

 **WILDLIFE
HERITAGE
AREAS**



Wildlife Heritage Areas

Benefits

How do Wildlife Heritage Areas benefit custodian communities?

1. Promoting responsible tourism
2. A website and promotional campaign
3. Purpose-built for communities
4. Tangible economic benefits
5. Support from NGOs and wildlife experts
6. A focus on cultural heritage
7. Championing local solutions
8. Free application open to all

1. Promoting responsible tourism

The travel industry currently has no way to clearly identify the wildlife watching destinations that prioritise animal welfare, wildlife conservation, community well being and sustainability, whilst still delivering amazing experiences. Wildlife Heritage Areas achieve this by working with responsible tour operators and experts who help to design wildlife watching adventures and associated cultural events, that also help to fund the protection of nature.

2. A website and promotional campaign

The Wildlife Heritage Areas website guides and informs anyone interested in responsible wildlife experiences. It shares inspiring stories of communities coming together to protect local wildlife and offers advice from experts across the world. Social media and traditional media campaigns run alongside the digital platform to promote destinations and drive traffic to the website, encouraging tourists to visit the designated areas.

3. Purpose-built for communities

Wildlife Heritage Areas is a global area-based programme that empowers local people as custodians of their unique wildlife. It is these grass-roots communities that hold the key to protecting biodiversity across the world.

By truly listening to each custodian community and encouraging them to hold courageous conversations, the Wildlife Heritage Areas programme enables collaboration and drives positive change.

4. Tangible economic benefits

Wildlife Heritage Area designation can deliver international recognition, increased exposure, and new tourism investment, which in turn creates local job opportunities and provides a focal point for funding.

The area will also benefit by combining core protected areas with sustainable development zones. This approach enables local people to partner with enterprises that can demonstrate proven sustainable practices based on research and monitoring.

5. Support from NGOs and wildlife experts

Specialist NGOs and other wildlife experts become members of the Wildlife Heritage Network to provide support and advice for local communities where it is most needed.

This means custodian communities can be supported to protect their local biodiversity while assisting with animal welfare and wildlife conservation fundamentals.

6. A focus on cultural heritage

Wildlife Heritage Areas place a strong emphasis on the custodian community's cultural and natural heritage, appreciating the delicate balance that exists between them. This leads to a deeper connection with nature that drives long-term sustainable goals and delivers the most authentic tourism experiences working in partnership with the community.

7. Championing local solutions

Wildlife Heritage Areas champion grassroots solutions to biodiversity loss, climate change, and wild animal suffering by empowering local communities to deliver long-term nature conservation and wildlife stewardship.

Working in harmony with the natural world is an essential ingredient to creating better places for animals and people to coexist. By coming together to protect and respect nature, Wildlife Heritage Areas can help biodiversity to thrive.

8. Free application open to all

Application to become a Wildlife Heritage Area is free. However, to meet the standards required, communities link up with a specialist wildlife NGO advisor affiliated with the Wildlife Heritage Network. Some NGOs may provide this service for free whilst others charge a fee for their time.

Any community involved in wildlife tourism that wishes to meet the standards required can bring together a group of stakeholders, sign the pledge, and work through the requirements by completing their online listing. The process involves a mixture of fun and measured tasks as well as inspiring learning.

What is a Wildlife Heritage Area?

A Wildlife Heritage Area is an outstanding wildlife watching destination where local people recognise their natural heritage with a deep sense of pride and play a central role in protecting wild animals and their habitats.

As animal welfare and sustainable tourism in general become more important for the travelling public, Wildlife Heritage Areas will identify places that meet the highest standards of animal welfare, wildlife conservation, community well-being, and sustainability, whilst also maintaining high tourism value.

By coming together to reconnect with, protect and respect nature, Wildlife Heritage Areas will help turn the tide on biodiversity loss and wildlife suffering by demonstrating the power of local communities to help solve the planet's most urgent issues.

Through collaboration, robust criteria, storytelling, and radical transparency, Wildlife Heritage Areas:

- Empower local people to care for and protect wildlife in their environment.
- Emphasise cultural links with nature as a powerful tool for positive change.
- Incorporate animal welfare as an integral part of sustainable and wildlife friendly.
- Point people towards responsible wildlife experiences as an alternative to exploitative, extractive, or consumptive experiences or attractions.
- Use an approach combining nature conservation and animal welfare for the betterment of all.

Wildlife Heritage Network

The Wildlife Heritage Network supports Wildlife Heritage Areas through strategic partnerships between specialist NGOs, wildlife experts, responsible travel companies and community champions.

Wildlife NGOs and experts within the Wildlife Heritage Network designate Wildlife Heritage Areas both helping them to meet the programme's criteria and indicators, and assessing that evidence is sufficient to designate the Area.

Responsible tourism operators and experts within the network work with Wildlife Heritage Area communities to design more sustainable wildlife experiences and enhance cultural links that celebrate nature as a powerful tool to encourage positive change for animals, people, and places.

Founding Partners

Wildlife Heritage Areas is a global programme developed by World Animal Protection and the World Cetacean Alliance to designate outstanding places where local people protect species and habitats to which they are intrinsically linked. The concept of Wildlife Heritage Areas was born out of the success of the Whale Heritage Sites programme. Initiated by the World Cetacean Alliance in 2015, and run in partnership with World Animal Protection since 2019, Whale Heritage Sites showcase an entire community and their relationship with whales and dolphins by encouraging respectful human-cetacean coexistence; celebrating cetaceans in local culture, arts and events; supporting local economic and environmental sustainability; and developing locally based science, research and education.



A programme developed by

