



Animal Welfare Policy

MAY 2021

Introduction

Animals are an important part of tourism and contribute to the cultural and natural heritage of destinations. At Club Med, we are aware of this richness and listen to our customers' wishes to get closer to nature.

However, we also know that tourism can be detrimental to the welfare of the animals involved, and that it is not always easy for consumers and professionals to distinguish between good and bad activities. In parallel, knowledge on animal welfare is developing, thanks to the commitment of various stakeholders, which enables to progressively identify the practices that must be encouraged and the ones that can no longer be tolerated.

Therefore, at Club Med, we have been committed for several years, alongside with specialists, to align our practices with our values. Following an overview of the products we offer to our GMs, we identified three priority groups of animals, elephants, cetaceans and working animals, because of their importance within our offer, but also owing to the existing threats to these species.

We are moving forward with this approach in partnership with our suppliers and experts, convinced that the solution does not lie in removing all animals in tourism, but in selecting and supporting suppliers in the deployment of good practices.

Agnès WEIL, Director of Sustainability

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01



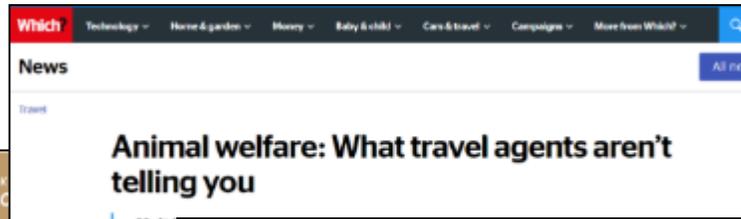
Context Animal welfare concern & industry reaction

Emergence of animal welfare concerns in tourism

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By Kirstin Marlowe | On Nov 8, 2018



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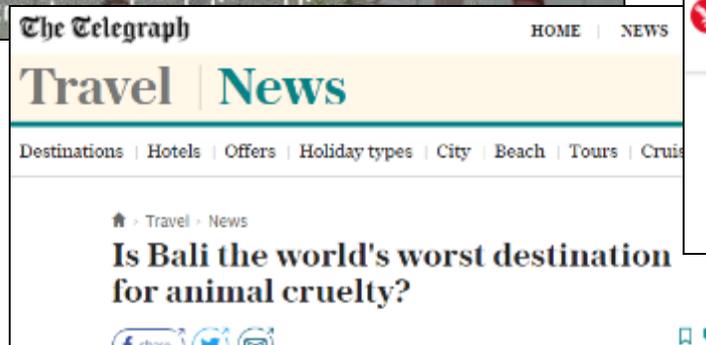
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Captive wild animal encounters are hugely popular, thanks partly to social media.



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THOMAS COOK TO STOP SELLING TICKETS TO SEAWORLD OVER ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

Tourism industry evolution

- Commitments from major tourism actors:

	ELEPHANTS	CETACEANS	WORKING ANIMALS
	No elephant shows and rides sold since 2016	-	All suppliers must adhere to ABTA's Global Welfare Guidance for Animals in Tourism All animal excursions suppliers are progressively being audited
	-	No new attractions featuring captive whales and dolphins signed since 2017	-
	Kuoni partners must adhere to a code of conduct, they must comply with animal welfare standards (CITES & ABTA Animal Welfare Minimum Requirements)		

- Legislation on captive cetaceans evolving quickly:

E.g., [Cetacean captivity is banned in Canada, California, India, Croatia, Chile, Costa Rica, among other countries](#)



Elephants

Elephants in tourism



MAIN ACTIVITIES WITH ELEPHANTS

- Elephant rides
- Elephants shows (circuses)
- Feeding and bathing elephants
- Viewing elephants in the wild (safari)
- Viewing elephants in an enclosure



ISSUES OF ELEPHANT TOURISM

- **Issues of captivity:**
 - Elephants are very intelligent and social animals who allocate most of their time to foraging and moving
- **Issues of activities involving contact with elephants:**
 - Elephants are dangerous animals (category 1, like lions)
 - Activities with human contact require training to make the elephant accept human presence, which very often involve physical and psychological violence to break the animal's spirit
- **Additional issues of elephant shows:**
 - Elephants shows force elephants to adopt unnatural postures

Elephants in tourism – Main welfare risks

Elephants kept in captivity for shows and ride are separated from their mother and trained violently through a practice called « phajaan ». The elephants are isolated, starved and beaten for days to break their wild spirit



Elephants are often chained with very short chains day and night

For activities with contact and shows, elephants are controlled with a « bullhook ». Right picture: elephant with injuries from bullhook



Elephants are forced to perform unnatural tricks for shows, under the bullhook threat



Expert support and position



ABTA, 2019:
Any practice involving human-elephant contact is unacceptable.

