



## **Our People, Our World, Our Actions: Animal Welfare Policy**

Many of STA Travel's adventures involve watching or interacting with animals. This can take many forms; from watching whales or dolphins in the wild, to horse riding or visiting a zoo. Whilst attractions involving animals can have social, economic, environmental and educational benefits, where activities are not carefully managed, they can impact on the welfare of the animals and effect our customer's enjoyment of the experience.

Animal welfare is important to STA Travel, our staff and our customers. We want to help protect animals from exploitation, neglect and cruelty and we expect our suppliers to share these sentiments. If attractions we offer to our customers are not meeting recognised standards of animal welfare, or involve unacceptable suffering, we will work with the supplier concerned to improve things, or remove the attraction from sale.

STA Travel works with Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA, The Travel Association), and regularly refers to their Global Welfare Guidance for Animals in Tourism ([www.abta.com/animalwelfare](http://www.abta.com/animalwelfare)), which apply a series of minimum requirements to ensure animals involved in the attractions we promote are properly cared for. We request input from other national travel agency associations and have also partnered with international wildlife charity, The Born Free Foundation <http://www.bornfree.org.uk/> who advise us on all activities involving animals, helping us reduce our 'Animal Footprint': our impact on animals in tourism worldwide.

Our ultimate objective is to eliminate practices that have a negative impact on the welfare of animals or that threaten fragile natural habitats and their wildlife.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Auditing the animal attractions we feature in our programme against good practice criteria
- Ensuring compliance with our Animal Welfare Policy. We require suppliers meet the minimum requirements of ABTA's Global Welfare Guidance of Animals in Tourism and STA Travel's Animals in Tourism Operation Criteria
- Removing animal attractions from our programme that fail to meet our good practice criteria
- Encouraging staff, customers, and travel partners to report bad practice so we can take action as quickly as possible
- Raising awareness of the Born Free Travellers' Animal Alert service <http://www.bornfree.org.uk/TAA> which allows visitors to flag up concerns over animal use, abuse or neglect.

Working closely with ABTA, The Travel Association, the Born Free Foundation and other industry partners to uphold the best possible standards in animal welfare

**This is a tricky issue to tackle and we recognise we have a long way to go, but as a business we are committed to making a difference where we can.**