic, it is a system of defence that can be very efficient, and so unless you are a botanist and know what is what, don't touch any plant in a rainforest or underwater.
 - Unregulated tree/plant/flower collection from the wild is not acceptable because wildlife feeds itself with the products of nature and some are dependent on certain kind of trees/plants/flowers; if these trees/plants/flowers get damaged and die, the animals depending on them will die too.
 - Corals are highly sensitive animals (not plants) and are easily damaged. Once a coral reef is damaged it takes many years to recover, if ever.
- ✦ Do not scare wildlife
 - Do not make loud noises among wildlife; you will definitely scare it away – females may leave their new-borns behind
 - Keep your distance at all times! Do not run or swim after them
- ✦ Do not hunt wildlife or support hunting activities, hunting has been one of the foremost reason for diverse species around the world to become extinct. Furthermore, do not eat, trade or buy protected wildlife.
- ✦ Report any incidents to contact@exofoundation.org in the event of witnessing any guides purposely damage nature; tree cutting, collecting plants, littering, wildlife touching or hunting.

❖ In marine and rivers areas (beach, mangrove, etc.)

- ✦ Avoid motorized activities (i.e. quad-riding, 4WR tours, jet skis etc.)
- ✦ Avoid wildlife-unfriendly behaviour in the water (such as motorized boats disturbing behaviour of birds, dolphins, whales and turtles)
- ✦ Do not veer off from appointed diving areas and strictly respect your diving-instructor's recommendations

❖ In rainforests and mountain areas

- ✦ Avoid wandering off recommended trekking routes
 - You may damage the grounds, step on nests, eggs, or mess up scents spread by wildlife, or even encounter toxic plants species and animals
 - You may get lost, signage is quite rare even in National Parks, night falls promptly, and it can also be dangerous
- ✦ Avoid wildlife-unfriendly excursions and activities (quad-biking, motocross, setting up fires, etc.).

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELEPHANT VIEWING

Did you know?

Wild Asian elephants may still be found in isolated pockets scattered across grasslands and tropical forests in thirteen Asian countries, but they are under serious threat from illegal hunting, loss of habitat and conflicts between elephants and farming communities. Asian elephants are herbivores that survive on a diet of leaves, stems, fruit, grasses, and the bark of many trees and other plants. A female elephant may weigh 'only' 2 tons, but a big male can weigh up to 5 tons! They need to drink lots of water (up to 200L/day) so water scarcity is also a serious issue for elephant survival and they spend most of their day grazing due to their need for plenty of food.

Although tourist visits to a National Park for wild elephant viewing can be good for conservational purposes, the pressure of tourism can also be quite damaging for the welfare of elephants living in these parks.

Elephant encounters are a very exciting activity, the Asian elephant is a magical and charming creature that touches the heart, but do remember that elephants are wild animals, and thus can be unpredictable and dangerous. The best way to enjoy the beauty and appreciate the grandeur of this animal is to visit them in the wild, where elephants belong. Not only will you see them in their natural environment, doing natural 'things', but you will also contribute to the existence of the threatened Asian elephants by visiting them in the wild. We understand you may be unlucky and return disappointed because you could not spot one, indeed this is not a show staged to satisfy our needs but real wildlife, and imagine the rewarding experience it is when you do spot them! Income produced by tourists' visits to National Parks should be used for conservational purposes, and as such benefit the survival of the Asian elephant (and other wildlife).

How to act when viewing elephants in the wild?

Usually this is possible in some National Parks, but note that your visit is not without risks.

- ✦ Keep distance at all times!
- ✦ Do not support wild elephant encounter activities such as feeding and touching
- ✦ It is dangerous: Wild elephants may look friendly and calm, but they weight 2 – 5 tons and can easily injure you; And if the elephant comes close to your car or else don't scream, don't over-react, keep control, move away if you can or just keep quiet and wait.
- ✦ Do not veer off the recommended paths/roads—elephants habitat need to be protected and elephant paths are quite sensitive and we should avoid damaging them with cars.
- ✦ Do not make loud noises that can scare the wild elephants
- ✦ Do not disturb the wild elephants from their daily routines
- ✦ Do not chase wild elephants, nor support the chasing of the mother for baby elephant encounters/photo moments
- ✦ Do not eat elephant meat
- ✦ Do not buy ivory or any items made of elephant parts

Visiting Elephant Camps

Did you know?

