

corendon.

Animal welfare policy





Corendon animal welfare policy for excursions

We care about the world and we feel responsible for the sustainable development of our destinations and the conservation of a **liveable world**.

By making responsible choices ourselves and taking our clients along on our **sustainable journey**, we aim to guarantee that **next generations** can also enjoy all the beautiful destinations we visit today.



Why an animal welfare policy?

Excursions are an important part of the holidays of our customers. Excursions let you experience local culture and they bring you in contact with different people and animals. Unfortunately tourists are not always aware of the hidden cruelties and suffering behind excursions and attractions with animals. Therefore we created this new animal welfare policy for excursions. These guidelines are here to support our product managers, local representatives, local agents and customers to make the right decisions when they offer or want to book an excursion where animals are involved.





Basic animal welfare principles

This policy is based on important elements of the ANVR principles for animal welfare. In this policy we make a distinction between wild and domesticated animals. In our opinion, wild animals are best off in their natural habitat. For animals in captivity we use the five freedoms as a basis to ensure minimal animal welfare standards:

1. Freedom of hunger and thirst (access to fresh water and a varied and healthy diet)
2. Freedom from discomfort (appropriate housing and living conditions including shelter and rest area)
3. Freedom from pain, injuries and disease (respectful treatment by trained animal caregivers and access to veterinary care)
4. Freedom to express natural behaviour (create enough living space and resemble the natural habitat of the animal allowing for species-specific social behaviour)
5. Freedom from fear and chronic stress (treatment and living conditions which avoid mental suffering)

In the next paragraphs we will explain what we mean by wild and domesticated animals, what type of excursions and attraction we no longer want to offer to Corendon customers and what type we do want to offer.

Most commonly seen animals in tourist attractions and excursions:

Wild animals	Domesticated animals
Dolphins and marine mammals	Horses
Elephants	Mules and donkeys
Lions, tigers and other types of big cats	Camelids
Bears	
Primates (monkeys)	

¹ FAWC, 1979

(<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121010012427/http://www.fawc.org.uk/freedoms.htm>)



Wild animals

We believe that wild animals are best off living in the wild. Wild animals are often taken from the wild to entertain tourists or bred solely for this purpose. The interest of the animals is not the priority of their keepers and they are often begin held in small cages or chained without space to move around. There are also hotels that have wild animals on display or use them in shows to entertain their guests. This causes unnecessary suffering of the animals. Therefore we created a list of excursions and attractions that we do not want to promote or offer to Corendon customers:

Excursions that we no longer want to offer:

- Riding wild animals, such as elephants or ostriches.
- Shows or circuses with wild animals, like bears, monkeys, dolphins, crocodiles, elephants, lions or tigers that have to do performances.
- Direct contact with wild animals. For example swimming with dolphins, cuddling with tigers cubs, walking with lions, bathing and feeding elephants.
- Animal fights. Like cock- or bullfights.
- Sport fishing or trophy hunting activities.
- Visiting a dolphin show or aquarium.
- Visiting animal shelters and sanctuaries where there is direct contact between wild animals and visitors and where they breed animals.
- Visiting animal farms or museums where they breed animals for the purpose of tourist entertainment, such as crocodile farms, civet coffee farms, turtle farms or snake farms.

The most common offered excursion with wild animals are with elephants and dolphins. In the next paragraphs we explain our policy regarding these types of excursions.

Elephants

In February 2018 we signed the 'Elephant Friendly Pledge'. By signing this pledge we promise that we no longer offer elephant rides or shows. As stated in the previous paragraph, elephants are wild animals and they are supposed to live in the wild. They are not domesticated animals such as horses and donkeys. Corendon discourages direct contact with elephants, because this is only possible when elephants are trained. Even when it comes to washing and feeding. This 'training' is a painful and disrespectful process, where the elephants are being chained and beaten.

We encourage customers to visit places where the animals live in their natural environment without direct interaction with people. This helps reducing the number of visitors to places where animals are kept in captivity and this ultimately helps to stop these practices. In appendix 1 a list is added with elephant parks that are recommended by World Animal Protection. No direct interaction is possible at these locations and the welfare of elephants is the number one priority.

