

Animal Welfare Policy

Objective

As the UK's no.1 specialist in sustainable and responsible travel to Latin America we have always believed in the importance on minimising the impact of our activities in the destinations in which we operate, and we actively work to protect the people, places and the natural environment.

This animal welfare policy is designed to be a practical approach to ensuring that any services we offer that include an element of animal interaction follow best practice guidelines. Where these are not met, we seek to work with our partners locally to improve standards through communication and raise awareness of animal welfare concerns, or avoid engaging in that activity.

Overview

We recognise that animal encounters are a memorable part of many holidays and, when managed appropriately, these can enhance the overall experience.

Our objective is to ensure that all animals – whether wild, captive or working – that are involved in or impacted by our activities, have a good state of welfare. Animals should be healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express natural behaviour and be protected from unpleasant feelings such as pain, fear and distress.

We want our customers to have exceptional holiday experiences, but not at the cost of an animal's welfare, so aim to help ensure animals are protected from the exploitation, neglect and cruelty that may result from bad management practices, or poor living conditions. We strive to fulfil this by having clear policies to ensure the following:

- We advocate responsible tourism practices with animals and improved animal welfare standards
- We do not knowingly include or promote holiday activities that put people or animals at risk
- We seek to protect animals and plants that may be threatened by trade

We encourage our staff, clients and partners to monitor animal welfare standards throughout our operations, and report concerns back to us, so they can be acted upon.

While not everything we offer will always be perfect, our animal welfare policy is in place to help focus on areas where animals form part of the overall holiday experience, so we are conscious of the risks and are able raise awareness and encourage a best-practice approach throughout in Latin America.

Our Pledge

As an animal-friendly company, we pledge:

1. **Sharing responsible, animal-friendly customer experiences**

We will promote responsible tourism amongst our customers to enable them to be wildlife-friendly travellers and advocates.

We will provide our customers with responsible wildlife experiences where animals in the wild, at genuine sanctuaries or wildlife-friendly settings have the freedom and ability to exhibit a wide range of natural behaviours and visitors can observe them from a safe and respectful distance. Working and domestic animals will be well looked after in terms of both their physical and mental health.

We will not use images that promote activities that may be harmful to animals on our website, newsletters or printed materials.

2. **Following a focussed and effective animal welfare policy**

We have designed, and will follow, a dedicated animal welfare policy for our business, which we will share with customers, overseas partners and staff. This incorporates:

- Ongoing reviews to identify and act upon animal welfare concerns within our portfolio.
- A time-bound plan to help protect animals by influencing changes, where needed, with local partners to improve the welfare of animals on all our holidays.

3. **Encouraging local leadership:**

Journey Latin America encourages local leadership in tackling animal welfare concerns by engaging in dialogue with suppliers about our policy, which also forms part of our Memorandum of Understanding. Our partners on the ground are expected to spread awareness locally and take action where relevant, to ensure these principles are followed. An understanding of animal welfare best-practice also forms part of our selection process for new suppliers.

4. **Ensuring open and honest dialogue**

We aim to be open and transparent in our approach to animal welfare, to raise awareness of the issues and encourage best practice. We encourage our staff, clients and partners overseas to monitor animal welfare standards throughout our operations, and report concerns back to us so we can act.

5. **Taking responsibility, with a dedicated point of contact:**

Our Customer Services team have responsibility as the first point of contact for highlighting and following up on areas of concern (email: cs@journeylatinamerica.co.uk). Where there are concerns, we will first engage in dialogue with our partners to try to raise standards, which we believe to be the most effective way of ensuring long-term improvements. If we do not feel sufficient changes have been made over a reasonable period of time, we will remove the product from sale.

6. **Keeping animal welfare central to what we do:**

At Journey Latin America we are all passionate about being a responsible business – it is our love of the region's people and natural environments which motivates us to share this fantastic continent with others. All our staff believe in our Animal Welfare Policy and understand the role they can play in ensuring best practice, and it forms part of training for new staff.

Our approach to animal welfare is regularly reviewed and updates on an annual basis.