As seeing an elephant in the wild is not always guaranteed, some were captured and turned into tourists attractions resulting in the poaching of wild elephants, separating calves from their mothers' - and further exploitation of these gentle animals who endure a horrible taming process designed to break their 'natural behaviour', or as it is called 'crush' their spirit and condition them into gentle pets. For more information on the way elephants are tamed and why it is not acceptable to ride elephants please read more [here](#).

Before booking a trip to an elephant camp - keep in mind that at some elephant camps the elephants' welfare is not the number one priority, and as such elephant riding becomes a seriously damaging practice. An example of bad practice - the success of elephant camps has been fuelling the traffic and poaching of wild elephants, where the mother is killed in order to capture the baby or reversely the baby is killed to capture the mother. Often a long and sad struggle where the mother fiercely tries to protect her baby precedes this. After this trauma has taken place the next one will follow - the young elephants are trained in cruel ways, leaving the elephant with nothing to do but obey its trainer. Once trained, captured elephants are often forced to work long hours, staying chained in enclosures far too small when not working, and are generally not well fed.

We highly recommend to conduct some research before visiting an elephant camp. One can also choose more elephant-friendly encounters, such as elephant sightseeing in the wild.

How to know an elephant camp is respecting elephant welfare?

The elephant camps that we include in our tours have been screened and approved, although it may occur that certain practices are not always followed, or that you go by yourself to another camp that may not have been approved. In this case please read the following advice to ensure elephant camps treat their animals with respect. In a good camp, tourism activity with elephants should support the purpose of conservation and protection, not serve as the main purpose. An elephant camp should never be created for the sole purpose of tourism, but always as a rescue camp or conservation camp, protecting the elephants from the hard working conditions of logging, formerly tortured elephants, or calves whose mother was killed or taken away, etc.

Elephant riding

Asian elephant-related activities have become an important source of income for local communities, in Thailand alone there are hundreds of elephant camps offering elephant rides, but elephant rides are not a natural activity for elephants to do. Elephants can pull heavy loads with their shoulders, though their backbone is quite fragile and they can actually suffer greatly from carrying too many people. For this reason, some Tour Operators have decided to completely ban elephant rides. At EXO Travel we do not consider this the best approach, or fair towards the mahouts and local communities making their living from elephant activities to suddenly stop working with them, as then not only will the owners will be deprived of their main revenue, but they will also not be able to afford to feed or take proper care of their elephants.

Instead EXO Travel has started the process of assessing all of the elephant camps with which we work and retain only those who respect the guidelines ensuring the best welfare of these incredible creatures. We are also planning with specialised NGOs to encourage owners, mahouts and camp managers to develop other types of activities (bathing, learn how to be a mahout, walking with elephants, etc.) which will allow a close encounter without affecting the elephants welfare. EXO Travel advises elephant camp activity suppliers to carefully consider and comply with the activities as described in the [Elephant Care Manual](#) provided by the Lampang Thailand Elephant Conservation Centre.

Did you know?

- Elephants usually eat 14-16 hours a day and have a constant need for water up to 200L/day! So being used as a tourists' ride for long hours prevent them from feeding themselves properly.
- An elephant should not ride tourists more than four hours a day and have a significant break every hour.
- Elephants are sensitive to sunlight and heat, and should not be exposed to direct sunlight. Rides in the middle of the day, from 12.00 to 2.30pm are exhausting for them.
- An elephant's maximum carrying capacity on his backbone is limited to 150 kilos so an elephant should only carry maximum two normal weighted adults and one mahout

EXO Travel believes that elephants are much better off in the wild than in a tourist camp, but if elephant riding has been your life dream and you still want to do it, choose the attraction carefully, research the elephants' health, and consider the working hours at particular elephant parks and/or ask your travel agent to look for responsible options.

The booklet [here](#) created by Elephant Asia in Laos and will help you being aware of what is right or wrong.

