

WILDLIFE

CODES OF CONDUCT



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WILDCHINA

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CODES OF CONDUCT

- 🐾 Our Commitment
- 🐾 Conservation
- 🐾 Tourism & Wildlife: A Balance
- 🐾 Animal Welfare
 - 🐾 Marine Life
 - 🐾 Sea Turtles
 - 🐾 The Giant Panda
 - 🐾 Primates
 - 🐾 Domesticated and Working Animals
- 🐾 Animal-Related Activities
 - 🐾 Snorkeling and boat trips
 - 🐾 Fishing
 - 🐾 Animal Cafes
- 🐾 Instructions for guides and guests on dos and don'ts
- 🐾 Appendix



WILDCHINA



OUR COMMITMENTS

The preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity is a core part of WildChina's mission, and as such, ensuring we work with providers that share our ethos in prioritizing the environment and the animals we work with is of paramount importance to us.

As part of this commitment, we have joined the WWF sustainable travel alliance which works to protect endangered species and spaces and aims to tackle global issues like climate change.

We have also volunteered to join the UN Global Compact early adapter program, pledging our allegiance to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals which aim to combat issues including the environment, human rights, and animal welfare.



We are also in the process of obtaining Travelife’s prestigious sustainability certification, which includes individual animal welfare training available to our whole team and network of providers.

This training ensures that each step of our supply chain is on the same page with animal welfare standards in our travel services, defined by the following ‘**Five Freedoms**’:

- 🐾 Freedom from **hunger and thirst**
- 🐾 Freedom from **discomfort**
- 🐾 Freedom from **pain, injury or disease**
- 🐾 Freedom to **express normal behavior**
- 🐾 Freedom from **fear and distress**





CONSERVATION

The conservation of all flora and fauna encountered on WildChina's journeys is very important. We are in the process of outlining an extensive list of dos and don'ts, but for now ask that all suppliers operate on a best practice basis.

For example, **WildChina** condemns the riding of elephants, but appreciates our tourism revenue is of great benefit to their conservation, elephant conservation centres are therefore available on the programme for our customers to learn about their importance, why riding is a malpractice and how they can help.

As a national legal standard **WildChina** complies with CITES (*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna*) requirements and are proud of China's ratification with the legal framework.

WildChina's team is dedicated and equipped to noticing and reporting any malpractice within animal welfare and the trading of endangered species, whether alive or dead, **WildChina** has a duty to inform the relevant suppliers and governing bodies.





TOURISM & WILDLIFE A BALANCE

China is home to some spectacular wildlife to showcase, some of which are endemic to China, which can put certain species at the top of tourist's bucket list. Whilst the overwhelming opportunity to see this wildlife can provide education and revenue for protection, **WildChina** recognizes that there is a fine balance to strike, as such activities can actually exacerbate wildlife and environmental

protection issues, even when they take place in National Parks.

WildChina, therefore believes wildlife should not be exploited and used as a sole means for profit.

This means that whilst wildlife encounters are a fantastic addition to any WildChina trip, wildlife will not be pursued or lured in order to guarantee this.

TOURISM & WILDLIFE A BALANCE

To reinforce this and ensure all wildlife stays wild, whether marine or terrestrial, **WildChina's** trained tour suppliers, providers and guides educate people to:

- ❧ Not touch the wildlife and flora.
- ❧ Minimize noise disturbance.
- ❧ Not scare or surprise the wildlife.
- ❧ Keep their distance.
- ❧ Avoid flash photography or any similar light disturbance.
- ❧ Not attempt to attract the wildlife with food (as to also avoid associations of food with humans).
- ❧ Not chase, hunt, or attempt to capture wildlife.
- ❧ Not take 'souvenirs' from the environment.

WildChina also makes every effort to ensure that:

- 🐾 All National Park guidelines are followed and communicated by guides to ensure visitor understanding and respect.
- 🐾 Health and Safety of all staff and visitors remains of paramount importance.
- 🐾 Wildlife and humans alike are never to be put into dangerous situations.

