



WILDLIFE POLICY

Our Commitment to Animal Welfare

At Untamed Escapes, we believe all animals, whether land, sea, or air-dwelling, are vital to the planet's ecosystems. Our team deeply respects and loves animals; many staff members are proud pet owners and advocates for animal welfare.

Operating in nature-rich destinations across Australia, we recognise our responsibility to protect wildlife and lead by example in responsible tourism. As a nature-based tourism provider, we're committed to:

- Minimising human interaction with wildlife
- Observing animals from a safe, respectful distance
- Supporting only ethical wildlife experiences

Objective of These Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to:

- Prevent harm and exploitation of animals
- Offer a framework for responsible animal-related activities
- Ensure ethical treatment of wild and domestic animals
- Raise awareness of the issues surrounding wildlife in tourism

Used by staff and guests alike, these guidelines help plan and evaluate animal encounters with welfare at the core.

Our Animal Welfare Framework: The Five Domains

We align our operations and partner standards with the internationally recognised Five Domains model (World Animal Protection):

1. **Nutrition** – Access to clean, balanced, and sufficient food and water
2. **Environment** – Comfort through adequate space, shelter, and climate
3. **Health** – Free from illness, injury, or distress
4. **Behaviour** – Opportunities for natural behaviours like foraging, playing, bonding, and retreating
5. **Mental State** – Promote positive experiences (e.g., comfort, vitality), reduce negative states (e.g., fear, frustration)

Wild vs. Domestic Animals

At Untamed Escapes, we acknowledge the fundamental differences between wild and domesticated animals. Domesticated species, such as dogs, horses, and livestock, have been selectively bred over many generations, resulting in genetic and behavioural traits that make them more suited to human care and controlled environments.

In contrast, wild animals like kangaroos, koalas, seals, wallabies, and other Australian wildlife have not undergone this domestication process. Despite being kept in captivity for tourism or entertainment, these animals retain their natural instincts and are not adapted to life in confinement.

Untamed Escapes believes that keeping wild animals in captivity often compromises their welfare. We support such practices only when they serve the animal's best interests and meet the highest standards of ethical care and wellbeing. Where wild animals are kept in captivity, the facility must not only provide them with the best possible welfare conditions but also contribute towards a shift away from exploitative practices and be supportive of phasing out the keeping of wild animals for commercial purposes.

Our Core Animal Welfare Values

- **Respect for all life** – All animals are part of nature's web and deserve protection
- **Wildlife belongs in the wild** – Observation should occur only in natural habitats
- **No contact, feeding, or interference** – We endorse non-invasive encounters
- **Ethical partnerships** – We work only with organisations that uphold strict welfare standards

What We Do Not Support

Untamed Escapes **does not support**:

- Direct contact with wild animals
- Wildlife performances
- Wildlife selfies or staged photos
- Blood sports or exploitative entertainment
- Commercial breeding or wildlife farming
- Consumption or sale of cruelty-derived products
- Sport or trophy hunting

What We Do Support

Untamed Escapes supports and promotes ethical and respectful wildlife experiences:

- **Certified Sanctuaries and Rehabilitation Centres**: Only facilities certified by bodies such as the *Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries* (GFAS) or those that follow *World Animal Protection* guidelines.
- **Wildlife Watching in the Wild**: Activities that allow viewing of animals in their natural environment from a safe, non-invasive distance (e.g., WCA-certified whale watching).

Tour Guidelines for Wildlife Encounters (Land, Marine, Air)

These best practices apply to all animal interactions on Untamed Escapes tours:

General Rules

- **Always maintain a safe and respectful distance from wild animals**: Do not chase, lure, or touch them. Observe *nature* as it occurs *naturally*. This is also important for human safety, as animals can be unpredictable and may become aggravated if they feel threatened or do not have enough space. Harmful diseases can also be passed from human to animal and vice versa.
- **Do not feed wild land, marine, or air animals** (e.g. kangaroos, koalas, wallabies, dingoes, birds, seals, dolphins and other marine life). Native Australian animals have specific dietary requirements that differ from those of humans – feeding human food to wildlife can disrupt their natural feeding habits and shorten their lifespans.