We try to create awareness in as many ways as possible for the suffering behind elephant rides and shows. We do this by not only signing the pledge, but also by informing our product managers, buyers and local agents. In addition, we communicate about elephant friendly tourism to our customers. We do this through inspiration blogs on our website, information in the information books in hotels at our holiday destinations and by training our representatives.

What can you pay attention to?

- Only visit elephants in (semi)nature parks;
- Do not visit sanctuaries where there is direct contact with the elephant, such as feeding or washing;
- Pay attention that the elephants have enough space to move freely in a natural environment and that they are not chained;
- Pay attention that the elephants look healthy, without injuries and show no behavioural problems;
- The wellbeing of the elephants is leading, not the entertainment of tourists;
- Pay attention that the call themselves sanctuary, shelter or nature park, while they breed animals and promote direct contact with the animals. Use the Sanctuary Checklist of WAP to recognize an actual sanctuary.





Dolphins and marine mammals

Dolphins and other marine mammals are, just like elephants, wild animals that need their space and freedom to move. A small delimited basin is an unnatural environment for these animals to live in. They are very intelligent and social animals that travel great distances in the wild. They experience stress due to lack of space and too many of them in their surroundings. That is why we do not want to offer excursions to dolphinariums and aquariums where mammals have to perform and do tricks or where there is the option to swim with dolphins. We also avoid places where other types of direct contact between dolphins and humans are permitted.



What can you pay attention to?

- Don't go to aquariums and dolphinariums where the animals live in small basins;
- Even in places where the animals can enter the open sea, they are not necessarily animals friendly. These animals are trained to come back and cannot survive in the wild because they never learned to hunt and catch their own food;
- Choose an excursion where you can see the animals in their natural environment, such as a boat trip at sea. Be aware that with such an excursion it is also possible that you do not spot the animals, but that makes it even more worth the trip when you do see them;
- Make sure that the animals do not experience any stress from the presence of you and others and that the excursions adheres to the rules for distance, number of participants and does not rush the animals;
- The animals are not being lured with food or sound to get closer.



Type of excursions with animals that we do want to offer

- Sanctuaries where visitors can observe wild animals in a (semi) natural environment. The animals show natural behaviour and are cared for professionally;
- Sanctuaries where the wellbeing of the animals is their number one priority and not the entertainment of tourists;
- Venues where they rehabilitate the animals to return to their natural habitat;
- Safaris and bird watching;
- Dolphin and whale spotting in the wild, where the excursion adheres to strict guidelines (distance, maximum number of tourists/boats per group of wild animals, everyone staying on board, animals are not lured with food or noise);
- Educational eco-tours;
- Attractions with domesticated animals where the welfare of animals is guaranteed.



Domesticated animals

Unlike elephants and dolphins, horses, donkeys, mules and camels are considered domesticated animals. They are used as a means of transport of people and goods and as attraction for tourists. In many countries people depend on these animals for their livelihoods. We are not against attractions and excursions with domesticated animals, but we do have set minimal standards for these type of excursions.

Horses, donkeys and mules

The welfare of horses, donkeys and mules used as transport or for tourist attractions is often poor, because their owners see their animals as a source of income and this is often more important than the welfare of the animal. When you choose to go on an excursion with these animals, it is important that you pay attention to the living conditions of the animals. The attraction or excursion should not negatively affect the welfare of the animals and should meet the minimum welfare standards as mentioned under the five freedoms. Corendon discourages the use of animals as entertainment and excursions that have an adverse effect on the welfare of animals.

What can you pay attention to?

- Choose the right size of the animals that suits you, horses and donkeys should never bear more than half their body weight;
- Never ride the animal with more than 1 person;
- Do not ride in extreme temperatures;
- Saddles must be the right size and not cause any pain, discomforts or injury;
- The animals should look healthy and well-nourished;
- The animals show normal behaviour;
- The animals have clear eyes and they look alert;
- The living environment of the animals is clean and hygienic;
- The animals are treated well by their owner/caretaker and they do not use physical force to control the animals.

Do you see something that is not right? Report this to your tour guide or local representative, so we can take action and check the provider.



Camels

Camelids are also domesticated animals and used in tourism attractions to transport people and goods. We are against activities which include camel racing or camel dancing. Camelids include llamas, alpacas, dromedaries and camels. For excursions with camels, the same minimum standards apply as for excursions with horses and donkeys. Customers should be informed on the risks and rules of engagement, all animals can be unpredictable and potentially dangerous. Contact should only occur under constant supervision.