The **ABTA** (Association of British Travel Agents) is the reference in terms of animal welfare in tourism

- In 2013, they published guidelines overseeing animal welfare in tourism, with a specific focus on elephants
- These guidelines were written by 200 experts (NGOs, industry associations, individual experts...) and are currently being reviewed with the objective to be more demanding.

Club Med has been moving forward in its approach in close collaboration with ABTA for several years, following ABTA's recommendations and participating to their animal welfare workshop. The recommendations included in this chapter are based on all this work and reflection.

Elephant tourism – Responsible alternatives

Observing elephants being their wild selves is the encouraged elephant tourism activity.

Highest welfare venues allow observational activities only with no direct interaction between humans and elephants. Without contact, the animals are less stressed and thus less dangerous, which allows for less control from the owner, and more peace of mind. Observations activities still enable to provide local people with a vital, sustainable income from wildlife tourism.

Some recognized sanctuaries allow occasional contacts with the elephants and still maintain a high level of welfare. E.g., the NGO World Animal Protection identified venues with best welfare conditions.



Club Med: 13 elephant activities, 1 resort, 12 circuits



Club Med commitment for Elephants

From the end of 2020, Club Med will only offer activities of observation of elephants.

The following activities will be stopped by end of 2020:

- 1. Circus shows,**
- 2. Riding activities,**
- 3. Bathing activities.**

RES

Cetaceans

Cetaceans in tourism



MAIN ACTIVITIES WITH CETACEANS

- Dolphins and orcas shows in marine parks
- « Swim with cetaceans » activities in marine parks
- Viewing cetaceans in marine parks
- « Swim with cetaceans » activities in the wild
- Observing cetaceans in the wild



ISSUES OF CETACEAN TOURISM

- **Issues of captivity:**
 - Cetaceans naturally live in complex societies and have intelligence comparable to apes and elephants
 - In captivity, cetaceans are offered a too restrictive space compared to the distances they travel in the wild
 - They suffer from social and behavioural restrictions
- **Issues with “in the wild” activities:**
 - Captive and wild cetaceans can be dangerous
 - Ill-managed boat excursions can make cetaceans unsettled, spending less time feeding, socialising or resting

Cetaceans in tourism – Main welfare risks

CAPTIVITY UNETHICAL PRACTICES

Animals are often captured violently from the wild



Cetaceans hurt themselves on their tank's bars, most of them have worn down teeth



« Swim with » activities are stressful to cetaceans since they cannot leave and they can be hurt by human contact



Animals who normally swim more than 100km a day are confined in small tanks



Violent control methods are sometimes used



Almost no captive orca has lived past 30 years old. In the wild, they can live up to 80

IN THE WILD UNETHICAL PRACTICES

Pressure from numerous boats can disturb cetaceans, especially if boats are chasing the animals



Expert support and position



WCA: Holding cetaceans in captivity is unacceptable.