- ✦ **Quit the ride and express your disapproval to the camp managers if:**
 - Elephants ears are jerked off
 - Elephants are being forced to carry out certain activities and show signs of stress
 - Elephants should not walk long on hard substrates - concrete or tarmac roads.
 - Elephants are being treated with an ankus (elephant hook) and show (open) wounds on their bodies, no puncture wounds should be inflicted, ever.
 - Elephants are being beaten
 - Elephants are being chained in between activities
- ✦ OR when you are not properly informed about the risks of riding an elephant and related safety guidelines.
- ✦ Never take part in elephant riding when the elephants look overworked, injured, disabled, pregnant or sick. Sick elephants should not be working but resting and eating! The elephants should look fit and healthy.
- ✦ Never agree to ride an elephant with more than one person; refuse riding a howdah (seating arrangement for multiple people). A howdah is often loaded wrongly and loaded far too heavy (up to 6 people). A howdah can damage the elephant's back permanently. Instead ride on a padded mat or bareback – as such you can make sure the number of people on an elephant's back is limited to one or two.
- ✦ Any working elephant should not be working more than 4 hours per day (Each ride should last a maximum of 2 hours)

If you quit you may lose what you have paid for your trip, but you will maintain your dignity and pride! Doing your research on elephant camps before visiting is a must.

- ✦ Make sure the elephant caretaker provides unlimited access to a variety of food with a high proportion of natural browse material and water. Ask the caretaker to provide water, if it seems not to be immediately available for the elephants.
- ✦ Elephants should have access to shade when not working and when waiting during work, should be shaded.
- ✦ Be careful to follow the elephant's caretaker instructions. No-one knows the elephant better than the mahout, by following the mahout's instructions you won't put yourself into dangerous situations.

Mahout training

If you decide to book a mahout training session, carefully choose the place, do some research about the elephants' working conditions, health and hours of working and/or ask your travel agent to look for responsible options.

- ✦ Please quit the activity if any of the wrongdoing listed above is taking place.
- ✦ Please bear in mind, that it is often portrayed by the providers that your special caretaking will benefit the elephant's welfare. This is not always the case - some activities may seem relatively harmless but could be a cause for concern.
- ✦ Carefully follow the mahout's instructions when you decide to book mahout training.
- ✦ Make sure activities carried out are necessary and beneficial for the elephant by informing yourself before visiting.
- ✦ You should ask the elephant caretaker for clear instructions and you should not tolerate a lack of supervision. Never carry out any activities when you are left alone (or with other tourists) with the elephant. You will put yourself in a very dangerous situation!

While carefully following the above listed guidelines, **never forget to enjoy the beauty and wonder of elephants.**

If you witness any serious wrong behaviour putting at threat the welfare of elephants, tourists or mahouts, please report to contact@exofoundation.org.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TIGER VIEWING

Did you know?

There are only 3,200 tigers remaining in the wild; it is a critically endangered species. EXO Travel believes that tiger encounters are among the most memorable travel experiences one can wish for, although we believe these encounters can be much more responsible (and safer) than they are at the moment. For this reason we ask you to join our movement to safeguard the continuous existence of the tiger.

Viewing Tigers in the wild

Viewing tigers in the wild is exceptional, tigers are solitary and very shy animals and they know by ancestral experience that encounters with men is most of the time fatal for them, so they discreetly avoid being seen at all times; don't expect to be able to view tigers easily, if you do so it is likely that the tigers have been habituated by being fed and this is not acceptable as habituating such wild animals is just the best way to make them more approachable and vulnerable to poachers.

EXO Travel does encourage you to visit National Parks instead of tiger temples and tiger attractions. There is a high likelihood of not seeing a tiger in this natural environment but there are so many other fascinating things to experience and contemplate in a protected area, and if you happen to see one swiftly running away, this is an exceptional and precious experience.

Viewing Tigers in captivity

The rare chance to view tigers in the wild and the fact that many would like to see a tiger before it is 'too late' has unfortunately led to the creation of numerous attractions in Southeast Asia where tigers are held in captivity, filling the demand of tourists wanting close encounters with the majestic feline.

However, Tiger attractions in Asia are often harmful for the tiger's health and for the survival of the tiger population (as going to see them encourage attraction owners to acquire more from the wild, as they rarely reproduce in captivity). Moreover these tiger 'farms' are often drugging the tigers so they remain docile, and accept being photographed, or touched, far easier. A few are sometimes even involved in illegal trafficking to sell their parts, skins, husk, etc. for medicinal purposes. The infamous Tiger Temple in Thailand is to be absolutely blacklisted for example. If you are not convinced yet, please read the following two articles; [Article 1](#) - [Article 2](#).

