



Ethical Tourism

Having Productive Conversations
About Animal Issues



Have You Ever...

... BEEN HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER

And heard some alarming details about their upcoming trip? They want to take their kids to swim with dolphins or ride some elephants. You know that they are excited and you don't want to ruin their fun... But you need to let them know that tourism has a large impact on animals, especially in negative ways. Even though these conversations are with people we love we should choose to educate them on the dangers of unethical tourism and about the importance of traveling responsibly.

... SEEN A PHOTO ON FACEBOOK OR INSTAGRAM

Of a family friend holding a new born baby lion? Pictures from a safari that look a little too close? We all have and it's our responsibility as animal lovers to advocate against these practices.





**How should you
respond & spread
awareness?**

With Education!

How to Respond Quickly & Effectively



Sometimes it is difficult to bring up emotional topics on animal welfare, especially to our friends and family. This is even more so when we discuss vacations - happy times in people's lives. But that makes productive conversations even more important. Spreading ethical traveling practices is essential to animal welfare. ***If we can teach those closest to us - we can teach anyone.***

STEP 1

Establish your point.

Any tourism that involves interacting with animals is unethical.

STEP 2

Use Strong Facts!

5,000 tigers live in captivity and only 3,200 in the wild...

STEP 3

Use Emotion.

This is emotional! Animals experience loneliness, fear, and stress.

STEP 4

Offer Alternatives.

Bring ideas to the table that are ethical and sustainable travel options.

Something You Could Say Quickly!

I know your trip sounds nice but have you thought about the ethical impact it? More than 500,000 animals live in captivity for tourism purposes. Maybe we can think of another way to celebrate your vacation or perhaps we can volunteer with a reputable sanctuary. Animals are amazing but they should never be used for entertainment or tourism.



Important Facts

+75% OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS HAVE A NEGATIVE
IMPACT ON WILD ANIMALS

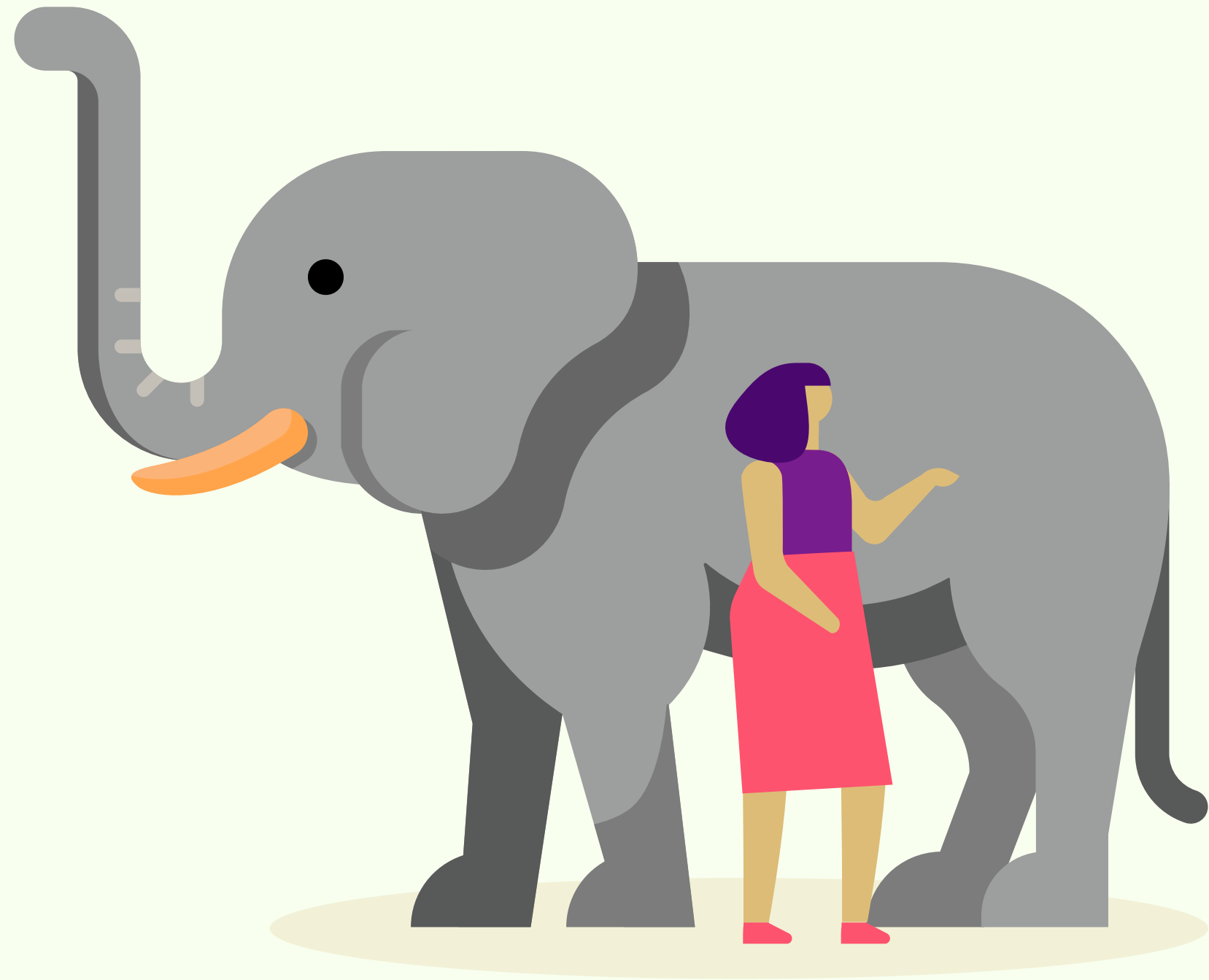
+80% OF TOURISTS WILL NOT SEE THESE NEGATIVE
IMPACTS FIRST HAND. THEY ARE HIDDEN BECAUSE OF
THE REPRECCUSIONS OF THEIR ACTIONS.