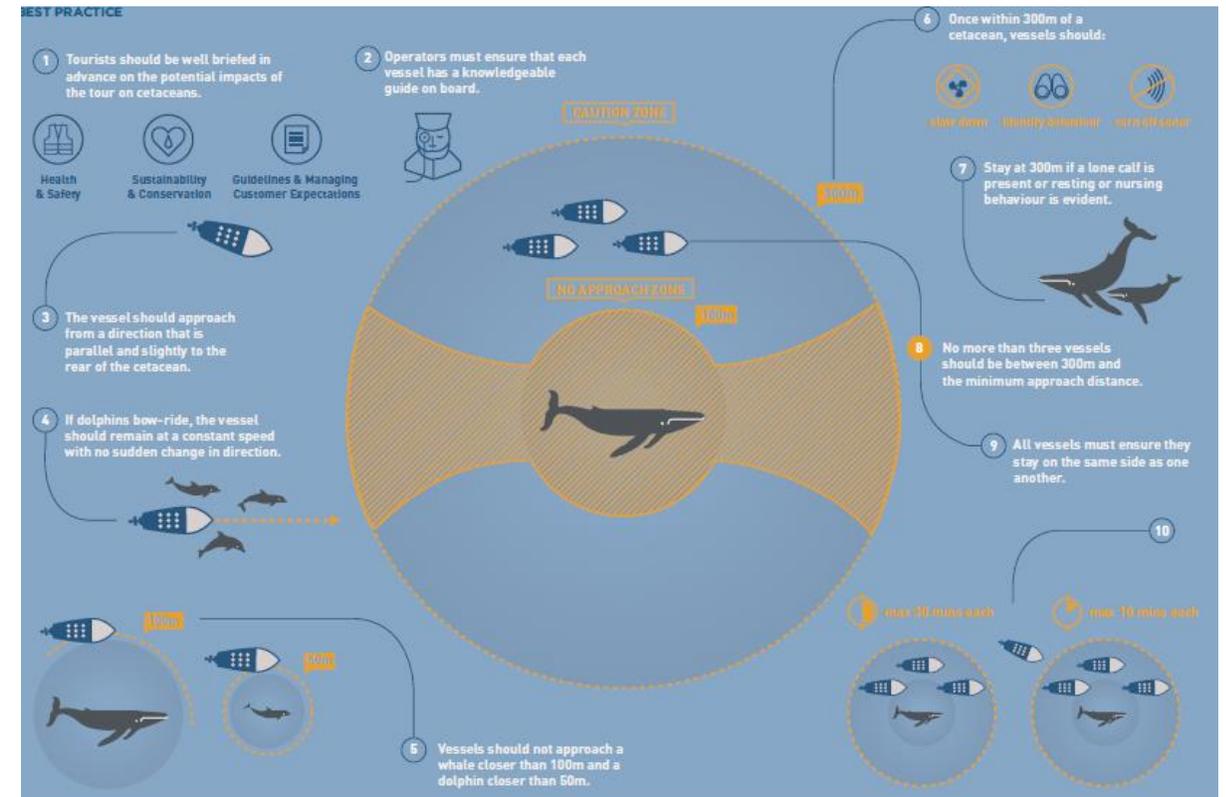
The **WCA (World Cetacean Alliance)** is the world's largest partnership working to protect whales, dolphins and porpoises. It gathers non-profit organizations, tour operators and individual experts worldwide to raise awareness on cetaceans.

Protecting cetaceans does not mean stopping all tourist activities, **but any activity must be properly designed and supervised**, for the safety of animals and humans involved.



Club Med and the WCA co-created the first international guide on cetaceans observation

In 2018, Club Med sponsored the creation by the World Cetacean Alliance of the first international guidelines on cetaceans observation. This document highlights best practices and unacceptable practices for observation by boat and by swimming.



Cetacean tourism – Responsible alternatives

Cetacean watching in the wild is the activity with the most positive impact, provided it is done properly.

Club Med and WCA international cetaceans observation best practices guide provides detailed advice to distinguish between unacceptable and best practices for cetacean watching tours suppliers, including boat tours and swimming tours.

Some examples of best practices:

- Each boat must have a knowledgeable guide on board and include a briefing of the customers on the animals and their threats
- Cetaceans should always be approached from the side and slightly behind, making sure the animal has a right of way
- Boats should not approach a whale closer than 100 metres and should not approach a dolphin or porpoise closer than 50 metres
- No more than three boats should be between 300 metres and the cetaceans
- There should be no water entry if the cetaceans are feeding, resting or trying to flee
- Swimmers should never be placed directly in a cetacean's line of travel or on top of the animals



See [WCA and Club Med guide](#) for more information.

The WCA also assesses and identifies responsible suppliers.

Club Med: 11 cetacean activities, 1 in captivity



Club Med commitment for Cetaceans

From the end of 2020, Club Med will only sell activities of observation of cetaceans in the wild.

May 2021 update: last activity will be removed by August 2021.

Since 2019, Club Med works with WCA to train its suppliers on the WCA & Club Med guidelines for wild cetacean observation.



Wild cats

Wild cats tourism – Main welfare risks

1

Cubs are often **separated from their mothers** for pictures with tourists.

They may be chained up or kept in small cages where they are not properly fed.



2



As the lion grows, it may be involved in activities such as **Walking with lions**.

Interacting with tourists goes against wild cats natural behavior. To avoid any risks, wild cats may be **drugged, chained, declawed** or have their **teeth removed**.

3

When the lion grows too dangerous for touristic interactions, they risk ending up in facilities in **poor living conditions**. Some can be sold for **hunting activities**.