Consequently, EXO Travel is extremely cautious and does not encourage any visits to tiger specific zoos or farms, unless they are directly managed by specialised conservationists. If you decide to book a tiger attraction, EXO Travel recommends you to visit places where tigers are allowed to behave as naturally as possible, i.e. zoos.

If you are visiting an attraction featuring tigers, please follow the instructions as described in our previous section 'Animals in Captivity' and note the following advice.

- ✦ Carefully consider the zoo you plan to visit, do some research on the attraction and make sure that the tigers are entitled to regular feeding, have access to clean water and have a clean environment that allows them to move and exercise freely.
- ✦ Direct touching of tigers is a very dangerous action and several incidents occur regularly.
- ✦ Animal performing shows where tigers are forced to do unnatural tricks is not acceptable
- ✦ Tigers should also live in facilities that protect them from direct contact with humans, allowing the tigers' privacy and refuge as well as constant opportunities to express natural behaviour.

While carefully following the above listed guidelines, **never forget to enjoy the beauty and mystery of tigers.**

If you witness any serious wrong behaviour putting at threat the welfare of tigers, tourists or rangers, please report to contact@exofoundation.org

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PRIMATE VIEWING

Did you know?

Apes and monkeys are both primates, but there are lots of differences between them. The easiest way to distinguish monkeys from the other anthropoids is to look for a tail. Most monkey species have tails, but no apes or hominids do. Monkeys are much more like other mammals than apes and humans are. For example, most monkeys cannot swing from branch to branch as apes can, because their shoulder bones have a different structure. Instead, monkeys run along the tops of branches.

Primates are our closest animal relatives, we share similar genetics and display comparable behaviours. It is this close relation to primates that is fascinating to many tourists. Seeing a primate on holiday always enhances the experience, and illuminates our humanity and our status as a species among others;

Although, tourists viewing primates in National Parks can be good for conservational purposes, the interaction between tourists and primates can also be quite damaging and dangerous, for both parties. Where some parks maintain a mission of conservation and protection of the various species, practices within the boundaries of the park are not always right in some countries where animal welfare is not a matter of great concern. Moreover the growing amount of tourists viewing primates in or outside national parks is not without risks; there are two main negative impacts:

- **The risk of disease transmission**

The small differences in the genetics between primates and human-beings are reason for concern regarding the possibility of certain diseases transmitting between primates and humans, or vice-versa. In particular primates are extremely vulnerable and can be seriously affected by human diseases such as flu. In some gorilla conservation areas, visitors' health is checked before permitting entry. Those suffering from an illness should not visit a primate centre or conservation area. The risks only increase when humans spend more and more time close to primates.

Diseases which are currently only found in primates may also have the potential to infect humans in the future as well. For this reason primates and humans should not touch each other and preferably keep a well-defined distance.

- **Increased and repetitive stress level provokes behavioural changes**

Primates that have increased levels of interaction with humans tend to show an increased opposition towards other primates as well as human beings. This means there is a reduction in social behaviour and an apparent decrease in accepting new group members.

Another problem is the feeding of primates by tourists; this will result in an overall decrease of foraging times and movement but will increase the overall food intake and sometimes cause diseases, as the natural diet falls out of balance by an oversupply of sweet food, for example, such as bananas. The feeding of primates can increase the level of competition between primates and can lead to aggression and physical injury. Having too short a distance between human-beings and primates can also increase stress levels, with the result of heightened aggressive behaviour. Personal safety is another good reason for limiting the interaction between primates and humans.

**For all these reasons you should keep a reasonable distance at all times.
Finally BE AWARE! Trade of Primates (live or dead) and primate parts (i.e. meat & bones) is illegal.**

How to act when viewing primates in the wild or in captivity?

Primate viewing is an enjoyable experience, but as explained it is not without risks. EXO Travel advises on 5 main activities to be avoided when among primates:

- ✦ Do not approach nor touch, even babies
 - Keep your distance at all times. A cough or a sneeze from you or the primate is enough for transmission of zoonosis/disease. Besides, primates may react aggressively if approached. EXO Travel likes wildlife to stay wild and does not support activities that may humanize primates.
- ✦ Do not feed (or leave behind any food)
 - Food also includes the risk of transmitting zoonosis/disease. Feeding primates disturbs normal primate behaviour; primates will have less social contact, will forage less and will show more aggressive behaviour. It is always better to respect animal's natural behavioural patterns.

