

# Wildlife Heritage Areas

The Future of  
Wildlife Tourism

 **WILDLIFE  
HERITAGE  
AREAS**

**WCA**  
WORLD  
CETACEAN  
ALLIANCE





Wildlife Heritage Areas is a global programme developed by World Animal Protection and the World Cetacean Alliance.

# An urgent problem



The window of opportunity to protect the world's wildlife from suffering and loss is narrowing every day:

- Animal cruelty remains prolific in the travel industry.
- The climate crisis, interlinked with the biodiversity crisis, is making nature-based solutions, and the protection of nature increasingly urgent.
- Overtourism is a growing risk for destinations and nature.

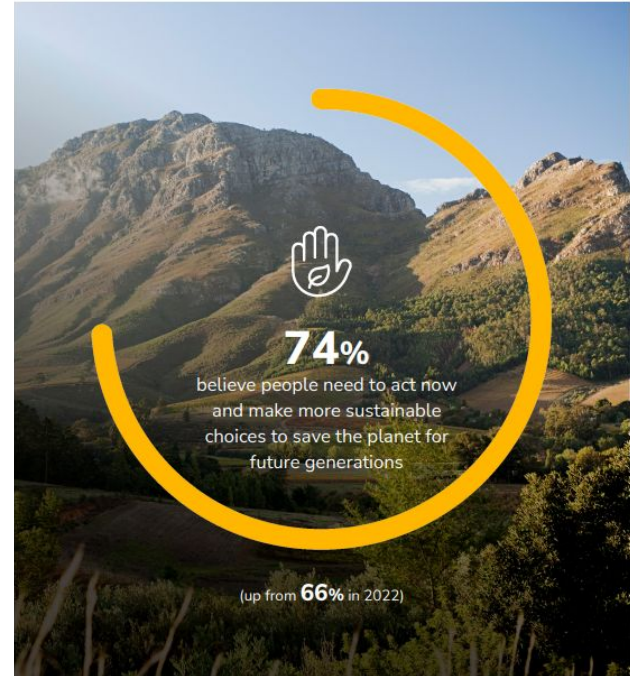




# But, nowhere to turn

Despite increasing demand, travellers and the travel industry currently have no way of identifying destinations with:

- high animal welfare standards;
- experiences run by local custodians;
- expert-written guidelines;
- income streams flowing directly to local communities and nature;
- holistic sustainability standards.



# What if...

- Wildlife was not cruelly exploited for tourism.
- Local communities created responsible wildlife watching destinations that benefited animals, people, and place.
- We celebrated people that worked in harmony with the natural world.
- We collaborated to reconnect with, protect and respect nature.
- We emphasized our cultural links with nature as a very powerful tool to encourage positive change for animals and people.





A photograph of two hikers in a lush green forest. One hiker is in the foreground, seen from the back, wearing a white t-shirt and a black strap. The other hiker is in the background, wearing a tan cap, a dark jacket, and a large blue backpack, looking towards the right. A river is visible on the left side of the image. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark green rectangle.

# Welcome to... Wildlife Heritage Areas

Outstanding wildlife watching destinations where local communities recognise their natural heritage with a sense of pride and play a central role in protecting wild animals and their habitats.

# Designed with key themes in mind



**Accessible**

**Robust**

**Collaborative**

**Inspirational**

- Raise standards for the whole travel industry.
- Bringing together experts, communities, and businesses to drive change.
- Promote responsible wildlife experiences led by communities.



# An easy-to-use web platform



Home > Apply now

## Application support

### ▼ What is the application process like?

The Wildlife Heritage Area application process is run through an easy-to-use web platform, which guides applicants through initial registration, uploading evidence to meet the Wildlife Heritage Area criteria, and creating a listings page.

To be designated a Wildlife Heritage Area, an applicant must:

1. Bring together a steering committee which is representative of the wildlife-friendly community living and working in the relevant area.
2. The steering committee must provide two pieces of evidence that meet each Indicator.
3. The steering committee must meet Criteria 1,2, 4, and 5. If tourism experiences and visitor attractions involving wildlife exist or are being planned within the Wildlife Heritage Area, they must also meet Criterion 3.



# Holistic criteria, evidence based



# Listing pages to showcase impact



California, United States

## Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area



▶ Play video

### Did you know?

Cetaceans in the Santa Barbara Channel are culturally significant. Since ancient times, whales, dolphins, and porpoises have held cultural significance for many coastal communities. For the local Chumash, the presence of cetaceans play a role in their rich cultural mythology and traditions.

◀ Cetaceans are considered sacred and are believed to have guardianship over the ocean. Understanding this cultural connection helps foster a greater appreciation for cetaceans and encourages their protection to preserve cultural heritage as well. ▶

Looking for in depth information?