ABTA, 2019

Direct contact between tourists and wild cats like feeding and 'walking with' activities are unacceptable practices.



Club Med commitment for Wild cats

From the end of 2020, Club Med will only offer activities of observation of wild cats.

Activities involving direct interaction with wild cats will be stopped by the end of 2020.



Working animals



Working animals in tourism



WHAT ARE WORKING ANIMALS?

- Animals used for rides (elephants, camels, donkeys...)
- Animals used to pull carts, carriages, sleighs
- Animals used to carry loads

ENSURING MINIMUM WELFARE REQUIREMENTS: THE FIVE FREEDOMS

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



ISSUES OF WORKING ANIMALS IN TOURISM

- **Potential impacts on animal welfare:**
 - Animals kept in unsuitable captive conditions
 - Lack of veterinary care
 - Problems caused by poorly designed harnesses, saddles
 - Overloading
 - Working long hours under hard weather conditions
 - Cruel training methodsAll of these may cause abnormal behaviour, diseases and death
- **Activities with working animals can be dangerous for humans and must be managed properly**

Working animals in tourism – Main welfare risks

Animal can sometimes be forced to work for long hours without rest, carrying too heavy loads or working under severe weather conditions



Working animals are sometimes beaten to do their work



If not adapted, animals can be injured by saddles, harnesses, or ropes. Some owners do not treat the wounds properly before putting the animal back to work

There is a risk that owners do not feed their animals properly in order to save money



Working Animals at Club Med



Animals carrying loads

E.g., Club Med tour
« Sanctuaires de l'Himalaya »



Carriage rides

E.g., Club Med tour « Ramses II »



Animal rides (horses, camels, donkeys)

E.g., Club Med Agadir,
Marrakech, Kemer, Palmiye,
Cancun, Punta Cana...



Club Med commitment for Working animals

From 2020, Club Med encourages its suppliers to respect working animals welfare through the progressive implementation of its Animal Welfare Charter.

Club Med will be vigilant about suppliers practices and will proceed to animal welfare audit

May 2021 update: due to the ongoing crisis, the implementation of the Animal Welfare Charter and corresponding audits have been postponed to the industry relaunch



Animals for pictures

Animal props – Main welfare risks

Animal pictures, also called Animal prom. What is it?

An animal prop is an animal used as an accessory to take a picture with.

What are the risk for wildlife and animal welfare?

- Some of the animals used as photo props are directly snatched from their natural habitats, into a noisy and stressful activity.
- Animal props are forced to stay for the photo with the tourist. This direct contact goes against natural behaviours and may cause stress and even injuries.
- After the show, animal props are often kept in poor living conditions.



ABTA, 2019

Touristic photo involving a wild animal that is forced to stay is an unacceptable practice.



Club Med commitment for Animal props

**By the end of 2020, Club Med will no longer allow
the use of wildlife as photographic props.**

07



Sea Turtles

Sea turtles - Risks of tourism

Some facts about sea turtles:

- Sea turtles are found in all warm and temperate waters throughout the world and migrate hundreds of miles between nesting and feeding grounds.
- They spend most of their life in water, but female sea turtles lay their eggs on beaches.
- They lay their eggs on the beach where they were born, which means that the resort can disturb them if built on this beach.
- Six of the seven species of turtles are threatened or endangered.

Tourism can contribute to endangering marine turtles:

Sea turtles in the water

Threats from tourism to sea turtles in water mainly come from watersports and speedboats, especially during breeding season when turtles gather in shallow waters. Very often, turtles are hit by boats without even being noticed



Sea turtles nesting on beaches

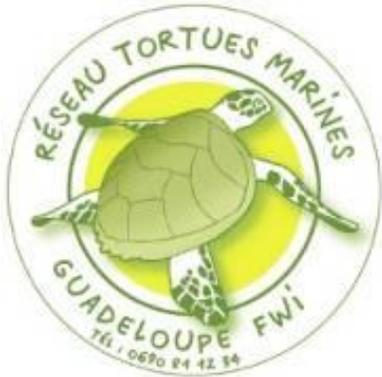
Waste, holes in the sand, sunbeds, parasols and strong lights can all contribute to disturbing the laying turtle, damaging the eggs or preventing the hatchlings from reaching the sea



Experts support on turtles

Club Med relies on the advice and support of several experts to protect turtles locally at our resorts. Here are some examples :