Responsible travel is an addition to any trip, rather than a deduction, through supporting companies that support this form of travel, it can promote the longevity of these endemic species for generations to come. So that visitors can end their memorable excursion with the knowledge they have contributed to the survival of these extraordinary species and leave without their habitat without a trace, but lots of memories.



Whilst WildChina agrees all animals should remain in the wild, however, sometimes captivity is necessary for the protection and conservation of these animals and preserving overall biodiversity.

This can in turn provide educational benefits, for example **WildChina** visits the *Ya'an Bifengxia Giant Panda Base* of China Conservation and Research Centre, which has housed these Giant Pandas since the 2008 earthquake and now acts as a nature reserve focusing on the reproduction of Pandas. This area of conservation offers a rare chance for visitors to see these animals as they are usually limited to researchers and doctors.

However, overall, the captivity of animals is less than ideal, as in most cases it disrupts their natural behavioural patterns, such as hunting or foraging for food, social interactions, and other expressions, often due to the inability to replicate their natural surroundings. This can result in unnatural behavior, because of this **WildChina** requires all of its providers to maintain their animal welfare with the most severe importance.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Providers can show their compliance through:

- ❧ Providing their legal certifications for the relevant animals or activity.
- ❧ Showing they ensure the animals live under the principle of the ‘five freedoms’.
- ❧ Showing animals are kept as ‘wild’ as possibly and not domesticated or humanized.
- ❧ Showing animals are not trained, whether humanely taught or not, to carry out tricks as entertainment.
- ❧ Showing they comply with international enclosure guidelines to ensure animal enclosures are large enough for the specific animal.
- ❧ Proving animals have access to veterinarians, food, and clean drinking water.
- ❧ Having visibly healthy animals.
- ❧ Proving animals are housed in humane conditions.

Tourism activities should be developed in accordance with the aforementioned and should benefit conservation and biodiversity efforts through revenue generation.

Finally, **WildChina** strives to continue to improve and also supports its providers to do the same, for example through aspiring to making animal activities even more animal-friendly and ever-improving enclosures as to make it more natural for the animals and they can achieve less human interaction as desired.



OBSERVING FROM A SAFE DISTANCE

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0016

OBSERVING FROM A SAFE DISTANCE

One quick and easy trick guides can teach their groups is the **‘rule of thumb’**, to ensure visitors maintain a safe distance from the wildlife they are observing:

- 🐾 Make a thumbs up
- 🐾 Fully extend your arm towards the animal in the distance
- 🐾 Close one eye
- 🐾 Can you hide the animal with your thumb?
- 🐾 If no, take a few steps back and try again

A simple trick like this is easy to remember and can ensure the safety of visitors and the animals.



Animal encounters can become some of the most memorable moments of a trip, especially the vibrant and endless sea life that can be spotted off the coast of the vibrant city of Hainan. Anything from sharks, rays, and dolphins to vibrant corals and jellyfish can be found here. **WildChina** runs whale shark observance excursions here, which take place from aboard boats as to ensure minimal disturbance to the animals.

Additionally, **WildChina** also offers a day trip to the Atlantis Sanya aquarium (one of the largest in the world) which offers a great place for people to get close to and learn about a large array of marine life, with the main message being how to better protect this marine life.



SEA TURTLES

‘*Wugui*’, in Chinese refers to all hard-shelled turtle species.