Journey Latin America's Animal Interactions Review

We have reviewed all our products and categorised all animal interactions into three types:

- Wild/free
- Captive
- Working animals

Here we have identified where there are areas of potential concern that need to be monitored or acted upon.

This audit will be reviewed annually to ensure our policy is up to date and considered for future product development. Next review: October 2023.

[For internal use: <F:\Sustainable Tourism\Animal Welfare\2021\Animal interactions audit 2021>].

Definitions:

Journey Latin America recognises that there is a difference between wild and domesticated animals.

Wild animals:

Undomesticated animal species, including all organisms that usually grow or live wild in an area, without interacting with humans on a frequent or planned basis. We consider that all animals must be respected for their intrinsic value and that the best way to experience animals while on holiday is by seeing them in the wild.

Captive animals:

The welfare of wild animals is compromised in captivity and captivity is only acceptable when it is in the animal's best interests and the highest possible standards of care are given.

Tame animals in captivity, in contrast to domesticated animals, were once wild or have been born in captivity and their behaviour is conditioned so that they become tolerant of humans. They are not truly domesticated and remain genetically wild. Any wild animal which allows people to hold it, have a photo taken with it, ride it or simply stroke it will have been conditioned to do so. This process will always jeopardise the animal's welfare and is against our animal protection policy.

Domesticated animals:

Domesticated animals have been selectively bred and genetically adapted over generations to live alongside humans, and are genetically distinct from their wild ancestors or cousins. Animal domestication falls into three main groupings: domestication for companionship (dogs and cats), animals farmed for food (livestock such as sheep, cows, pigs etc), and working or draft animals (horses, donkeys, mules). While domestic animals are more used to human interactions, their welfare and protection is of equal importance to the other categories.

Reporting concerns:

Any reports or feedback from clients or staff on animal cruelty and substandard treatment will always be investigated by Journey Latin America and followed up with our suppliers and partners locally, with the aim to see standards improve.

Traveller Advice

Our animal welfare policy aims to ensure animal encounters are managed appropriately and enrich the holiday experience. With that in mind, and in conjunction with animal welfare specialists Four Paws, below are some general tips for travellers to help ensure animal welfare is promoted on your trip.

Do

- While travelling, make sure to enjoy wild animals in their natural habitat, rather than in captivity where possible, and only support genuine sanctuaries or conservation centres. If you are worried about an animal or institution – let us know as we will act upon it!
- Make sure that any domesticated animals, like mules or horses, that are ridden, are in good physical condition, well cared for, and provided with water and shade.
- Finally, do think about what you are eating or buying. Avoid buying souvenirs or products made from animals – often endangered species – and don't support cruel food practices like eating turtle eggs and wild animal meat trade.

Don't

- Touch, hug, ride or take a photo with a wild animal, as it is likely to have suffered from some form of cruelty to make that possible – or at the very least cause distress to the animal.
- Feed wild animals, or support the use of animals to solicit money from tourists e.g. animal shows and performances, selfie photo opportunities, or animals killed for consumption or souvenirs.
- Don't put yourself at risk! Wild animal species are unpredictable and direct contact with such species poses a high risk to people.

Ten tips to help protect animals while travelling

1. Photos

Photograph wildlife in the wild and while respecting their space. Don't support businesses that interact too closely with wild animals or charge for photos with animals.

2. Look, but don't touch

Wild animals aren't pets looking for belly scratches. Holding or petting wildlife is never kind to the animal despite your best intentions. Close contact with wild animals could cause harm to their environment or to the animals themselves. And for your safety, this goes for stray or feral animals too.

3. Feeding animals

Feeding wild animals harms their ability to find food naturally and teaches them to get dangerously close to humans – so is discouraged.

4. Animal care (sanctuaries or working animals)

Sometimes, you'll see animals in sanctuaries, farms or zoos that are substandard. If you are worried about the welfare of these animals, report it immediately to Journey Latin America, our local operator, or report it on Red Flag: www.bornfree.org.uk/raise-the-red-flag. A true sanctuary does not breed animals, allow public contact with animals, and cares for the animals for the rest of their lives.