LA CARAVELLE



We work with the **Guadeloupe Sea Turtles Network** and the protection association « **Kap Natirel** ». Our partnership was recognized in the France-Antilles newspaper

IXTAPA



We partner with « **Ixtapa Zihuatanejo** », which is a coalition of NGOs and government organisations

BINTAN ISLAND



The « **Bintan Resorts Turtle Conservation Initiative** » helps us to protect and collect turtle eggs

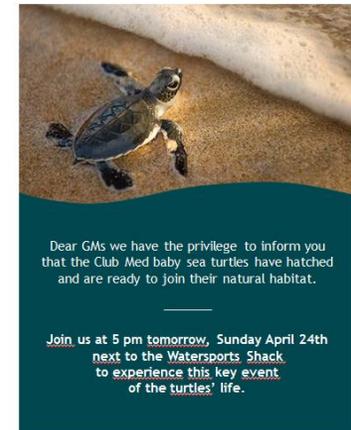
In 2013, Club Med created a turtle protection guide

In 2013, we developed an internal guide to raise awareness among our teams and support them in their actions to protect turtles on site.

We were advised by specialists to develop this guide:

- Virginie DUVAT, Geography professor and topical environments experts
- GAIA DOMO, consulting firm specialized in biodiversity

The guide contains information on marine turtles and their threats, as well as advice on actions that can be implemented by Club Med resorts to help these animals.



	GREEN TURTLE <ul style="list-style-type: none">> La Caravelle - Guadeloupe Egg-laying season: June to September> Cherating - Malaysia Egg-laying season: March to September> Bintan Island - Indonesia Egg-laying season: March to December> Cancun - Mexico Egg-laying season: end of May to September	
	LOGGERHEAD TURTLE <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Cancun - Mexico Egg-laying season: March to September	
	LEATHER-BACK TURTLE <ul style="list-style-type: none">> La Caravelle - Guadeloupe Egg-laying season: June to September	
	HAWKSBILL TURTLE <ul style="list-style-type: none">> La Caravelle - Guadeloupe Egg-laying season: June to September> Bintan Island - Indonesia Egg-laying season: March to September> Cherating Beach - Malaysia Egg-laying season: end of March to September> Ixtapa - Mexico Egg-laying season: July to January	

There are 7 species of turtles. Six of them visit our resorts.
Turtles can be recognised by their shape, size and the number of scales on their shell.

Resorts can help protect marine turtles

- Resorts can contribute to raise travelers' awareness on turtles through:

- Conferences and video screenings
- Supervised observation of the birth and baby turtles release
- Recommendations printed and displayed near the beach

- Resorts can help protect turtles and nests from predators by:

- Creating a fenced nest area and monitoring the beach every morning for new eggs
- Organizing protected release of the baby turtles

- Sponsoring local turtle protection associations

Example of communication near the beach

Avoid using flash photography, lamps and torches
Sea turtles nest and lay their eggs at night, bright lights will scare them away.

Keep your distance
Sea turtles are easily disturbed by human presence. Should you encounter one, keep your distance, try to be quiet and do not touch them.

Please do not leave any litter on the beach or in the ocean
Turtles may confuse litter with their own food, causing injuries or even death.

If possible, sunbathe, walk and play in the harder sand near the sea
Turtles lay their eggs near the surface in the loose sand, near the back of the beach.

Do not disturb the turtles
Newly hatched turtles face a dangerous journey to the sea. You can help by not picking them up, removing anything that could be in their path, and by not shining lights which can disorientate them.

Do not purchase or consume any turtle-derived product
Products such as meat, eggs, oils, or turtle-shell handicrafts.