The SA Department for Environment and Water outline that feeding wildlife can:

- Alter their natural behaviour in the wild
- Cause poor nutrition
- Make some animals aggressive

- Contribute to overpopulation
- Benefit pest species
- Lead to property damage from unwelcome wildlife
- Spread disease
- Affect water and environmental quality

More information can be found [here](#).

In Western Australia, feeding wildlife is illegal without authority under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018.

- **Always dispose of food and waste responsibly** in bins or take it with you – do not throw it into the environment (e.g. into a bush or off a ferry). Animals may ingest harmful waste, get entangled, or be lured into dangerous areas. For example, almost all birds ingest plastic by mistaking it for food, which causes them to slowly starve. Waste pollution upsets ecosystems and threatens biodiversity.
- **Follow signage and park ranger guidance strictly:** Signage is designed to protect sensitive habitats, prevent harmful interactions with animals, and preserve natural ecosystems (e.g. signs indicating bird nesting areas to be avoided). Park rangers have expert knowledge of local conditions and wildlife behaviour, and their guidance helps minimise human impact while enhancing the overall experience.
- **Stay on designated paths to avoid disrupting habitats:** This is vital for animal welfare, as it helps prevent the disturbance of nesting sites, feeding areas, and shelters that many species rely on for survival.
- **Refrain from loud noises in sensitive wildlife areas:** Keeping noise to a minimum in wildlife areas is crucial, as loud sounds can stress animals, disrupt their natural behaviour (e.g. nesting and raising young), and drive them from important habitats. Quiet observation supports their wellbeing and ensures a more authentic wildlife experience.
- **Use eco-friendly products:** Many conventional products contain chemicals or materials that can harm animals, especially in marine and sensitive ecosystems. Choosing sustainable, non-toxic alternatives, e.g., reef-safe sunscreen, helps minimise our impact and supports the long-term preservation of the environments we explore.

Did You Know?

Conventional sunscreens containing oxybenzone can harm marine life.

[Read more →](#)

- **Minimise usage of flash photography and flashlights**, and never deliberately shine your light into an animal's eyes. Do not illuminate prey, as this gives the predator an unfair advantage. Where possible, use red night lights for viewing animals after dark.

Wildlife by Activity

Land

- Observe without touching or feeding.
- Use zoom lenses for photos—don't disturb animals.
- Do not climb or shake koala trees.

Marine

- Maintain legal minimum distances from dolphins, seals, sea lions, and whales.
- Never throw anything overboard.
- Swim/snorkel with wildlife only through approved, guided operators.
- Use reef-safe sunscreen.
- Work only with MMIP-certified marine suppliers.

Air/Birds

- Never feed birds or raptors.
- Avoid nesting areas and follow signage.
- Pick up litter that could be mistaken for food.

Picnics & Campsites

Picnics and campsites are a key component of Untamed Escapes tours. These settings require careful waste management and respectful behaviour to prevent wildlife disturbance and protect natural habitats. Always observe the following guidelines in these spaces:

- Do not feed animals or leave food scraps behind.
- Clean up after yourself and always dispose of any picnic waste in the bins provided or in the bin bags on the bus so that wildlife does not get entangled in or accidentally ingest anything.
- Always use designated facilities in the picnic areas to avoid unnecessary destruction of natural habitats.
- Keep food in proper enclosed containers and lock them up in the trailer overnight at the campground.

Ethical Photography & Videography

Travellers are strongly encouraged to avoid attractions that feature photo opportunities, animal performances, or direct contact with wild animals. These practices often involve animals that are captured from the wild or bred in captivity under harsh conditions. Many are separated from their mothers at an early age, kept in unnatural environments, and subjected to abusive training methods to make them submissive and behave unnaturally for entertainment purposes. If you're uncertain about an activity's ethical standards, it's safest to choose not to say no.