5. Animals in entertainment or shows

Please don't support cruel animal exhibits or shows like circuses, performances with marine mammals or any kind of show that involves wild animal performances. These animals are kept in inappropriate conditions and their performances are the result of dubious training methods based on domination or, at worst, based on violence. Please don't support this torture. Avoid making fun of animals and understand that they are sentient beings who deserve our respect and compassion.

6. Animal products or trinkets

Do not buy trinkets or souvenirs made from animal parts. The illegal trade in wildlife parts and products can include items made with exotic leathers and fur, ivory and ornamental objects, food items, and traditional medicines. Buying these products encourages animal exploitation and poaching of animals from the wild. Products from endangered species are illegal and if detected by customs you can be fined.

7. Poaching and trophy hunting

It goes without saying that if you are an animal lover, you probably do not support trophy hunting. The killing of wild animals for sport is cruel and unnecessary. Enjoy animals in the wild where they belong, and support companies that offer eco-tourism trips or non-invasive photo safaris.

8. Working animals

Working mules and horses are commonplace in some countries. If you encounter those that are bred for work and are in doubt that these animals are well cared for, please report it immediately to Journey Latin America or our local operator.

9. Health and safety

It's important when you are abroad that you are aware and take care in the presence of animals. Many strays and wild animals are fearful of humans and if approached, handled or attacked, they can pose a real threat to you and your health. Rabies is a serious issue in some countries and can be transferred to humans. If bitten, wash the wound with soap and water, and seek medical attention immediately.

10. Eating Out

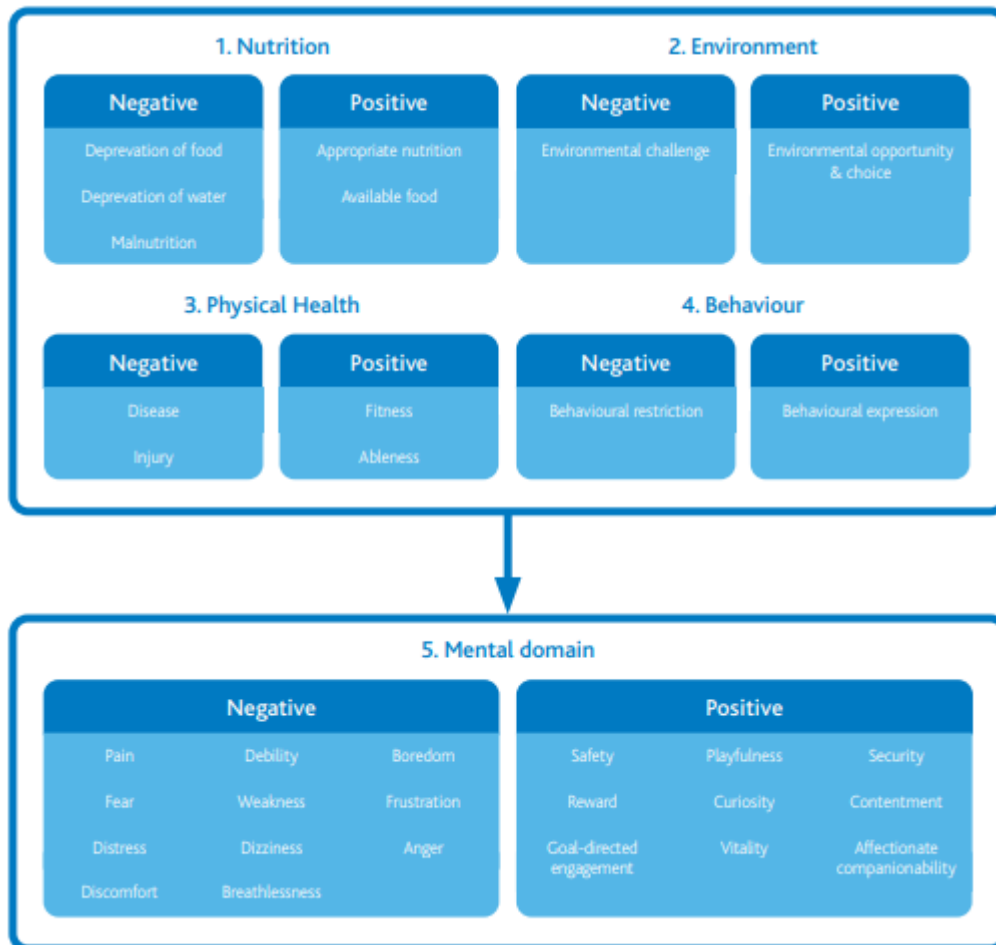
In some countries wild animals, or those we consider our companions, can be found on the menu. These animals, such as dogs and cats, endure immense cruelty and barbaric treatment to end up on a plate, and in some cases could even be people's stolen pets. There are also risks to your health and diseases, or even poison, that can be present in the meat, as a result of improper slaughter practises or hygiene. Avoid eating at places, including street vendors, that sell wild animal or domestic animal meat, including bush meat or endangered species, such as shark fins, whale and turtle meat.