Fenced nest area in Club Med Cancun

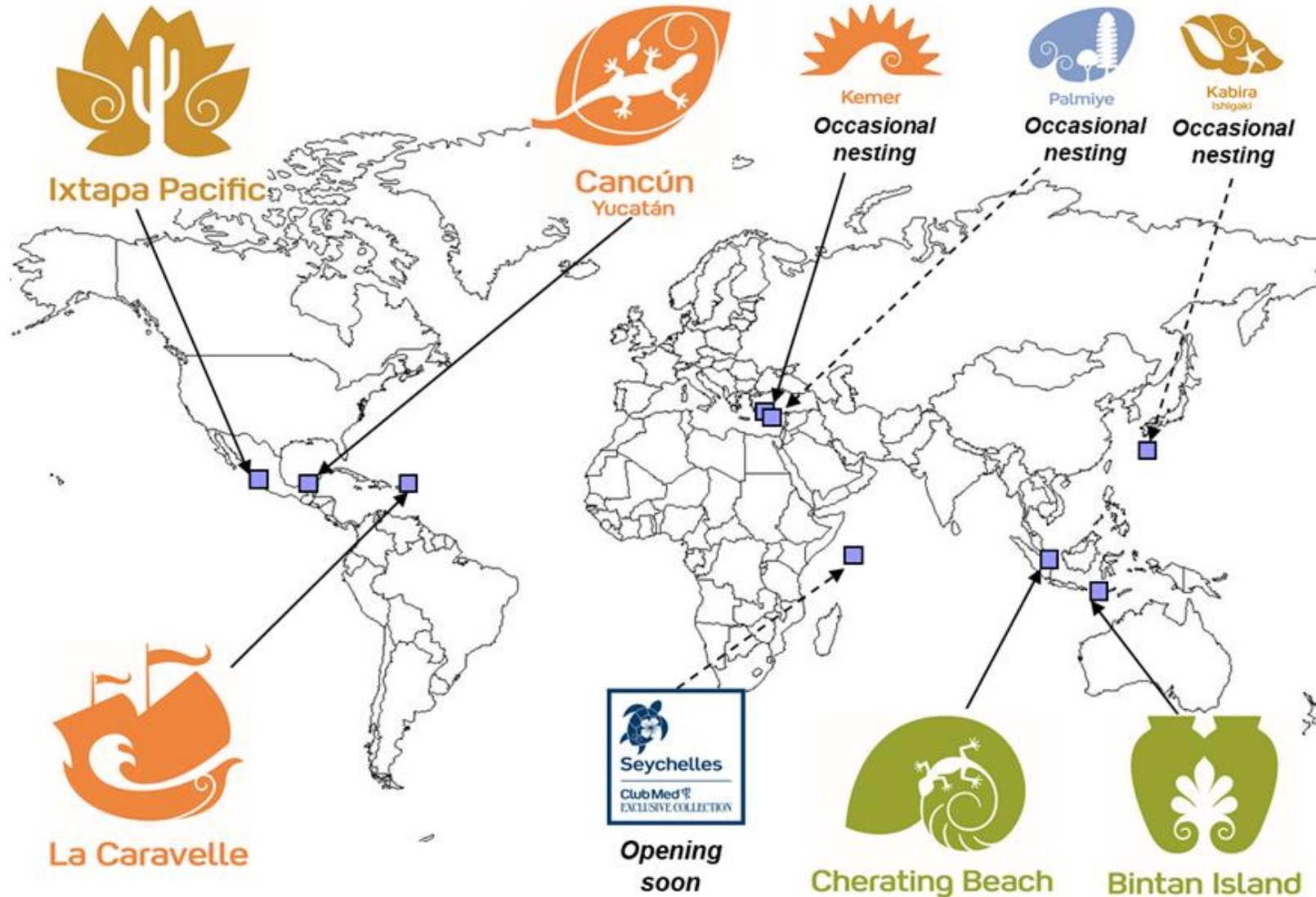


Protected turtle release at Club Med Bintan Island



Thanks to all these measures, turtles come back to lay their eggs on Club Med's beaches

Sea turtles nesting sites at Club Med



Club Med commitment for Sea turtles

In all resorts located in a turtle nesting site, partnering with local experts, Club Med commits to protecting turtles by securing the nests, ensuring non disturbance, and raising awareness.

Club Med will keep the [turtle protection guide](#) available to its staff and follow its right application.





Other animal issues



Club Med commitment for Cage-free eggs

From 2025 onward, Club Med will only source cage-free eggs* (shell, liquid and eggs products) for all resorts in Europe, Brazil and the United States (and from 2027 in the other markets).

In Europe, all eggs served with their shell at the buffet already come from free range hens.

** This commitment is part of our purchasing policy, which implies that all products purchased must meet the company's hygiene and health safety requirements.*

An underwater scene with various fish swimming in clear blue water. In the background, there are coral reefs and other marine life. The lighting is bright, creating a clear view of the underwater environment.

Club Med commitment for Seafood charter

Since 2007, Club Med, through its Sustainable purchasing policy, does not allow the purchase of marine threatened species*.

Our policy is embodied in our Sustainable seafood charter.

