VOLCAN TOURS

Volcan Tours & Travel Limited

Animal Welfare Policy

Standards for wildlife viewing, captive facilities, working animals and the activities we will not sell

Effective 1 October 2026 | Version 1.1 | Updated 27 October 2026

1. Purpose

Volcan Tours & Travel Limited exists because of the wildlife of East Africa. We believe that animals, whether wild, captive, working or domestic, should be treated with respect and should never suffer for the entertainment of tourists. This policy sets out the standards we apply when designing itineraries, selecting suppliers and guiding guests. It is based on the Five Domains model of animal welfare (nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and mental state), the ABTA Animal Welfare Guidelines, the Global Welfare Guidance for Animals in Tourism and the regulations of the wildlife authorities of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda.

2. Guiding principles

- Wild animals are observed in their natural habitat, on their own terms, and are never baited, called, chased, cornered or touched.
- We do not sell, promote or facilitate any attraction in which wild animals are kept primarily for entertainment, in which guests can touch, hold, ride, feed or pose with wild animals, or in which animals are made to perform.
- Captive animal facilities are included only where they have a genuine conservation, rescue or rehabilitation purpose, are licensed by the national wildlife authority, do not breed animals for commercial purposes, and do not permit physical contact with wild animals.
- Working animals (horses, camels, donkeys) are used only with operators who can show that the animals are healthy, properly fed and watered, rested, not overloaded and not worked when sick or injured.
- Our guides and drivers are trained in this policy and empowered to refuse any request from a guest that would breach it.

3. Wildlife viewing standards

Situation	Our standard
Distance from animals	Minimum 25 metres from large mammals, more from animals with young, mating animals or predators on a kill; always further where park rules require. Guides never position the vehicle to block an animal's path or escape route.
Vehicle numbers and time at sightings	A maximum of five vehicles at any sighting (or fewer where the park rule is stricter) and a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes at busy sightings, so that others may view and the animal is not surrounded.
Off road driving	Only where the park or conservancy expressly permits it, and never to approach an animal closer than the distance above or to cross fragile ground.
Noise and behaviour	Engines off at sightings, no shouting, whistling, banging on the vehicle, flash photography or playback of animal calls to attract wildlife. Guests remain inside the vehicle except at designated points.
Night drives and spotlighting	Only in conservancies where permitted, using red filtered lights, never shining light directly into the eyes of animals for prolonged periods.
Feeding	No wild animal is ever fed, including birds, monkeys and baboons at lodges and picnic sites. All food waste is secured.
Gorilla and chimpanzee trekking	Strict compliance with Uganda Wildlife Authority and Rwanda Development Board rules: 7 metre minimum distance, one hour maximum with the group, no trekking when ill, masks where required, no flash, no eating or drinking near the animals.
Walking safaris	Only with licensed armed rangers or guides, in approved areas, keeping downwind and at a safe distance, never approaching dangerous game on foot.
Boat and marine activities	No chasing of dolphins, whales or turtles, no touching coral or marine life, no anchoring on reefs, reef safe sunscreen recommended; snorkel and dive partners follow Green Fins principles.
Hot air ballooning	Only with licensed operators who fly at heights that do not disturb wildlife.

4. Activities we do not offer

- Elephant riding, elephant bathing or elephant shows, and any facility that uses the bullhook or chains elephants for long periods.
- Walking with lions, cub petting, cheetah petting, photo opportunities with wild animals, or any facility that breeds predators for petting or for the trade in body parts.
- Ostrich riding, animal circuses, animal fighting, canned or trophy hunting, and any form of hunting.
- Dolphin or whale shows and swimming with captive marine mammals.

- Snake handling, crocodile or chimpanzee photo props and street performances with monkeys or other wild animals.
- The purchase or promotion of souvenirs made from ivory, rhino horn, skins, teeth, claws, turtle shell, coral or any CITES listed species.

5. Captive facilities we may include

Facilities such as the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust elephant orphanage, the Giraffe Centre, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, the Nairobi Animal Orphanage and rescue centres in the region may be included only after we have confirmed that they are licensed by the national wildlife authority, release or rehabilitate animals where possible, give priority to animal needs over visitor access, provide species appropriate space, diet and veterinary care, and do not allow riding, holding or posing. Where a facility allows feeding or contact under supervision (for example the Giraffe Centre), we explain this to guests honestly and let them choose, and we review the facility's inclusion every year against the latest welfare guidance.

6. Working animals and domestic animals

Camel rides, horse riding and donkey use are offered only with operators who follow the Brooke and SPANA welfare guidance: animals are in good body condition with no visible wounds or lameness, loads and rider weights are limited, water, shade and rest are provided, equipment fits properly, and animals are not worked in the heat of the day or when young, pregnant or unwell. At lodges and in communities, we support humane treatment of domestic animals and do not patronise suppliers where cruelty is evident.

7. Supplier requirements

Every accommodation, activity and transport supplier receives this policy on contracting. Suppliers confirm in writing that they do not offer any of the activities in Section 4 and that their guides follow Section 3. Reports of non compliance are investigated, the supplier is given the opportunity to correct the issue, and persistent or serious breaches lead to removal from our programmes.

8. Guest information

Guests receive our wildlife viewing guidelines before travel and in the welcome briefing. We explain why we do not offer certain activities and we encourage guests to report any poor practice they witness, including at facilities not run by us. Our marketing never shows people touching or holding wild animals.

9. Training, monitoring and review

All guides and drivers are trained in this policy on joining and refreshed annually, with particular attention to park regulations, distances and sighting etiquette. Guest feedback forms include a question on animal welfare. The Directors review this policy and the list of approved captive facilities every year against the current ABTA and GSTC guidance and national regulations. Any staff member, supplier or guest may report a concern to the Directors in confidence.

Approval

This policy has been approved by the Directors of Volcan Tours & Travel Limited and applies to all directors, employees, guides, drivers, freelance staff, agents and contracted suppliers acting on behalf of the company.

Paul Kyalo, Director

Marion Mutuku, Director

Volcan Tours & Travel Limited
Office: 1st Floor, Luther Plaza, Nyerere Road, Nairobi, Kenya
Postal address: P.O. Box 50 - 90125, Konza Technopolis
info@volcantours.com · volcantours.com