Supplier communication – MOU

Animal welfare Good Practice Guidelines

1. Working Animals (Equidae – Horses, Donkeys, Mules)
2. Captive Animals
3. Wild Animals

Journey Latin America will only work with suppliers if the animals under their care have the highest possible welfare in line with the Five Domains of Animal Welfare:



1. Working Animals – Animal Welfare – Good Practice Guidelines (Equidae – Horses, Donkeys, Mules)

Nutrition

- Offer water continuously during rest, and multiple times/throughout the day.
- Use clean water buckets and water
- Feed small amounts often; mostly fibrous foods, concentrates and fats/oils suitable for equine. Allow animals to eat undisturbed and when at rest.
- Feed from a clean ground.
- Ensure a suitable forage/cereal ratio, where the cereal has a high fibre content

Environment

- Clean, free from hazards and a well-ventilated resting place.
- Protection from weather extremes (hot, cold, wind, rain).
- Animal can move its legs, body and neck. Tethering and hobbling is discouraged. If tethered, this should be for short periods and the animal should be able to walk, lie down and stand up without putting tension on the tether, and reach basic resources, like feed and water. Tethered animals should be regularly monitored.
- Dry areas and space to stand and lie down; porous, drainable and non-slippery flooring; clean, comfortable bedding.
- Opportunities to interact or see other, familiar equids.
- Stables or shelters should not be overcrowded – all animals should be able to sufficiently avoid others and still access food, water, and thermal comfort.

Physical Health

- Owners practice preventative care, for example, cleaning feet, grooming, wiping eyes, fly control.
- Owners are aware of where they can get veterinary support and seek treatment promptly in case of injury or disease.
- Regular routine veterinary checks, which should include teeth care, checks of general body condition and hoof care.
- Animals under three years of age, ill or injured, or in the last trimester of pregnancy are not working.
- Waste matter and old food is removed from the enclosure and is stored away from grazing and housing. It is disposed of responsibly, according to local legislation.
- Animals have been vaccinated and owners keep a record of vaccinations.
- Access to shade and other means to minimise the effects of heat stress. Sufficient time to rest periods between working periods.

Behaviour

- Using animals that are alert, agreeable to being handled or ridden.
- Animals accept the weight of a rider/load and are able to start, stop and move easily.
- Calm handling.
- Animals are given opportunities to express comfort behaviours: mutual grooming, rolling, scratching, play, vocalising.
- Year-round, daily access to the outdoors; given the opportunity to exercise off-tether and to socially interact with other animals.
- Mare and foal should be kept together until the foal is naturally weaned (at approximately one year old).

Mental State

- One person riding at a time, matching size to that of the animal and balanced weight when riding. The maximum load should not exceed 15-20% of the animal's body weight.
- Owners/drivers practise calm handling and show a positive bond with the animals (animals don't avoid or shy away from their touch).
- Walk the animal slowly and patiently over difficult terrain such as stones, hard and dusty surfaces, steep hills and winding steps.

2. Captive Animals - Animal welfare - Good Practice Guidelines

Nutrition

- All animals have unrestricted daily access to adequate and clean drinking water in line with their species-specific needs.
- All animals are provided access to food that is adequate in quality, amount and variety for the species, the captive environment and the individual animals' needs. Feeding routines should be species-specific, mentally stimulating and encourage natural behaviours.