Read More

# 10 Wildlife Heritage Areas now live





# Respected Industry & NGO Partners



# Working with industry partners



Home → Sustainable Travel → Sustainable Travel: Places & Planet → Wildlife Heritage Areas



Exodus Adventure Travels is a proud supporter of **Wildlife Heritage Areas**, a new global benchmark from [World Animal Protection](#) and the [World Cetacean Alliance](#) to identify tourism destinations meeting high standards of animal welfare, wildlife conservation, community well-being, and sustainability. The Wildlife Heritage Area programme connects responsible travel companies like Exodus with wildlife experts and local communities as a network to designate wildlife-friendly and community-based tourism destinations to deliver better outcomes for wild animals and the people that live in surrounding areas.

By rewarding local communities for their role in protecting habitats and responsible wildlife watching, these Wildlife Heritage Areas will generate pride and income for communities while reversing biodiversity loss and facilitating climate resilience in order to help solve some of the planet's most urgent issues.

## Wildlife Heritage Area goals

- ▶ Empower local people and communities to care for and protect the unique wildlife in their environment.



## Why visit a Wildlife Heritage Area?



### Trustworthy

Visitors to Wildlife Heritage Areas can take part in outstanding wildlife watching experiences that put wildlife first. Staying in a Wildlife Heritage Area helps local communities invest in animal welfare and wildlife conservation, benefitting community well-being and driving forward sustainable practices.

### Designated for excellence

Communities achieve Wildlife Heritage Area designation by playing a central role in protecting wild animals and their habitats. With support from responsible travel organisations and wildlife experts, these communities are committed to help turn the tide on biodiversity loss and the climate crisis, adopt a zero tolerance for wildlife suffering in tourism, and advocate for positive change through a willingness to collaborate.

# Extensive press coverage

## AFAR

New Wildlife Heritage Areas Help Travelers Find Responsible Animal Experiences

A new global initiative designates destinations where you can have both extraordinary and ethical interactions with animals in the wild.



The Santa Barbara Channel Whale Heritage Area in California, an important migration route for gray and humpback whales, is among the newly designated Wildlife Heritage Areas. Photo by Adam Ostrow



### greentraveller

greentraveller introduces the Wildlife Heritage Areas, a new global programme for responsible wildlife watching that works to support both local communities and the animals.

## Wildlife watching with a heart

**N**ewly introduced Wildlife Heritage Areas (WHAs) are a global initiative designed to support both local communities and the animals they care for. The initiative is a response to the growing demand for responsible wildlife watching experiences. It aims to ensure that tourism benefits local people and the environment, while providing ethical and educational opportunities for travelers.

## NEW BENCHMARK TOOL HELPS AGENTS FIND RESPONSIBLE WILDLIFE TOURISM EXPERIENCES

19 OCT 2023 BY CHARLOTTE CULLINAN

Agents are being encouraged to use a new free platform to help them discover responsible wildlife tourism experiences around the world to promote to clients.



The Apennines Maronean Bear Heritage Area in Italy focuses on the critically endangered Maronean brown bear. Credit: Bruno D'Amico



### What does 'regenerative travel' mean?

Taking the concept a step further, regenerative travel attempts to not just produce sustainable travel options – but to enhance local culture, economy and natural ecosystems through the income that travel generates. The process allows local people to become the primary stakeholders of their businesses and environment, promoting education and knowledge to be shared by shared within communities. The benefits to travelers is a more immersive, well-rounded experience.

**Wildlife Heritage Areas:** for example, is a global programme founded by World Animal Protection and the world Cetacean Alliance, that reconnects local communities with nature, helping them understand – and preserve – the biodiversity and ecosystems on their doorstep. From Brazil's Maracá Reserve, the largest protected landscape area in the world, to the whale heritage areas around the Whitsunday Islands in Queensland, Australia – the initiative offers a wealth of in-depth nature-based experiences to those who are passionate about the planet – while also teaching visitors about the region's cultural links.



as an area still in the early stages. The new highlights are being used to educate on the importance of responsible wildlife tourism. The new highlights are being used to educate on the importance of responsible wildlife tourism. The new highlights are being used to educate on the importance of responsible wildlife tourism.

'Organizations such as Safari Club International and the Safari Club give awards to tourists who use methods like low-impact and eco-tourism, which don't put the welfare of the animal.'





# Get involved



We're eager to work with:

- Responsible tourism businesses.
- Wildlife charities.
- Local communities.
- Independent specialist experts.
- Storytellers.





## Follow us



[www.wildlifeheritageareas.org](http://www.wildlifeheritageareas.org)



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## Get in touch

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Thank you