For photography and videography best practice, download Ethical Nature Photography in Tasmania [here](#).

For detailed bird photography, we recommend the following source from Birdlife Northern Queensland [here](#).

If in doubt, don't participate.

 Helpful guides:

- Ethical Nature Photography in Tasmania (Download)
- [Birdlife Northern Queensland Photography Tips](#)

Animal Products

Untamed Escapes does not encourage guests to purchase any animal products that have been produced in unethical ways or that make use of endangered species. Travellers should be aware of food products & 'medicinal' products made from wild animal derivatives, which can also fuel wildlife farming and the illegal wildlife trade. The wild animals used to produce these products often suffer significantly, and suffering is likely to occur regardless of whether the animal has been bred in captivity or the wild or if the process is legal or illegal.

If customers choose to purchase animal products during a tour, it's important they do so responsibly. They should take the time to understand what the product is made from, how it was sourced, and whether it comes from an ethical and sustainable origin. Being conscious of these choices helps prevent support for practices that exploit animals or contribute to illegal wildlife trade.

Sanctuaries – Ethical Criteria

We only visit facilities where animals are in permanent care for ethical reasons. Genuine sanctuaries:

- Do not buy/sell/loan animals
- Do not allow performances or direct contact
- Breed only under recognised conservation programs
- Provide vet care and proper conditions
- Keep animals only for conservation benefits

Injured Wildlife Protocol

 If you encounter an injured animal, please contact:

South Australia

- 24/7 Hotline: (08) 8289 0896 or 1300 KOALAS (1300 562 527)
- Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges: 0427 556 676
- Kangaroo Island: 0477 334 898
- Eyre Peninsula: (08) 8688 3223
- Flinders Ranges: 0408 378 284
- Others: Refer to the **South Australia Environment Department** [Wildlife Help](#)

Northern Territory

- Uluru: (08) 8956 1128

Western Australia

- Wildcare Helpline: (08) 9474 9055
- More info → <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/wildlife-and-ecosystems/animals/wildcare-helpline>

Reporting Animal Cruelty in Australia

Witnessed cruelty or neglect? Report to the RSPCA:

 [Report online →](#)

Untamed Escapes Tour Guides will adhere to the following protocol in case of any injured animal encounter:

1. Phone the relevant authority (when in signal) and
2. Follow the advice of the relevant authority (remembering that on many occasions, our guides will be in a very remote location and the only course of action for them may be to euthanise the animal in order to relieve it from suffering— however, acknowledging that some guides may not have the capacity to execute that.

Final Word

At Untamed Escapes, we're committed to leaving nature untouched and inspiring guests to Travel Back Better. Animals are not entertainers—they are vital members of Earth's ecosystems. Through education, empathy, and ethical choices, we can ensure their survival for future generations.

Questions or Concerns?

For guests:

If you have concerns about any wildlife-related activities or suppliers, please contact us.

For the public:

If you'd like to report unethical animal practices in tourism, we're here to listen and help.

 Email: regen@untamedescapes.com.au

Ethical Partnerships & Examples

Kangaroo Island

- Clifford's Honey Farm – cliffordshoney.com.au
- Seal Bay Conservation Park – parks.sa.gov.au/experiences/seal-bay

Eyre Peninsula

Baird Bay Eco Tours – Swim with Sea Lions and Dolphins

- Ethical, guided swim with sea lions and dolphins in their natural habitat
 - No touching, no feeding—wildlife sets the pace
 - Tour includes a chef-prepared meal featuring local produce
- [More info →](#)

EP Cruises – Whale Watching

- Observe up to 120 southern right whales at Head of Bight
 - Operations follow strict marine mammal interaction permits
- [More info →](#)