Environment

- In captivity, enclosures are environmentally complex, including natural substrate, structures, shelter and environmental enrichment, in order to encourage a normal and diverse behavioural repertoire.
- All animals should be able to access shelter and a climatic environment suitable for their species specific needs and seek privacy from view.
- In captivity, enclosures are clean, hygienic, free of excessive artificial noise such as visitor or speaker noise, and well maintained (for example, devoid of excessive faeces, urine or rotting food, litter, not waterlogged, not infested with vermin etc.)

Physical Health

- The facility has access to a vet, either employed or externally contracted, who is knowledgeable and experienced in the health and welfare of the relevant animals.
- There is a policy not to surgically modify the skin, tissues, teeth or bone structure of animals, and not to sedate animals, unless it is for the purpose of genuine medical treatment or improved welfare, and always under the guidance of an appropriately trained vet.
- Complete, accurate animal stock-lists, veterinary records and any appropriate licences or permits should be up-to-date and available for inspection. The required paperwork should be in place for all animals.

Behaviour

- In captivity, enclosures (including pools) or methods used to contain the animals for temporary periods, allow all the animals to move and exercise freely, and to maintain sufficient distance from other animals in case of conflict.
- Depending on their species-specific and seasonal needs, animals should have the opportunity to interact regularly with other members of their species. Animals should not be prematurely separated from their young.
- Any training of animals should never involve punishment or food deprivation.

Mental State

- Regular checks are made on social grouping and environment to ensure positive mental states. Any prolonged distress, frustration or boredom in animals can result in abnormal behaviour, psychological disorders or premature death.
- Animals should be allowed to move and exercise freely; they should not be restrained.
- Positive indicators of welfare such as play behaviour, social affiliation and exploration should be encouraged wherever possible.

Unacceptable practices

- Animal breeding or commercial trade in sanctuaries and orphanages.
- Any tourist holding of, or photo opportunity with, wild animals where the animal does not have the choice of terminating the interaction or moving away.
- Performances or tourist interactions involving animals where training involves punishment or food deprivation, causes the animal fear, injury or distress, or the tasks are not based on normal behaviour.

3. Wild Animals - Animal welfare - Good Practice Guidelines

- Wildlife viewing suppliers should be recognised and, where appropriate, licensed and inspected by the responsible body in their country of operation.
- The suppliers should be able to demonstrate a good understanding of the potential negative impacts and risks of their activities and demonstrate how they actively work to minimise them.
- Tourists should be accompanied during all wildlife viewing activities by well-trained, well-equipped, and appropriately qualified leaders/guides, accredited by a recognised professional body (where one exists).
- Certification on its own is not sufficient; guides should have good local knowledge of the area, its wildlife and the typical activity of wildlife. Suppliers should independently assess their guides' knowledge and conduct.
- Viewing groups should be an appropriate size for the activity and the species being viewed to minimise disturbance.
- Suppliers should give clear safety guidance to customers and have robust emergency procedures that are tested and updated regularly to deal with incidents involving attacks by wild animals.
- Suppliers conducting wildlife viewing in remote areas should have radio communications and/or satellite phones and have access to medical personnel and emergency evacuation as appropriate to the location.

Wildlife viewing behavioural protocol

- Viewing groups should keep a sufficient distance from wild animals so their natural behaviour is not disturbed. If animals appear disturbed, then the approach is too close. These distances will vary depending on species and circumstances, for example, whether animals are with their young; their visibility and habitat type, wind direction. Guides should be alert to signs of distress or aggression and act appropriately, usually by withdrawing.
- Wildlife should be approached at an oblique angle, not head on, as this is seen as a direct threat.
- Wildlife should never be crowded, nor boxed in.
- Animals showing avoidance tactics (moving away) should never be pursued.
- When close to wildlife, noise and sudden movements should be kept to an absolute minimum (even in vehicles) in order to avoid alarming animals.
- Extra care should be taken when approaching wildlife with young so that parents and their offspring are never separated.
- Breeding sites should be observed from a distance, for example, nests, dens, burrows.
- Playback tapes of animal sounds should not be used to attract animals for easy viewing. This can displace animals from their natural territories or trigger competitive reactions, affecting their survival success.
- Wildlife should never be fed or touched; voluntary free contact between humans (tourists or guides) and wildlife should be actively discouraged.
- Guides should actively promote public education about the conservation of the species and habitats being viewed.
- Guides should actively educate tourists about the threats to the wildlife and environment they are viewing, and about purchasing items made from threatened and endangered wild animal products.

