



Ethical animal encounters on travels

by Hanna, on November 27th, 2018



As you know, sustainability comprises environmental protection, responsible resource management, safety at work as well as animal protection and the preservation of biodiversity alike. Animal welfare is an important and recurring issue in tourism. To date, animals are still exploited for profit being kept in worst conditions: Whether in animal welfare centers, that only pretend to protect, in animal shows in large amusement parks, or using caged animals for tourist selfies. Unfortunately, you still find too many examples of how it shouldn't be. Often, travelers also lack knowledge of what is and what isn't acceptable.

The Wildlife Selfie Code

For this purpose, the organization World Animal Protection has created a short video meeting the issue: It is about the selfies with sloths, in particular, and do's and don'ts for selfies with wild animals in general:

DON'T take a wildlife selfie if:

- ✗ I'm being held, hugged or restrained
- ✗ You're baiting me with food
- ✗ I could harm you

Call for boycott

The first important step for each of us is to boycott the exploitation of animals, since demand determines supply. The Thai resorts **The Tongyai Bay** and **Keemala** advise their guests to not support certain activities and don't sell tickets for animal shows, elephant rides or other attractions abusing animals for entertainment. Instead, they encourage guests to explore ethical animal encounters and cultural offerings. Moreover, **Keemala** is a peaceful home to a herd of rescued animals: water buffalos, peacocks, goats, geese and chickens.



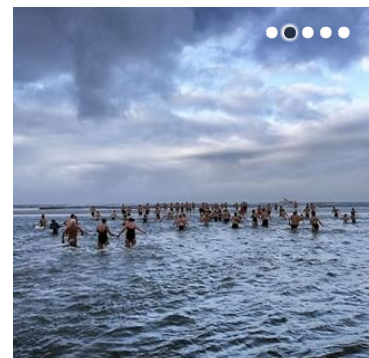
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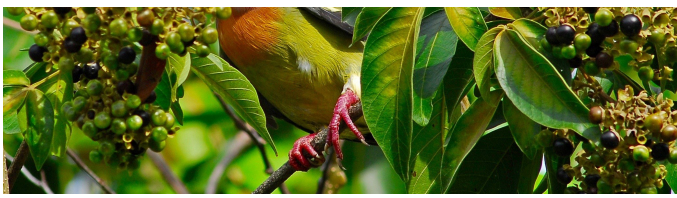
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The pink-necked green pigeon is just one of many species living on Tong sai Bay's property. © The Tong sai Bay

Rules for protecting animals

More than 60 bird species live on more than 28 hectares of unspoiled nature around [The Tong sai Bay](#). When the resort was built, not a single tree was felled protecting the birds' habitat. Moreover, the resort pursues a strict animal welfare policy: employees are dismissed when they harm or kill an animal in the hotel garden.

A heart for wildlife

At the [Zeavola Resort](#) on Koh Phi Phi, you can find fruit trees planted specifically for the birds. During the breeding, there are also separated quiet areas. In Peru, you can experience ethical animal encounters at the Inkaterra Hotels: A trained guide from the environmental organization Inkaterra Asociación that belongs to the hotel group not only informs you during the excursion but also ensures none of the animals is being disturbed.



One year old afforested corals of the Coral Lines Project. © Gili Lankanfushi

Of natural enemies, sunscreen and special projects

Coral reefs are dying around the globe – whether in Australia's Great Barrier Reef or on the Maldives. The fragile ecosystems respond to temperature fluctuations in the sea, the increasing plastic pollution, and are threatened by spreading natural enemies such as the crown of thorns starfish. On the Maldives, various projects help to rebuild coral reefs: For example, the [Coral Lines Project](#) at [Gili Lankanfushi](#) and the Coral Gardens at the [Reethi Faru Resort](#) you can support as a guest! An important step each of us can easily implement is using coral-friendly sun protection instead of conventional sunscreens with chemical filters since these damage the corals. By the way, you can get this sunscreen at [The Tong sai Bay](#) on Koh Samui and [Gili Lankanfushi](#) on the Maldives.



On excursions, you can watch the Andean bear. © Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

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On the loose

As mentioned earlier, protection centers are challenging. Guests are repeatedly told animals have been rescued and are now living in an appropriate way. (You can find more on [elephant sanctuaries in Thailand](#) on our blog). Often, however, they are telling lies, because the animals were raised or trapped for the centers. Of course, you can also find integer centers — inform yourself properly and if you have any doubts, ask critically! In Arosa, amidst the Swiss Alps, a refuge for rescued bears opened in 2018, founded by the organization Vier Pfoten (engl. “four paws”). So far, bear “Napa” was the only one moving in, getting company next year. The bears live on 2.8 acres of land, being able to move freely and in natural surroundings. In Peru, the [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#) also protects the rare Andean Bear. Both centers offer the opportunity to observe the bears in their daily lives — from a safe distance for humans and animals.

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