Riding Elephants

You are scrolling through Instagram one day and something catches your eye. Your high school friend just posted a picture of herself on her latest vacation. But you instantly get a terrible feeling - she is riding an elephant at Thailand park. The comments express how cool she looks and how awesome it must have been to get to ride such a majestic animal. How do you let your friend know about the unethical treatment these animals face? What do you tell someone thinking of doing the same?

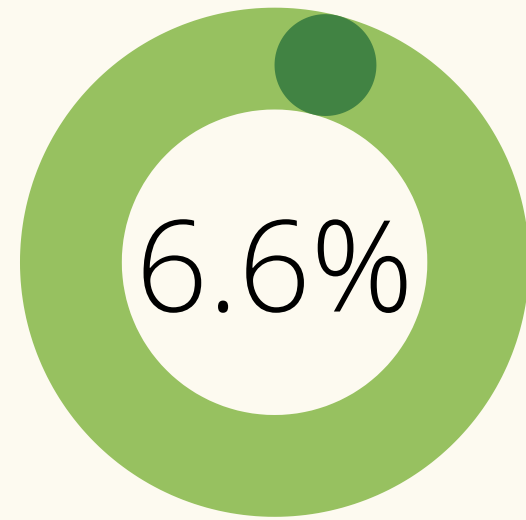


What you can say to educate others...



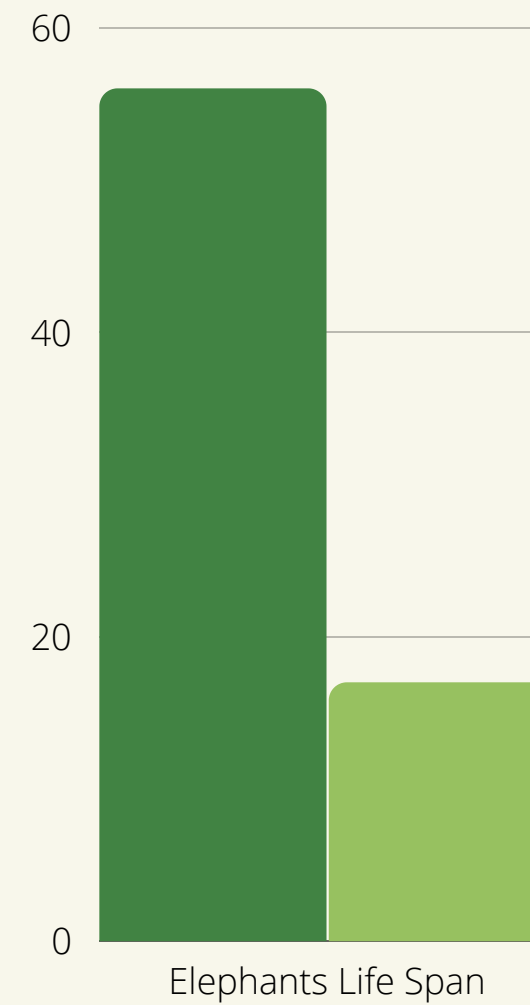
"I know that riding an elephant sounds awesome. They are majestic and exotic - what an experience it must be. But let's step outside of our own desires for a moment and think about how these animals feel. How would we like to get ripped away from our families and put to work for long hours without any say? I know you might not see any harm, but it is there. Elephants are put in chains, beaten, live in cramped living conditions, and suffer lifelong health issues for human entertainment. If an organization labels itself as a refuge but still offers rides - it is not a refuge! There is no such thing as ethically riding a wild animal."