Be aware that anything can look like food for primates, especially if they are familiar with feeding by human-beings – anything you hold in your hands or a hand grapping for something in your bag can be interpreted as food.

- Tourists should not walk around with any kind of visible food products in their hands that are easily stolen by primates (for their own and the primates safety); When stationed note that it is likely a primate notice your bag and if habituated to human contacts will steal it in search for food.
Always keep an eye on your belongings when stopping in an area where monkeys or primates are located.
- ✦ Do not chase away primates
 - Encourage primates to behave naturally, let them move around the way they want.
 - Do not scare them by unexpected movements, loud noises and bright lights (or flash photography) and do not follow them when the primates decide to move on. If they get too close to you, move away gently.
- ✦ Do not stare or smile at primates
 - For some species smiling or staring can be interpreted as a sign of aggression or dominance and, you may affect the primates' natural behaviour by doing this and provoke violent reactions.
- ✦ Do not view primates for a prolonged period of time or with groups of more than 10 persons
 - Remember: there is a time of coming and going – make it long enough to have a memorable experience, but short enough not to disturb any monkey business.

While sensitively following the above listed guidelines, **never forget to enjoy the funny pranks and human like mimics of primates.**

Would you witness any serious wrong behaviour putting at threat the welfare of primates, tourists or rangers, please report to contact@exofoundation.org

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MARINE ANIMAL VIEWING, DIVING AND SNORKELLING

Marine animals are popular among those who love the oceans, seas and beaches. Snorkelling or diving will allow you to admire some of the most beautiful scenes you’ve seen in your life – whales blowing water, dolphins jumping out of the water, swimming nearby a turtle, or a manta ray, a close-up encounter with a shark are unique experiences of a life time. But of course some rules to respect these animals as well as marine flora are to be scrupulously followed as oceans and seas while at the origin of our world and species is a fragile ecosystem which is under increasing threat. Listed below are the things you can do to prevent from getting into dangerous situations with marine animals, while improving the memorability of your travel.

Did you know?

Corals are animals that feed many other flora and fauna, damaging them can hinder the life of many sea species that depend on them.

Many marine animals are dangerous or poisonous, and coral cuts can easily get infected.

Similarly it is not recommended to dive if you have an open injury as corals disperse toxins that may worsen your wound.

How to act sensitively in a Marine environment?

- ✦ Expectations should be lowered to what is acceptable; marine animals may swim away, do not show interest or are asleep and in the worst case – marine animals cannot be found.
- ✦ Diving activities should only be operated with a valid license, issued by a recognized diving certification agency or local authority
- ✦ Avoid overcrowded sites, if there are too many tourists in one place it is surely impacting negatively on the ecosystem by simply being there in numbers!
- ✦ Never join a marine animal viewing excursion if the excursion provider did not provide you with safety instructions first. All tourists should be informed about safety issues and responsible behaviour among marine animals.
- ✦ Suppliers should not speed up when approaching marine animals, both to avoid noise-disturbance and the risk to hurt any animal.
- ✦ Do not touch nor approach – let them approach you, don’t force it! Chasing whales or dolphin with a boat is not appropriate
- ✦ Let the Marine animal control the duration of the encounter, when it moves away it moves away.
- ✦ Marine animals can approach the boat or human-beings in the water, but it should never be the other way around.
- ✦ Place engines in neutral, or above sea level, when marine animal approaches the boat very close.
- ✦ Approach marine animals from the side, never from the front or the back.
- ✦ There is a time of coming and going, leave after 30 minutes. Then there is time for other tourists to have their encounter as well.
- ✦ Never force bow-riding – dolphins should choose to surf the bow at front of the boat
- ✦ Diving trip providers should ask you not to touch anything with your hands, feet or fins, including the corals and even rocks, if they don’t they are not serious and you should tell them.
- ✦ Never dive alone.
- ✦ And as a reminder never feed (or leave behind any food) and do not litter.
- ✦ Spread around these best practices

While sensitively following the above listed guidelines, **never forget to enjoy the magic of underwater experiences.**

Would you witness any serious wrong behaviour putting at threat Marine life or tourists, please report to contact@exofoundation.org.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MARINE TURTLE VIEWING

Marine turtles live in the water but breed nearby the shore and lay eggs on the beach. Marine turtles are extraordinarily vulnerable, and so require detailed careful instructions.

