



**TRUSTED  
TRAVEL  
TEAM**

## ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY STATEMENT

Sustainability is an integral element of the corporate strategy of DERTOUR Group, the tourism segment of REWE Group. Healthy ecosystems are essential to human existence and life on Earth, and it is critical to conserve them for generations to come. Rich biodiversity, natural heritage and the cultures that support them are often a primary reason for travel. The sector needs to play a key strategic role in protecting destinations from potential negative effects of tourism while simultaneously promoting positive impacts by conserving and restoring healthy ecosystems. Based on its Animal Welfare Policy, with the aim of the animals' wellbeing and in recognition of the public interest, DERTOUR Group is implementing an animal and species protection program involving all relevant business units as well as partners and stakeholders.

### **Tourism und Animal Welfare**

Since tourism activities can be associated with undesirable effects, DERTOUR Group and its tour operator brands are committed to offering experiences that enable travelers to discover the animal world in a responsible and safe way. Therefore, a binding Animal Welfare Policy was developed in 2017, which identifies strategies for improving animal welfare in tourism and defines specific requirements for a wide range of attractions. These are gradually implemented in collaboration with partners, stakeholder groups, industry committees and animal welfare experts worldwide. DERTOUR Group complies with international and national animal welfare laws and participates in the development of animal welfare standards for the travel industry. DERTOUR Group's Animal Welfare Policy is based on the internationally recognized Five Freedoms for Animal Welfare according to John Webster: freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; freedom from fear and suffering; and freedom to express normal behavior.

### **Objectives of the Animal Welfare Policy**

The aim of DERTOUR Group's Animal Welfare Policy is to preserve and improve the wellbeing of animals in the visited habitats. It is designed to protect animals from exploitation, neglect and cruel treatment resulting from poor living or husbandry conditions. This includes avoiding offering activities that expose people or animals to risks, ensuring the experiences DERTOUR Group offers its travelers improve animal welfare standards and promoting species conservation. Partners are contractually bound to implement the requirements of the Animal Welfare Policy. DERTOUR Group expects all partners to meet the requirements in the policy by 2025 and works closely with them to achieve this change. Whilst DERTOUR Group's policy is designed to be applied to all animals impacted by its tourism activities, the Group has placed a particular focus on those species that are of most interest to DERTOUR Group's travelers, as well as those attractions and activities that pose the highest risk to animal welfare in the tourism value chain. These include elephants, dolphins and whales, stray animals as well as working animals. Here the focus is on actively improving animal welfare and changing existing standards and common practices in order to move the industry towards more responsible and sustainable best-practice models.

### **Animal Welfare Requirements**

DERTOUR Group's Animal Welfare Policy is largely based on the global and industry-leading animal welfare guidelines of the British Travel Association ABTA. DERTOUR Group has developed and expanded the scope of these guidelines to meet its stated goals. A detailed set of criteria has been established, which considers the various contexts and species individually. The criteria favor experiencing animals in their natural surroundings. This is a special experience for travelers and interferes least with the habitat and natural behavior of the animals. Thus, offers in the wild are

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preferable to those in captivity. But also in contexts where animals are more closely tied to humans, animal welfare must have top priority. The principles contain requirements under which animal watching and touristic activities in relation to animals are expected to take place. Suitable husbandry conditions must be guaranteed and there must be no display of unnatural behavior. The direct contact between humans and certain animal species, such as elephants, marine mammals or dangerous animals, is prohibited within the parameters of the requirements. Activities that are contrary to animal welfare, such as hunting, animal fighting and other examples, are fundamentally prohibited. The breeding of animals is prohibited under certain conditions, if it serves exploitative commercial purposes, trophy hunting or the production of animal products. At the same time, sourcing from the wild requires demonstrable motives for preserving the species, which is an essential element in DERTOUR Group's animal welfare strategy.

### **DERTOUR Group's Approach**

Products and practices that do not meet the requirements are, depending on the nature of violation and the activity, either removed from the portfolio, replaced by responsible alternatives that are conducive to animal welfare, particularly in the free wild, or included in programs to improve standards. A key element is the obligation to offer appropriate products, including improvement in animal welfare standards for particularly relevant focal species. To achieve this, all offers involving animals are identified based on regularly performed portfolio analysis and validated for compliance with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Policy. Offers with an increased risk in terms of animal welfare, living and husbandry standards are examined by independent animal welfare experts for compliance with the requirements and minimum standards of DERTOUR Group. For this purpose, differentiated audit instruments have been developed in the form of on-site audits and desk-based assessments using questionnaires and assessment tools.

Depending on the results of the review, partners who do not already meet the requirements of the Animal Welfare Policy will be given the opportunity to participate in programs to improve animal welfare standards. For example, a program to improve the living conditions of elephants in Thailand was successfully implemented, considering the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the communities associated with the animals. Within the portfolio, it was ensured that elephants are not exhibited in unnatural behaviors. Furthermore, elephant riding, which is associated with risks for humans and animals, and direct, barrier-free contact with the animals, which is associated with an increased risk of accidents and the possibility of disease transmission, is no longer offered.

Providers are assisted in transforming their services into best-practice models in dialogue with stakeholder groups and with the involvement of project partners. Employees and partners are offered supportive training courses. Likewise, customers and travelers are sensitized to choose attractions wisely. At the core of the strategy lies a shift in thinking and a positive change in animal welfare.

### **Conservation of Species**

Responsibility for the protection of the environment and society also includes species that are threatened with extinction. It is a concern of the travel industry to ensure the survival of the animal and plant world. The industry therefore has a responsibility to counteract the illegal trade of wild animals in the destinations. DERTOUR Group's Animal Welfare Policy contains requirements for its partners to prevent the illegal trade of wild animals and the supply of food or products made from animals or plants that are classified as protected, endangered or threatened with extinction worldwide or in individual countries or regions. At the same time, awareness among travelers about how to behave in nature reserves and how to protect species when buying souvenirs is promoted.

### **Promotion of Nature, Environmental and Animal Conservation Project**

In order to improve activities with animals and achieve progress beyond product design, efforts are being complemented by supporting suitable projects and initiatives in the destinations. Such support can be of a non-financial nature, for example through participation in industry working groups or the inclusion of projects in travel itineraries. It can also be of a financial nature, for example by supporting animal welfare organizations and projects or sanctuaries. With the purposeful support of charitable funds from the DERTOUR Foundation, DERTOUR Group can achieve even more effective changes for animals, natural habitats and local communities. Tourism can unfold its potential for positive impact, especially in the context of promoting initiatives in designated protected areas. For this reason, animal and species conservation has been included as a mission in the charter of the DERTOUR Foundation.

### **Additional information and resources regarding**

#### **DERTOUR Group's engagement towards animal protection:**

[Animal welfare - DERTOUR Group](#)

Have you witnessed a violation of animal welfare and DERTOUR Group's Animal Welfare Policy? Report it to the Corporate Responsibility department at the following e-mail address: [cr@dertour.com](mailto:cr@dertour.com)