**According to IUCN Red List*



Club Med commitment for Animal fur

**From the end of 2020, as part of its Animal Welfare policy,
Club Med committed to stop buying fur.**

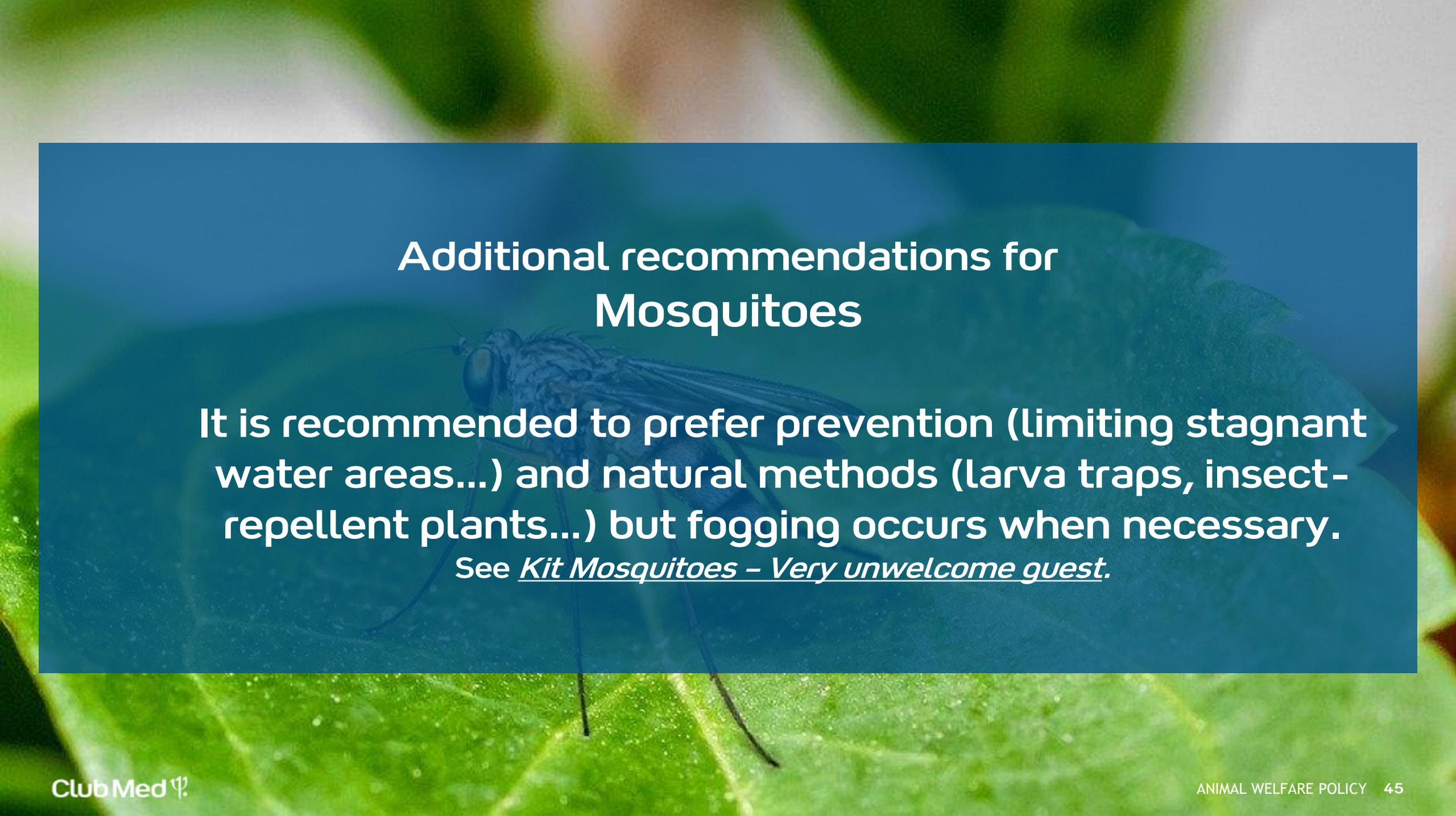
**By the end of 2021, no more fur will be sold
in Club Med's boutiques.**



Additional recommendations for Stray animals

In case of a group of stray animals on Club Med's property, Club Med recommends to directly contact local authorities and animal associations to implement a sterilization campaign, and potentially displace them to a suited area.