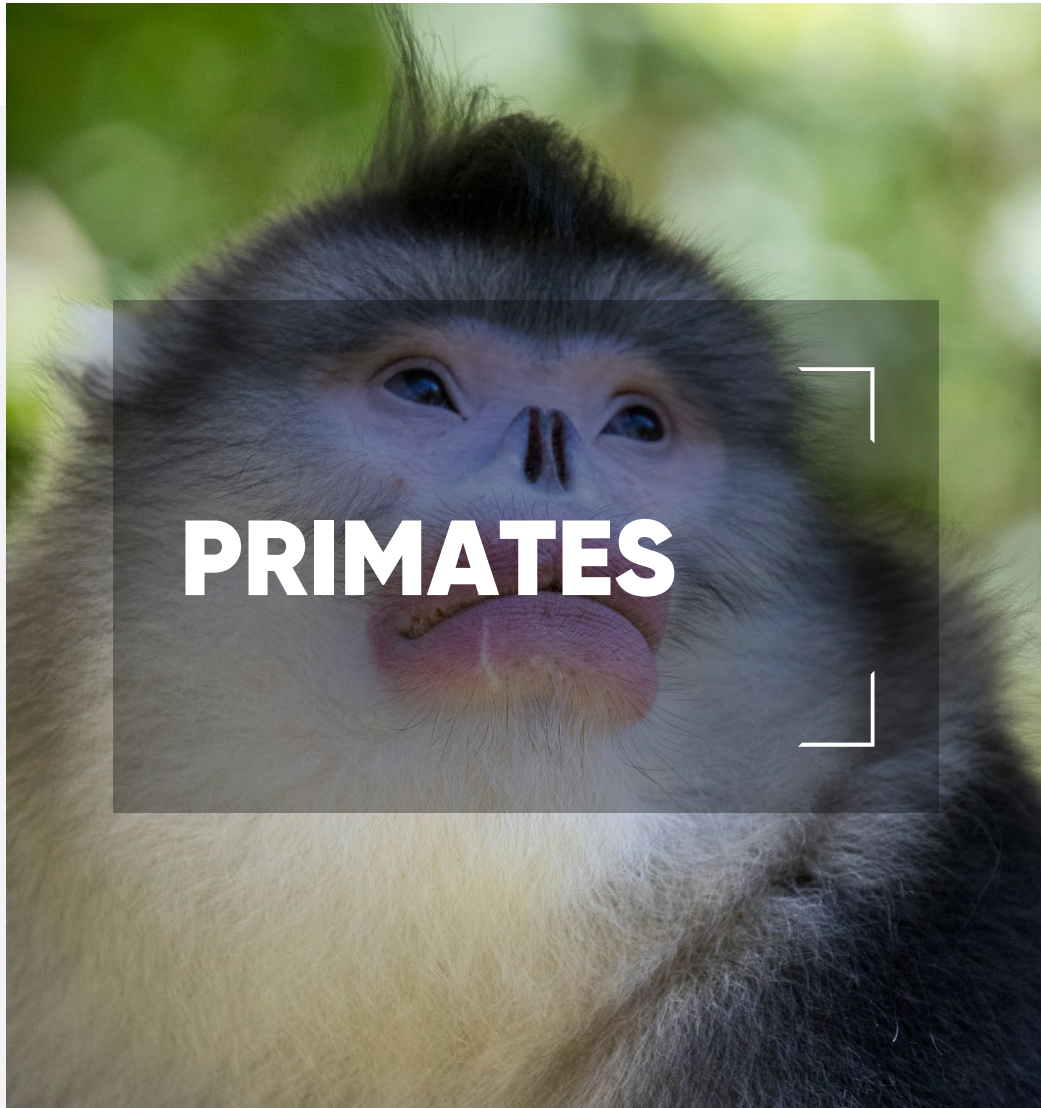
China is home to some spectacular marine wildlife, including the universally popular sea turtle. **76%** of turtle species have been labeled as endangered to critically endangered. It is therefore critical that any encounters are responsibly managed to ensure the longevity of these beloved animals. Two big contributors to sea turtle decline are lack of quiet beaches (where they lay their eggs) and increase in sea plastics.

For this reason, **WildChina** endeavors to avoid beach activities during hatching season.



Pandas are China's most valued national treasure, and as such earn a much-deserved bucket list spot for visitors to the country. However, as an endangered species with only 1,800 individuals left in the wild, extra care must be taken to ensure responsible tourism is practiced when visiting these animals as increased stress on the species or their habitat could have dire consequences to their prolonged survival.

WildChina conducts tracking tours in the wild which offer a rare and fantastic opportunity to see pandas in their natural habitats. However, we never approach or disturb the animals and make sure to follow our panda tracking expert's advice on keeping a safe distance.