Looking at the Facts



A WAP investigation found only 200 out of 3,000 elephants lived in "acceptable conditions" at these tourist organizations

(Information from BBC)



Elephants life spans are dramatically shorter in captivity. The average lifespan of a captive elephant is 17 to 20 years while in the wild they can live beyond 50.



13 Million

(Information from BBC)

People rode elephants in 2016. This was in Thailand alone.

The Impact

- Many of the elephants used in Thailand's tourism industry are stolen from Myanmar where they are a protected class of endangered animal.
- This is not just an elephant issue! These organizations take advantage of vulnerable people as well.
- Elephants are kept in chains, often isolated, and are exposed to long working hours for the enjoyment of tourists.

Training

- Trekking camps train elephants early, often illegally capturing newborns from their mothers in the wild.
- Training is started immediately and trainers use bullhooks, chains, whips, and beatings in order to "break" their spirits.

Living Conditions

- Elephants are left without the natural foods they need, access to clean water, and the ability to interact in natural exercise.
- They are kept in small sheds with concrete floors.
- Babies are also forced to work – chained to their mothers if they were born into captivity.

Health

- The long hours of work, concrete walkways, and poor living conditions lead to a variety of lifelong health problems: arthritis, back injuries, diseases, and serious psychological stress.
- Most elephants used in tourism do not live to a natural age. If they were able to live in the wild again they would struggle.

Social

- Animals in these conditions can not keep their normal matriarchal, traveling lifestyle. In the wild elephants travel, play, and explore for their food. This is not available to them at trekking camps.



Alternatives

Offer alternatives to people thinking about riding elephants or visiting elephants at questionable organizations.



01 Research Ethical Sanctuaries

Do your research. You can get the exhilarating experience of seeing an elephant without causing them undue harm.

02 Elephants from Far Away

Look for non-riding sanctuaries. Where you can observe elephants walking, swimming, and living free from human interaction from a safe distance. This is safer for you and the animals!

03 Volunteer at Ethical Sanctuaries

If someone really desires to interact with elephants do it through a reputable volunteer organization. Not only will you make lifelong memories you will learn valuable information about these amazing animals and how to save them!

Swimming with Captive Dolphins

At first, getting to swim with dolphins may sound like the perfect summer family trip. Your mom or sister mentions there are tons of places to swim with dolphins in Florida and the U.S. so how bad can these places really be? Any type of captive swimming is unethical and detrimental to the health of animals and the safety of people. How do you tell them the family photo op isn't worth the sacrifice these animals have to make?



What you can say to educate others...



"Just because an organization claims it can train wild animals does not mean that those animals are domesticated. Dolphins and other marine animals are forced to take pictures, play tricks and interact with tourists. They are kept in small concrete enclosures that inhibit their ability to be healthy and happy. Furthermore, swimming with dolphins and taking pictures with them is dangerous for you as well! Although it is often the animal who is harmed, people are injured during these interactions too. Dolphins can swim more than 60 miles a day in the wild - this is denied to them in captivity. Marine animals held in captivity live significantly shorter lives. The picture you get with them isn't going to be a truly happy one."

The Impact

- Dolphins that swim with humans in dolphinariums or marine parks are captive animals, forced to swim for human entertainment. This causes them undue stress, health issues, and a variety of other problems.
- Dolphins that are not "attractive" enough for photo ops or don't respond to training can be sold as meat.
- More than 2,000 dolphins live in captivity and multiple species of dolphins are endangered or vulnerable.