Introduction of animals on Club Med's property and their removal by GOs and GEs should be prohibited (TBD).



Additional recommendations for Mosquitoes

It is recommended to prefer prevention (limiting stagnant water areas...) and natural methods (larva traps, insect-repellent plants...) but fogging occurs when necessary.

See *Kit Mosquitoes – Very unwelcome guest.*

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Annexes



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 venue guidelines'¹.

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 welfare venue may call itself 'Bangkok Sanctuary for Elephants'. We therefore strongly recommend verifying the names to be exactly as below.

Activities with an * offer some limited form of direct contact between visitors and elephants without a protected barrier. They are nonetheless featured here because of other outstanding actions taken to provide best welfare to their elephants. However, while these direct contact opportunities at these venues are minimal and well supervised to ensure voluntary participation by elephants, we do advise venues to move away from such practices and travellers to politely voice their preference to not engage in direct contact without protective barriers or when elephants are not voluntarily participating.

Country	Name	Offered visitor activities	Date confirming visitor activities
Cambodia	Elephant Valley Project (EVP)	Observing elephants	2019
Laos	Elephant Conservation Centre	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest, one daily opportunity of direct interaction under mahout supervision (*)	2019
Laos	Mandalao Elephant Conservation	Observing elephants, some short touching and direct interaction permitted (*)	2019
Nepal	Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest and fields	2019

¹ Elephantfriendly venue guidelines can be found here: www.worldanimalprotection.org/elephant-friendly-venue-guideline

Best practice elephant venue list
Version 1.1



Country	Name	Offered visitor activities	Date confirming visitor activities
Sri Lanka	Elephant Transit Home	Observing young orphan elephants prior to release back into the wild	2018
Thailand	Boon Lott Elephant Sanctuary (BLES)	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest and fields	2019
Thailand	Burm and Emily's Elephant Sanctuary (BEES)	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest and fields	2019
Thailand	ChangChill	Observing elephants, preparing food and mahout chat	2019
Thailand	Elephant Nature Park (ENP)	Observing elephants, feeding of elephants from platform	2018
Thailand	Elephant Valley Thailand (EVT)	Observing elephants, protected contact feeding	2019
Thailand	Following Giants	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest	2019
Thailand	Global Vision International (GVI) project in Huay Pakoot	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest, visitors feeding one time per week (*)	2017
Thailand	Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation	Observation of elephants, walking with elephants, some direct interaction (*) ²	2016
Thailand	Kindred Spirit Elephant Sanctuary	Observing elephants in the forest, feeding and some direct interaction (*)	2016
Thailand	Mahouts Elephant Foundation	Observing elephants, following elephants in forest	2018
Thailand	Phuket Elephant Sanctuary	Observing elephants, protected contact feeding	2018
Thailand	Samui Elephant Sanctuary	Observing elephants, some feeding and direct interaction (*)	2018
Thailand	Tree Tops Elephant Reserve	Observing elephants, following elephants in natural area, some protected contact feeding	2019
Thailand	Somboon Legacy Foundation	Observing elephants, following elephants in natural area	2019

² This must be distinguished from activities by adjacent Anantara resort, which do offer some riding.



Building an elephant friendly future

The use of captive elephants in most tourist attractions involves unnecessary suffering for the entertainment of visitors. World Animal Protection's 'Taken for a Ride'³ report found that almost 80% of the 3,000 elephants used at tourist venues across Asia were living in 'severely inadequate conditions', with a clear correlation between those conditions and the activity being offered to tourists. Essentially, almost all the elephants living in severely inadequate conditions were found at venues offering elephant rides.

World Animal Protection acknowledges the need to facilitate the transitioning of existing elephant camps from worst husbandry to best possible captive conditions. To achieve this we work collaboratively with venue owners, mahouts, the travel companies and communities.

Changing demand

Elephant camps taking steps to transition from conventional elephant attractions towards observation-only elephant-friendly venues will be spear-heading a movement that is bound to increase, with more and more tourists and travel companies increasing demand for such places. Through Elephant-Friendly venues, animal welfare for existing captive elephants can be respected in the best possible way, while at the same time reducing demand for conventional elephant entertainment further exploitation of elephants will end.

To learn more about how we are building an elephant friendly future visit worldanimalprotection.org/chanqchill

³ Read the 'Taken for a Ride: The conditions for elephants used in tourism in Asia' [here](#).

Why sterilize stray animals?