On some of **WildChina**'s journeys, a trip to the Tacheng Yunnan Black Snub Nosed Monkey National Park takes place, where visitors may see Black Snub Nosed Monkeys in their natural setting supervised by on-site rangers and experts. During this experience it is important that all visitors:

- 🐾 Maintain a safe distance from the primates at all times.
- 🐾 Never touch the primates.

The feeding of any animal, including primates, can alter their behavior, and result in a dependency on humans as opposed to inherent skills like foraging. **WildChina** asks its visitors to avoid feeding or interacting with primates in any way and asks that guides and suppliers reinforce this message when on the ground with visitors.



DOMESTICATED AND WORKING ANIMALS

DOMESTICATED AND WORKING ANIMALS

WildChina does not condone the riding of elephants, but under good permits camel, donkey, and horse riding. Good practice is defined as the following:

- 🐾 Visitors must only ride animals suitable to their weight and size.
- 🐾 Animals must not carry more than half their bodyweight and even less in hot conditions and no riding is to take place in extreme heat.
- 🐾 Animal coats must be in good condition i.e., no sores, etc.
- 🐾 Handlers must not resort to physical force, such as whipping.



ANIMAL-RELATED ACTIVITES



When **WildChina** conducts snorkeling and boat trips, it endeavors to:

- 🐾 Avoid crowded areas and have options to go elsewhere to avoid overcrowding.
- 🐾 Ensure suppliers operate with a valid license.
- 🐾 Manage expectations – animals may swim away, and suppliers must not speed up to ‘catch-up’ with these animals.
- 🐾 Ensure suppliers conduct safety briefs.
- 🐾 Ensure suppliers keep the boat in neutral flotation when being approached by marine animals.

- ❧ Ensure visitors do not touch marine flora or fauna with hands or fins.
- ❧ Ensure the seabed is not disturbed by teaching visitors not to rest on the sea floor.
- ❧ Ensure suppliers don't force dolphins to bow ride.
- ❧ Ensure suppliers don't overstay their welcome in the marine environment and have reasonably allotted time slots.
- ❧ Ensure marine animals are approached from the side, not the front or back.





WildChina only conducts fishing activities when:

- ❃ Fishing is for a purpose defined as (1) when it supports the livelihood of local fishermen (2) the fish are not wasted and (3) the fish are fully consumed by the visitors or locals.
- ❃ Suppliers do not damage and release the fish, for entertainment.
- ❃ It supports educational purposes.
- ❃ If fishing does not take place in the wild, it occurs in a culturally-relevant situation (ex. fishes in rice paddies where the fish are farmed for this purpose and have a symbiotic purpose for rice production).
- ❃ Fishing for sport only happens in a farmed enclosure to protect endangered fish being caught as by-catch



The inherent nature of animal cafés, prioritizing animals for entertainment and profit over conservation, sits in stark opposition to **WildChina**'s policy and values. **WildChina**, therefore, **avoids** this kind of entertainment and encourages and educates its visitors as to why they should not be supported.

Despite the rise in popularity and frequency of animal cafés arising in parts of China and the rest of the world, **WildChina** decidedly continues to **refuse to support** this type of commerce. Even seemingly considered 'cute' animals, such as hedgehogs who seem under no harm are kept awake during the day at such cafés as to please visitors, despite them being strictly nocturnal, a clear unnatural detriment to this species.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDES AND GUESTS ON DOS AND DON'T'S

The guides at WildChina are crucial to implementing the above best practices on the ground, to ensure visitors and the wildlife alike remain safe and have a good time.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDES AND GUESTS ON DOS AND DONT'S

WildChina guides are accompanied by specialists when in areas of strict conservation to ensure biological and ecological fragility is maintained. The guides at **WildChina** work alongside the following general principles:

- ❃ Do not touch or attempt to feed the wildlife.
- ❃ Do not touch plants, trees, or coral.
- ❃ Do not scare or creep up on wildlife.
- ❃ Do not hunt animals or support animal hunting or animal trade.
- ❃ Leave no trace.
- ❃ Do not collect/keep anything.
- ❃ Do not drive off the roads, especially in national parks.
- ❃ When viewing wildlife, keep a minimum of 20 meters distance.
- ❃ Keep below the speed limit (most national parks have a maximum of 40KPH/25MPH).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDES AND GUESTS ON DOS AND DONT'S