(PETA)

Training

- Dolphins must be trained, often inhumanely, in order for them to be suitable attractions. They are trained to eat out of tubes rather than hunt.
- Dolphins must swim in shallow water, learn to beach themselves, and allow humans to hold onto their flippers... all unnatural to their wild lifestyles.

Living Conditions

- They are forced into cramped living conditions, often with incompatible pods of other dolphins.
- Dolphins usually swim +60 miles a day – something they can't do in pools.
- Concrete pools and barriers keep dolphins from communicating and this disorients them.

(PETA)

Health

(The DODO)

- While living in captivity dolphins can exhibit psychosis. Some captive dolphin mothers have been observed accidentally drowning their children as a way to keep them away from trainers.
- Physically, dolphins are unable to escape conflict with other dolphins. They experience ulcers from stress and can even catch some human diseases.

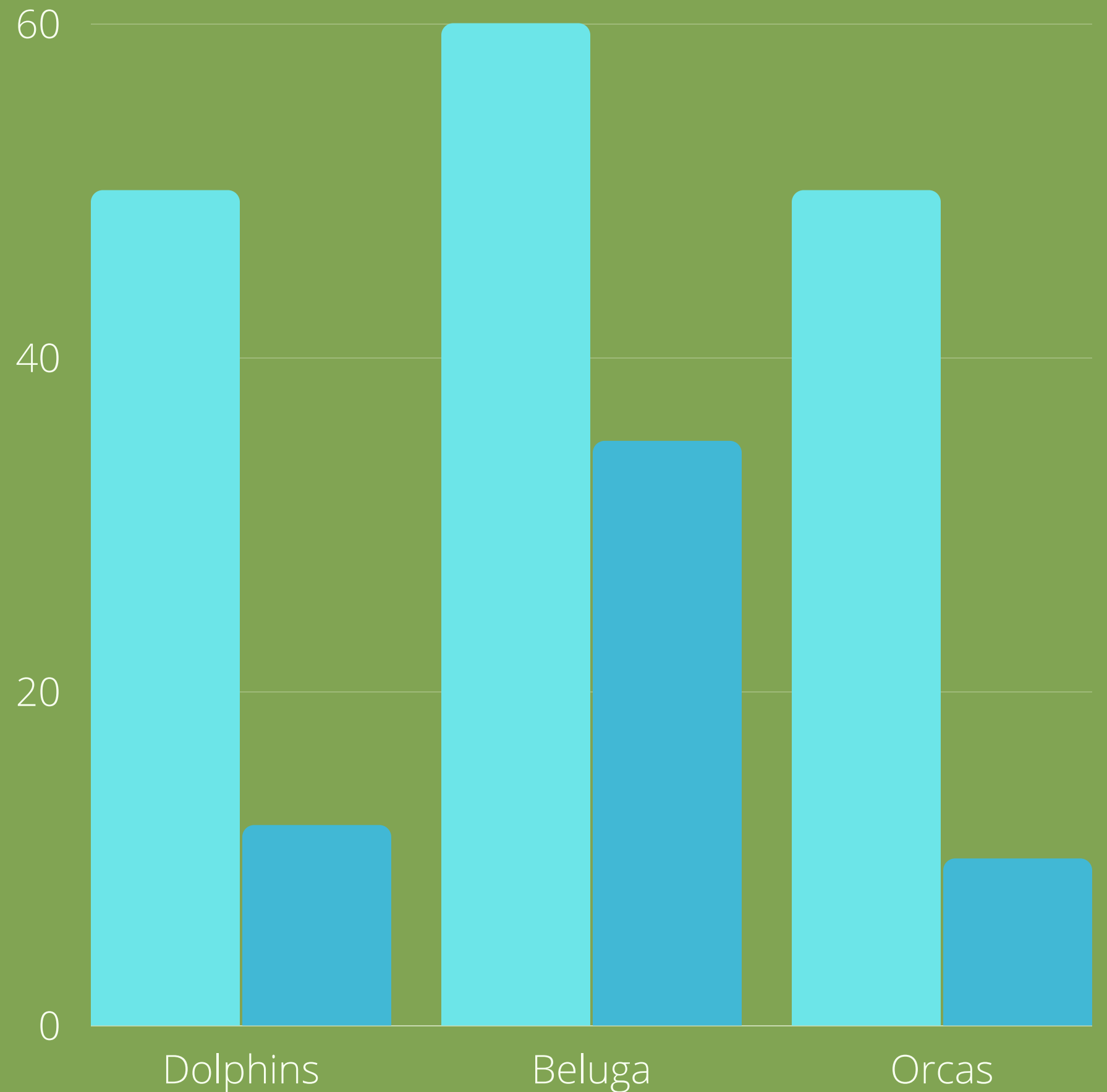
Social

- Dolphins in captivity are subject to undue stress. They must create unnatural pods with other dolphins and learn to adapt to human interaction – both of which are not what wild dolphins have evolved to do.



Marine Animals Held in Captivity

Tourism involving marine animals includes more than just dolphins. Many aquariums and marine parks also feature orcas and belugas. More than 5,000 marine animals have died in captivity since 1950 and this number is still growing. Marine parks are becoming mainstream worldwide with a growing number in China. Hundreds of marine parks operate in the United States alone.