Specific modes of wildlife viewing

Vehicle

- Vehicles should approach wildlife slowly and go no closer than 25m.
- No more than five (and ideally no more than three) vehicles should view an animal for a prolonged period.
- Drivers should keep to speed limits in wildlife areas, and drive slower in poor conditions and at night.

On Foot

- Guides escorting tourists viewing wildlife on foot need specialised training for the specific risks associated with this activity.
- Where the experience involves dangerous wildlife, two professionally trained staff should accompany customers. They should be qualified and equipped to look after customers in an emergency situation.
- Groups should be small to maintain safety and to reduce the impact on the environment
- Different walking routes (except boardwalks and managed trails) should be used to avoid repeatedly trampling vegetation. Routes should be carefully laid to minimise impacts on the wildlife and habitats.
- All participants should be properly briefed on responsible conduct and given clear safety guidance before commencing the walk.

- Tourists or guides should never touch, pick up, collect or remove animals, animal parts, fungi or plants.
- Guides should not replicate animal sounds/calls.

By boat

- Keep a good lookout and don't get too close. Ensure that action to minimise disturbance can be taken in good time. Use binoculars to get a better view.
- When wildlife is approached, reduce boat speed to a minimum, in order to reduce disturbance to wildlife while ensuring customer safety. Make sure that boat movements are steady and predictable and approach at an oblique angle – a direct approach is more threatening. Depart with equal caution.
- Let the animals decide how close they want you to be. If there are signs of disturbance (sudden movements, aggressive behaviour, heads up, bunching together, tail slaps, alarmed vocalisations) the boat should move away and, if possible, take an alternative route.
- If animals are moving in a consistent direction, maintain a steady parallel course and where possible stay beyond the recommended minimum distances. Do not cut off an animal or group of animals by moving across their path, and do not approach them from behind.
- If marine mammals decide to approach maintain a steady speed and course where possible. Try not to present propellers to approaching animals.
- Make sure animals are not surrounded. If other tourist groups are watching, try to stay on the same side. Avoid boxing in animals against the shoreline or in sea lochs, inlets or bays.
- Avoid sudden unpredictable changes in speed, direction and engine noise.
- No more than three boats should be at a sighting, which should be for a maximum of 30 minutes. When more than one boat is within 300 metres of a cetacean, all boats must stay on the same side of the animal so that movement is less restricted. Special care must be taken to ensure that cetaceans are not trapped between boats and other physical barriers such as islands.
- Take extra care during sensitive times of year in places where animals may be feeding, resting, breeding or with their young.
- Be careful not to split up groups, or mothers and young, and never approach apparently lone young animals.
- Do not allow flash photography.
- Anchoring and beaching of boats should be carefully planned to avoid damaging corals, underwater plant life and sensitive shorelines.

Scuba diving, snorkelling and swimming

- Operators should have a valid operating licence to operate the activity, issued by a recognised certification agency or relevant local authority
- If marine wildlife is approached, do so slowly and cautiously. Make sure the swimmers' movements are steady and predictable
- Let animals decide how close they want to be. Sudden movements or vocalisations are signs of disturbance; swimmers should stop approaching or move gently away
- Tourists (or guides) should **never** touch, pick up or feed marine animals or collect corals or shells
- Take care that tourists or staff do not cause damage to the environment with their feet or fins. Some species, including coral reefs, are particularly sensitive to physical damage
- Limit the number of photographs of individual animals and refrain from using flash or 'selfie-sticks' which can be distressing to wildlife
- Snorkelling, diving or swimming with large marine mammals where there is a personal safety risk is discouraged.