Did you know?

- Many turtle species are under threat of extinction due to the scarcity of beaches quiet enough where they can lay their eggs and where these can develop through time until ready to hatch.
- Each turtle species eggs have a different incubation time (± 2 months) –
- It is estimated that under natural circumstances only 1 hatchling out of 1000 hatchlings will become an adult.

If you are planning to visit one or several of Asia's turtle nesting beaches and want to act responsibly, you first need to be aware of what season you are visiting a turtle-nesting beach (ask at the hotel or consult the internet) and according to that period act as follows:

ALL SEASONS

- ✦ Never buy souvenirs made of turtle shell being sold at tourists shops or turtle meat in restaurants, your demand or purchase would directly be encouraging what is illegal trade; politely explain the seller this is not acceptable. Note: It is illegal to import sea turtle souvenirs into most Western countries and you are facing serious penalties.
- ✦ Never Litter (both on the beaches & in the water)
 - Sea turtles love to eat jellyfish and mistake plastic bags for a jellyfish
 - Sea turtles die a slow and painful death when eating litter
 - Instead clean up when leaving the beach and encourage other tourists to do so explaining why, but just seeing you cleaning up will ring a bell
- ✦ Do not speed up in speedboats and jet skis and ask tourists speeding to slow down and keep far distance of mating couples
- ✦ Do not touch and do not disturb turtles when diving or snorkeling among them. Note that sea turtles have a very, very nasty bite.
- ✦ Spread around these best practices

MATING SEASON

Usually sea turtles are loners, so you may recognize its mating season when groups of turtles swim close to the shore

- ✦ All rules above to be followed scrupulously, spread the word among tourists who don't seem to be aware.

BREEDING SEASON

Female turtles enter the beaches after nightfall and lay eggs in the dark along the back of the beach. As such they are extremely sensitive to light and noise, too much activity around will chase them away and may compromise the entire breed.

- ✦ Visit sea shores after nightfall only with guides of responsible organizations, check if they are aware of guidelines as described in this brochure
- ✦ Do not walk on nesting beaches after nightfall - if you know you are nearby one, ask the locals and / or your hotel
- ✦ Do not scare turtles back into the sea by making loud noises or shining lights, as when repeatedly disturbed female turtles will lay their eggs in the water where it is too cold for the incubation of the eggs
- ✦ Avoid bars on nesting beaches as they are not supposed to be there in the first place as lighting and noise are

NOT turtle-friendly.

Encourage nearby beach hotel owners to switch off their lights in gardens and on balconies. If your room is right on the nesting beach switch off as much as possible

EGG SEASON

- ✦ Do not 'open up' nests; Nests are covered with sand for a reason, eggs easily heat up too much or too fast
- ✦ Do not drive nor ride horses on the beach; it will definitely squash a lot of eggs
- ✦ Eggs are laid in a nest along the back of the beach
 - Avoid disturbing this area during egg season, walk along the sea shore instead.
 - Similarly beach furniture can be set up a few meters away from the water's edge,
- ✦ Do ask tourists not aware of possible hidden nests to be careful and walk close to the sea shore

HATCHLINGS SEASON

After ± 2 months, eggs will hatch and little turtles will wait for nightfall for their run to the sea – note that this is the most hazardous time of a turtle's life.

- ✦ Do not disturb hatchlings on their way to the sea
- ✦ Do not shine any kind of light - bright and soft lights should be avoided.
- ✦ Do not make noise
- ✦ Do not walk over the beach
 - Do not leave beach furniture on the beach after nightfall; Beach furniture is a great obstacle for a little turtle
- ✦ Break your sand castles before leaving the beach; they are huge mountains for a little turtle
 - Do not dig holes on the beach or remember to fill holes up before nightfall - big and steep holes are a trap for little turtles.
 - Do not leave lights on after nightfall; Bright light may confuse turtles and make them run inland towards the lights instead of running to the sea.
- ✦ Do not visit hotels or bars that refuse to switch their lights off
- ✦ As tempting as it seems, avoid the beach when it is known that hatchlings may run for the sea that night or do it only under the strict guidance of turtle specialist

While sensitively following the above listed guidelines, **never forget to enjoy the wonder of life creation.**

If you witness any serious wrong behaviour putting at threat turtles, please report to contact@exofoundation.org.