What can you pay attention to?

- Camelids must have sufficient space, shade, food and water. They must not be overworked or overloaded nor must they be forced to work by whipping or other types of abuse;
- An average camel can never carry more than 150 kilograms
- Camels must rest for at least 1 hour after a 2 hour ride;
- The camels should not be tied to rings in the nose or lower lip.





Compliance with this policy

Corendon offers excursions through local agents at the destinations. The local agent creates the excursion programme and shares this with Corendon HQ. This policy forms the basis of our cooperation with local agents. Excursions that do not comply with the above principles will not be included in the package that is offered to Corendon customers.

Handling complaints about excursions with animals

All complaints received from customers at the Corendon Contact Center about excursions that violate our animal welfare policy, will be reported to the local representative and the CSR Manager.

- Collect as much information as possible from the customer about the excursion: date, time, location, number of participants, type of animal, type of violation;
- Ask for photo's and/or video's as proof;
- Send all of the information to the CSR manager and local representative;
- The CSR manager and local representative will analyse the information and contact the relevant local agent about the excursion;
- Together with the local agent we will draw up an action plan on how to improve the excursion. If this is not possible we will make the decision to remove the excursion from the programme.

Questions or remarks?

Please contact mvo@corendon.nl

Appendix 1 – Approved elephant friendly venues by WAP

Moving towards an Elephant-Friendly future
Version 1.0



List of best practice elephant venues in Asia

This list with best practice elephant venues is not exhaustive and will be updated regularly. **Also being listed doesn't mean an endorsement by World Animal Protection as most venues are not visited by us on a regular basis and situations can change fast.** This list is simply there to help you find highest welfare elephant venues. When considering a venue that's not listed, please use World Animal Protection's Elephant-Friendly checklist.

World Animal Protection discourages direct interactions between tourists and elephants – including bathing and showering. At some of the listed venues these interactions are still offered and we advise you or your customers not to participate in any of these direct or close interaction with the elephants.

Elephant venues, in particular in Thailand, are often named very similarly, which can lead to confusion. For example, an elephant-friendly venue may be called 'Bangkok Elephant Sanctuary', while a lower quality venue may call itself 'Bangkok Sanctuary for Elephants'. We strongly recommend verifying the names to be exactly as below.

Country	Name	Offered visitor activities	Date confirming visitor activities
Cambodia	Elephant Valley Project (EVP)	Observing elephants	2018
Nepal	Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest and fields	2018
Thailand	Borri Jett Elephant Sanctuary (BJES)	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest and fields	2018
Thailand	Bum and Emily's Elephant Sanctuary (BEES)	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest and fields	2018
Thailand	ChangChill	Observing elephants, preparing food and mahout chat	2019
Thailand	Elephant Valley Thailand (EVT)	Observing elephants, protected contact feeding	2018
Thailand	Global Vision International (GVI) project in Huay Pakoot	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest, visitors feeding one time per week	2017





Appendix 2 – Interesting reads

- Paper of WAP on how we can end the use of wild animals for entertainment in the tourism industry: Checking out of cruelty.
[\[https://www.worldanimalprotection.ca/sites/default/files/checking_out_of_cruelty_1.pdf\]](https://www.worldanimalprotection.ca/sites/default/files/checking_out_of_cruelty_1.pdf)
- Paper of WAP on the wellbeing of elephants in tourist attractions in Asia Taken for a ride.
[\[https://d31j74p4lpxrfp.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/takenforaride.pdf\]](https://d31j74p4lpxrfp.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/takenforaride.pdf)
- Paper of WAP on the wellbeing of mammals held in captivity: The case against marine mammals in captivity.
[\[https://d31j74p4lpxrfp.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/ca_-_en_files/cammic_5th_edition_2019_final_lo_rez_-_canada.pdf\]](https://d31j74p4lpxrfp.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/ca_-_en_files/cammic_5th_edition_2019_final_lo_rez_-_canada.pdf)
- Paper of WAP on the use of tigers for tourist entertainment: Tiger selfies exposed.
[\[https://www.worldanimalprotection.ca/sites/default/files/ca_-_en_files/tiger_selfies_exposed.pdf\]](https://www.worldanimalprotection.ca/sites/default/files/ca_-_en_files/tiger_selfies_exposed.pdf)