



# Jane Goodall Institute Global Policy on Wildlife Tourism

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Wildlife tourism has the potential to: educate and engage; help conserve endangered species and threatened habitats; help local communities protect their heritage and environment; and provide sustainable livelihoods<sup>i</sup>. However, such tourism can also undermine conservation efforts, damage biodiversity and eco-systems, and harm individual organisms as well as communities<sup>ii</sup>. It must be carefully planned and managed.

## 2. OUR VISION

Our global vision is for a healthy planet where people make compassionate choices to live sustainably and in harmony with each other, the environment, and other animals.

At the heart of this policy is the principle that humans and wildlife can thrive in harmonious co-existence and that each and every individual matters.

## 3. WILDLIFE TOURISM GUIDELINES

The Jane Goodall Institute supports the aim that wildlife tourism should not only mitigate against risks but also seek to make positive net contributions to eco-systems and biodiversity in the form of Conservation Tourism<sup>iii</sup> - going beyond general principles of eco-tourism<sup>iv</sup> to actively advance our vision. We set out below key issues, in particular in relation to great apes, including chimpanzees, our flagship species.

In order to respect and protect wildlife in the wild, tourism must be properly planned and managed mindful of evidence-based research. The primary considerations should be protection and conservation. The needs and impact on the wild group/individuals must be vital considerations, along with the needs of and impact on local communities--the key stakeholders.

Tourists should be empowered to make ethical choices facilitated by the dissemination of ethical tourism information (e.g. by travel agents and governments) including explicit advice to report questionable operators and activity to authorities.

Good practice guidelines, developed by experts, should be used to guide all stages of the planning and running of tourism involving wildlife and must be strictly complied with by all parties, in order to mitigate the risks and ensure positive impact.

A significant part of revenues of wildlife tourism must support the protection and conservation of the animals, their habitats and local communities.

### 3.1 Primates

The Section on Human-Primate Interactions of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC) Primate Specialist Group, an interdisciplinary group of primate experts was established in response to increased interactions between humans and wild primates. They have produced detailed guidance on primate tourism for tourism professionals<sup>v</sup> as well as guidelines intended to guide tourists in how to responsibly engage in primate watching, with reference to various species, locations and circumstances<sup>vi</sup>. This guidance should be followed.

Specific guidelines for great ape tourism have also been developed by IUCN; see additional information below.

## 4. GREAT APE TOURISM

Wildlife tourism is often promoted as a tool for conserving apes and their habitats through the generation of revenue to fund conservation efforts, while also providing educational opportunities, and social and economic development. Great apes factor high on the list of animals that many would like to see, and people travel great distances to visit them in the wild.<sup>vii</sup>

The Jane Goodall Institute supports the operation of well-managed great ape tourism sites as a means to support local livelihoods and incentivise the protection of animals and their habitats in situ. In this, we acknowledge the crucial role of tourism in providing revenue for governments and household incomes for surrounding communities.

### 4.1 The Problem

Human interest in great apes has created industries promising viewers opportunities to get into close quarters with wild communities. Such in situ observation presents inherent hazards to wildlife, habitat, workers, and visitors. According to the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group, '[d]isease is the most serious risk associated with great ape tourism' including human-borne diseases, particularly respiratory infections.<sup>viii</sup> Additional risks include ecological damage to habitat (e.g. soil compaction, erosion and trampling of vegetation due to heavy tourist traffic) and behavioural modification (e.g. negative impacts on the behaviour, physiology and social dynamics of habituated apes).<sup>ix</sup>

While many wildlife tourism sites market themselves as destinations for 'sustainable tourism'<sup>x</sup> or 'ecotourism', a considerable proportion of operators do not meet best practice standards.

### 4.2 Recommendations

- a. Strict adherence to evidence-based best practice guidelines is required to minimise risks. Great ape tourism sites should conform to the IUCN Best Practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism<sup>xi</sup>, including observance of the 'Guiding principles for using tourism as a great ape conservation tool' and species-specific guidelines. For example, the minimum age of a tourist is 15 years, so small children should never be permitted to visit great apes in the wild, where there have been cases of chimpanzees injuring human infants. Further, the guidelines also state that there should be 'no provisioning', and minimum distances to habituated apes pursuant to 5.5.13 of the Guidelines are: 7 metres (22 feet) for visitors wearing N95 surgical masks, and 10 metres (33 feet) for visitors not wearing N95 masks. The guidelines also provide for disease monitoring and prevention measures including quarantine, tourist vaccination regulations, and community health projects.
- b. In certain locations and at times of higher risk, more stringent guidelines may apply limiting proximity with great apes<sup>xii</sup> and such variations should be respected.

- c. The operation of wildlife tourism must not divert attention and resources away from the central goal of protecting great apes and their habitat, including monitoring trends in illegal activities and assessing the performance and results of law enforcement activities.<sup>xiii</sup>
- d. Great ape tourism projects should strive to effect positive gains for conservation, partner with local communities, and should also be sustainable.
- e. Strict quota need to be applied regarding the size of visiting groups, as well as the number and duration of visits. The interests of the animals need to consistently prioritized, rather than maximising tourist numbers or revenue considerations.
- f. Tourists wishing to visit great apes can be advised on how to keep both themselves and great apes safe via IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group Section on Great Apes online guidance: <https://www.protectgreatapesfromdisease.com>.