General principles for **AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS:**

- 🐾 Do not collect anything.
- 🐾 Do not touch coral.
- 🐾 Listen to the activity instructor.
- 🐾 Stay together.
- 🐾 Do not bring bait or chum to entice animals.
- 🐾 Do not swim after marine or aquatic life.
- 🐾 Do not uncover beach nests.
- 🐾 Do not 'silt up' or cause a disturbance with fins and keep hands together and in front of the body at all times and avoid resting on sea or riverbed

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDES AND GUESTS ON DOS AND DON'T'S

General principles for **FORESTED AND MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN:**

- ❃ Remain together.
- ❃ Stick to wildlife and environmentally friendly activities.

General principles for **GUIDING AROUND PRIMATES:**

- ❃ Make sure no one from the group is carrying anything that can be grabbed or interpreted as food.
- ❃ Before entering, leave food behind in a safe place.
- ❃ No touching.
- ❃ No staring.
- ❃ No chasing or scaring away.
- ❃ No supporting of primate spectacles or anthropomorphizing of primates.
- ❃ Use the 'rule of thumb'.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDES AND GUESTS ON DOS AND DONT'S

General principles for **LARGE LAND ANIMALS**, such as elephants, bears, and yak:

- ❃ It is crucial that a safe distance is maintained at all times!
- ❃ If threatened elephants usually conduct a 'mock charge' first, so do not overreact, but this means a respectful distance has been breached and the safety of the animal and the visitors has been compromised. Move slowly, but purposefully away, immediately.
- ❃ Keep voices low and monotone, do not induce spooking.
- ❃ Ensure no activities concerning these animals are to their detriment, for example, no elephant rides.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDES AND GUESTS ON DOS AND DONT'S

Additionally, when a new product or service is being developed at **WildChina**, the criteria in which the associating providers and suppliers must maintain are as follows:

This is so **WildChina** can ensure it is aligning itself with reputable suppliers, guaranteeing outstanding animal welfare and great visitor experience.



APPENDIX

THE FIVE FREEDOMS

- 🐾 Freedom from **hunger and thirst**
- 🐾 Freedom from **discomfort**
- 🐾 Freedom from **pain, injury or disease**
- 🐾 Freedom to **express normal behavior**
- 🐾 Freedom from **fear and distress**



FREEDOMS

COMPLIANCE

- ❃ Complete compliance with national laws, such as the CITES (*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*) framework.
- ❃ Operators have valid licenses, and these are issued by the correct bodies.
- ❃ Know that all animal trade, whether dead or alive is illegal and who to contact if witnessed or suspected.



FOLLOW GOOD PRACTICES

- 🐾 Ensure guides and the specialists and rangers worked with are trained to guarantee the safety of the animals and travelers.
- 🐾 Ensure the visitors are well informed of the rules and guidelines for seeing each of the individual animals, to avoid unsafe situations.
- 🐾 Ensure local staff are paid well and are housed in good living standards.
- 🐾 Make sure to hold onto waste until appropriate disposal areas are found.
- 🐾 Avoid motorized activities, such as jet skiing or quad biking in areas of conservation and marine reserves.

ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY

- 🐾 Animals should not be held under cruel circumstances or inhumane conditions.
- 🐾 Animals should not be made to perform.
- 🐾 Animals should not be humanized, or wild animals should not be domesticated.
- 🐾 Animals should be kept in appropriately sized enclosures, either at the legal dimension standard or above.
- 🐾 Animals should have unlimited access to clean drinking water.
- 🐾 Animals should have access to veterinary care.
- 🐾 Animals should be healthy and fed appropriately.

SAFEGUARDING OF WILD ANIMALS

- 🐾 Wild animals should remain wild.
- 🐾 Wild animals should not be fed or taught to associate humans or situations with food.
- 🐾 They should never be chased or scared.
- 🐾 They should never be touched.
- 🐾 They should never be hunted.

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