

The five main things that you can do to support animal welfare and biodiversity:

1. Implement procurement policies and procedures that favour sustainable products and services.
2. Stop offering or promoting activities that can harm animals and biodiversity.
3. Help local ecosystems to develop and flourish by protecting sensitive areas and planting the right vegetation.
4. Educate your guests about the things they can do to support biodiversity and animal welfare in your destination.
5. Work with your community on initiatives that protect, support and develop biodiversity.

We have listed many ideas of how you can support animal welfare and biodiversity to help get you started.

Litter

- Reducing the amount of waste you produce is one of the best ways to control litter.
- Composting your own food waste for use as a fertilizer on your own gardens is a great way to reuse waste but you need to make sure it is well contained so that wild animals and pests cannot access this as a food source. Eating this kind of food could harm wildlife and they could distribute it as litter.
- Conduct a litter assessment both on and around your property. See if you can identify litter that is coming from your guests, staff or general operations then think of ways to improve, such as reducing the use of items that commonly end up as litter and/or better placement of bins so they are easier for guests to use.
- A common source of litter is items blowing out of bins so replace open-top bins with closed-top options, or any other solution that will do a better job of containing litter.
- If you have an outdoor bar or dining area, consider eliminating things that easily blow away, such as paper napkins, aluminium cans, straws, plastic cups and bottles. Here are some ways you could address that:
 - Replace plastic items with reusable options, or at least heavier options that are less likely to blow away.
 - When serving guests, pour items from plastic bottles or aluminium cans into their glasses instead of leaving them on the table or bar for them to pour.
 - In outdoor dining areas, decant water into glass jugs or reusable bottles instead of leaving a plastic bottle on the table.
 - Ask guests if they want a straw or paper napkin instead of automatically serving drinks with them.
 - Whenever it is safe to replace plastic cups with glass or metal reusable alternatives, you should do so.
- Educate your guests about the harm that litter causes to your community and to wildlife.

Other pollution

By complying with the Travelife Standard you will already be addressing many of the pollutants your property produces through good management of energy, water, waste and hazardous substances. Here are some other ways you can help reduce pollution that harms biodiversity:

- Sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate can be damaging to coral reefs. This could even cause harm when these chemicals end up in waste water from guest showering. Properties near reefs should research this issue and implement appropriate measures that also factor in sun safety for guests. There are many reef-safe sunscreens on the market that do not contain these chemicals.
- Noise pollution from activities that include motorised boats, jet skis, snowmobiles and off-road vehicles (4x4, ATVs, dirt bikes) can interfere with the natural activities of animals, either by scaring them or confusing them. Consider ways that any such activities that you offer or promote can be changed to reduce these negative impacts. If you feel that you do not have any influence on this, you should consider informing guests about the potential harm these can cause.
- Light pollution can confuse wildlife in a way that disrupts migration, feeding and breeding. You should conduct some research on whether there is wildlife in your destination that could be affected by this and find out the best ways to make any necessary changes. This is particularly important if you are near a beach where sea turtles are nesting as artificial light can disorient hatchlings and lead them away from the sea.

Animal welfare and wildlife protection

In addition to complying with the Travelife Standard, here are some other ways your business can support animal welfare:

- Procure animal products (meat, fish, dairy, eggs etc.) from suppliers that treat their animals properly. In some destinations these will be easy to identify through certifications or endorsements from reputable animal welfare organisations. At other destinations you might have to do a bit more research by consulting with local animal welfare groups or visiting the websites of similar groups in other countries. This is a way to use your influence as a buyer to encourage better practices and you will have even more influence if you team up with other businesses in your community or other hotels in your chain/group.
- Work with your community to support initiatives that use humane solutions to deal with stray cats and dogs.
- Educate your guests about the importance of not interfering with free-roaming wildlife at your property and/or destination. This includes discouraging them from feeding or petting wild animals, as well as activity that could frighten animals or otherwise disturb their natural behaviours.
- Use your business influence within your destination to speak out against tourism activities that may appear on the Travelife List of Unacceptable Practices, encouraging other businesses to follow your lead by not supporting these activities. Businesses that involve these unacceptable practices are more likely to improve if they feel pressured economically to do so.

- Ask your suppliers to reduce, reuse or eliminate packaging. If that is not possible then ask them to find more sustainable alternatives, e.g. using recycled shredded paper to protect fragile items instead of polystyrene. You might be able to return the shredded paper to them so they can reuse it.
- Dedicate some time to checking that products that claim they are environmentally friendly or biodegradable definitely are. For example, some plastics claim to be biodegradable yet still take decades to degrade and/or release toxic chemicals during the process.
- If there is a specific animal issue in your destination, see if there are ways you can support it. This include things like problems with abandoned pets, mistreatment of working animals such as donkeys, urban development leading to shrinking natural habitats, disruption of breeding grounds. Here are some things you might be able to do:
 - Raise funds to support initiatives that address these issues.
 - Invite speakers with specific expertise/experience to educate your staff and to give ideas about how you can help.
 - Provide information to guests about the issue and ways they can help.
 - Allow your staff an extra paid day off per year/season to volunteer for one of these initiatives.
 - Use your influence as a business owner to lobby for change.

General ideas

- Set aside an area of your grounds to 'grow wild'. This means not interfering with the growth of native grasses, shrubs and trees except to remove any non-native and/or invasive species. In addition to supporting biodiversity, there are a few other ways you could use this:
 - Use signage or guided visits to the area to educate guests about why you have an untidy piece of garden and about local flora and fauna. This could be especially good for children's activities.
 - Partner with a local school, college or university so they can use it to study things like the regeneration of native plants and local ecosystems.
- Most parts of the world have native bees, birds and butterflies that are under threat. Research the best ways to support them such as planting vegetation that attracts them, avoiding certain pesticides and removing vegetation that attracts their predators.
- Find out about sustainable methods for controlling invasive pests that can harm biodiversity in your area. For example, too many invasive wasps can devastate butterflies, and rats can raid bird nests for eggs.
- Build fenced or roped pathways that cross sensitive areas like sand dunes, native grassland and areas that are being regenerated so that people are discouraged from trampling on or polluting these places. Consider erecting signs that not only explain why people should keep to the pathways, but also about the wildlife you are protecting.
- Educate guests about what they can do to protect biodiversity. Here are some examples:

- How to enjoy water activities like snorkelling, scuba diving, boating and swimming responsibly.
- Why it is important to not collect things like shells, stones and plants from natural areas.
- How to take nature walks and bike rides (and longer treks) in a responsible manner – bringing their rubbish back to the hotel for proper disposal, sticking to pathways, not disturbing or feeding wildlife, sanitary and hygiene advice if there are no toilets available in the area.
- How to deal with unwanted insects or other animals guests find in or around their room. This is particularly relevant to destinations where there are things like native bats, important moths, snakes, spiders and other creatures that scare your guests! You should have a process in place so that guests can notify your staff who can arrange for their quick, safe and humane removal.