## 5. SANCTUARIES

Sanctuaries do essential work in caring for and rehabilitating wildlife at times when individuals cannot live safely in the wild. They may contribute to conservation efforts and seek to educate the public. They also play a vital role in enforcement of the law against wildlife trafficking, since authorities are reluctant to seize wildlife without suitable accommodation for housing seized individuals.

The Jane Goodall Institute operates two sanctuaries for rescued chimpanzees (and other species) and works in partnership with many more. Our Summary Statement on Ape Rights and Zoos sets out rights for apes with reference to their needs and captivity. The needs of individuals are a prime consideration and any tourism activities must as a minimum meet the needs and respect the rights of those involved. The Institute is highly supportive of developing international standards of welfare, management and housing of apes that should be integrated into the accreditation process for the zoo and sanctuary communities and encourages collaboration between both communities.

We advocate and collaborate to ensure primates are not subjected to inappropriate conditions and activities for the purposes of human entertainment.

## 6. TROPHY HUNTING

The Jane Goodall Institute does not consider trophy hunting to be ethical wildlife tourism and is opposed to trophy hunting based on ethical, ethological, ecological and economic concerns. These include the harm to individual animals, the removal of prime individuals from their groups (with damaging social and genetic consequences), the inequality of allowing a select few people (often foreign tourists) to kill endangered species based on their financial privilege. Trophy hunting has not been demonstrated to contribute to conservation aims or to significantly improve the prosperity and wellbeing of local communities in the vast majority of cases (contrary to some claims), particularly in comparison to ethical wildlife tourism activities.<sup>xiv</sup> Thus trophy hunting is cruel and reduces the opportunity for beneficial tourism which could conserve local wildlife, protect and restore eco-systems, and bring economic benefit to local communities.

Primates are among the species most targeted by hunters in terms of numbers killed, with baboons and vervet monkeys particularly affected<sup>xv</sup>. We are extremely concerned about the targeting of intelligent primates, who experience rich emotions and exhibit complex social behaviour, for hunting and killing. In addition to the harms cited above, this hunting can affect local perceptions of the species, damaging conservation efforts.

We call on governments to change laws to put an end to associated practices such as the issuing of licences, the sale of hunting holidays, and the export/import of trophies.

## 5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

JGI Summary Statement on Ape Rights and Zoos

JGI Statement on Cetacean Captivity

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<sup>i</sup> 2020 IPBES Global Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Chapter 2.3 Status and Trends- Nature's Contributions to People (NCP), p313

<sup>ii</sup> For example, in relation to macaques, see Qingming Cui, Yuejia Ren and Honggang Xu, The Escalating Effects of Wildlife Tourism on Human Wildlife Conflict. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/11/5/1378>

<sup>iii</sup> Term coined by Ralf Buckley. See [https://www.mandainature.org/content/dam/mandainature/resources/en/pdf/Promoting%20the%20Business%20of%20Conservation%20Tourism%20in%20SEA\\_web%20version.pdf](https://www.mandainature.org/content/dam/mandainature/resources/en/pdf/Promoting%20the%20Business%20of%20Conservation%20Tourism%20in%20SEA_web%20version.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> [IPBES Secretariat](#) definition 'Eco-tourism'

<sup>v</sup> <https://human-primate-interactions.org/responsible-primate-watching-for-primate-tourism-professionals-2/>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://human-primate-interactions.org/responsible-primate-watching-for-tourists/>

<sup>vii</sup> Currently, there are several sites where people can view chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*), western gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla*), eastern gorillas (*Gorilla beringei*), Bornean orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus*) and Sumatran orangutans (*Pongo abelii*).

<sup>viii</sup> Elizabeth J Macfie and Elizabeth A Williamson (2010) *Best practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group (PSG).

<sup>ix</sup> Elizabeth J Macfie and Elizabeth A Williamson (2010) *Best practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group (PSG).

<sup>x</sup> Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (TIES 2005).

<sup>xi</sup> Elizabeth J Macfie and Elizabeth A Williamson (2010) *Best practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group (PSG).

<sup>xii</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-52236493>

<sup>xiii</sup> Elizabeth J Macfie and Elizabeth A Williamson (2010) *Best practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group (PSG).

<sup>xiv</sup> Multiple sources of evidence have been compiled by campaigns to ban the import of trophies in UK and Germany. Some key sources cited here [https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/files/eurogroupforanimals/2022-07/2022\\_07\\_06\\_joint\\_position\\_trophy\\_hunting\\_0.pdf](https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/files/eurogroupforanimals/2022-07/2022_07_06_joint_position_trophy_hunting_0.pdf)

<sup>xv</sup> <https://pasa.org/awareness/trophy-hunting-poses-threat-to-african-primates/>

Our Kin Discarded: South Africa's Cruel and Gratuitous Trade and Killing of (nonhuman) Primates. 2023. <https://emsfoundation.org.za/our-kin-discarded/>

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