Life Span in the Wild Vs. Lifespan in Captivity

Alternatives

Offer alternatives to people thinking about visiting marine parks or taking their children to swim with dolphins.



01 Responsible Eco-Tours

These boat tours allow tourists to see whales and dolphins from a safe distance. What is better than seeing an animal happy and playing in its own environment?

02 Visit a Natural Dolphin Area

California, Portugese, Florida... All these places and more are natural homes of dolphins. Take a dip at the beach and maybe in the distance, you will see some beautiful happy dolphins!

03 Robotic Dolphins

If you or someone you know really wants to take their kids to swim with dolphins there is an ethical way to do so with robotic dolphins! Realistic recreations of dolphins simulate the experience without suffering.

Holding Cubs or Walking with Big Cats

It is human nature to see something cute and want to hold it or interact with it. We do this with our own pets! But a scary trend in the tourism industry has been the chance to hold a baby tiger or lion at a "wild animal" petting zoo. These zoos often disguise themselves as conservation organizations when they are the complete opposite. We all saw it in the show "Tiger King" - but this trend is not only dangerous but cruel. What do you say to someone thinking about visiting one?

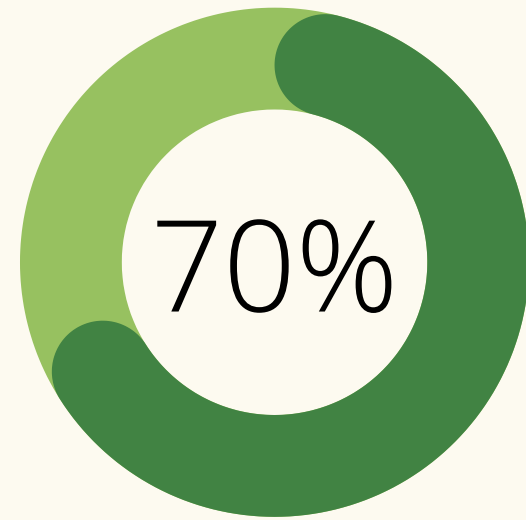


What you can say to educate others...

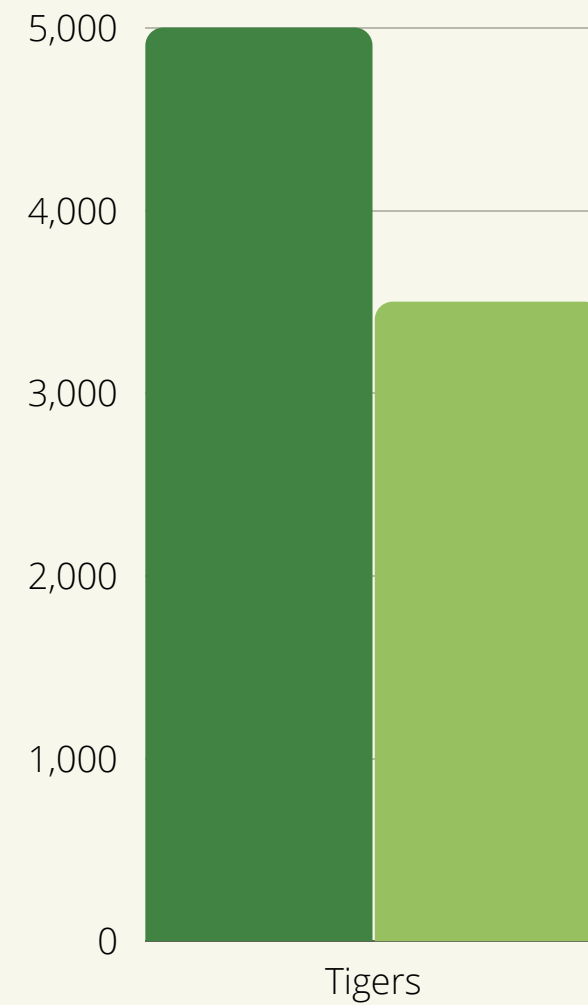


"I know those padded feet and snuggly faces are adorable. But these animals and their babies do not exist for human entertainment. They are not like our pets at home and they are certainly not enjoying interacting with us. Lions, tigers, leopards - they are all wild animals with complex social and behavioral instincts that are not suitable for interactive tourism. These animals are not only stressed out by tourists but also are treated unethically, often sold as products and only used to make money. Who knows what happens behind closed doors? Lionesses are forced to breed and then taken away from their cubs. Babies are beaten and starved. How would we feel if this was happening to us and our children?"

Looking at the Facts



70% of Lions live their lives in captivity. South Africa has more than 150 captive big cat facilities. Holding 5,800 animals for commercial use (WAP).



Nearly 900 tigers are kept captive for tourism purposes in Thailand alone (VOX). Lions, tigers, leopards, and big cats in general are used for photo ops.

5,000 tigers are currently living in captivity vs. 3,500 in the wild.

75%

Of tigers were found to be living in spaces 20 square meters or less in Thailand entertainment facilities (VOX).

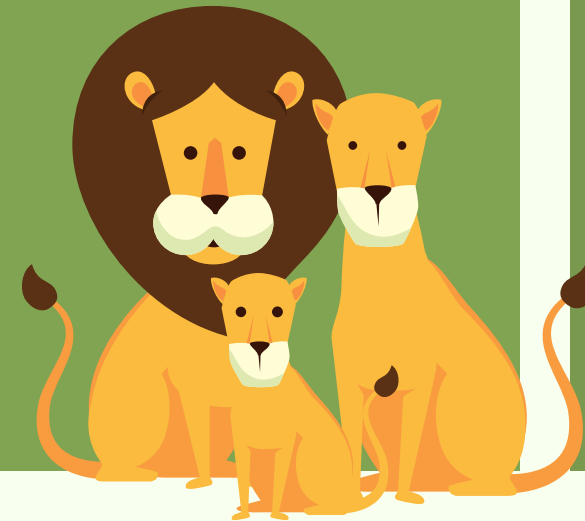


The Impact

- Baby tigers, lions, leopards, and more used as photo props at wildlife venues are taken from their mothers at an alarmingly young age causing health and psychological problems.
- Lions are often sold when they become too mature for photo ops. There is little regulation as to where these animals are sold. Many are thought to have been sold to canning and trophy hunting facilities .

Training

- Cubs used for photos are often too young to defend themselves. Many reports claim people are allowed to hit cubs or use force if they do not comply with tourists.



Living Conditions

- Lions and other large cats kept in captivity live in small, dingy, and often unsafe cages, rooms, and enclosures.
- Cubs are constantly being handled causing more stress to their lives. They are often forced to “work” for long hours not allowing for proper rest.

Health

- Big cats held in captivity often face inbreeding issues and are drugged as a way to subdue their natural behaviors while tourists are with them. Sometimes they are declawed or worse.
- Many of these places are incredibly cheap. Meaning a tourist can get in for less than \$20. These places generally do not use their money to treat disease, health conditions, or general health care for animals (VOX).

Social

- In the wild lions are pride animals. In captivity, they are rarely allowed to create strong bonds with other lions. Lionesses are forced to breed – then their young are taken away from them. Lions are kept separately and in cages or small enclosures.

Alternatives

Offer alternatives to people thinking about visiting parks that allow interaction with big cats or any animals!



01 Avoid Anything with "Interactions"

Wildlife tourist industries can call themselves "sanctuaries" with little repercussions. They may lie and say these animals were orphaned. If a place is offering ANY time of interaction with wild animals then make sure to avoid them!

02 Ethical Safaris & Views

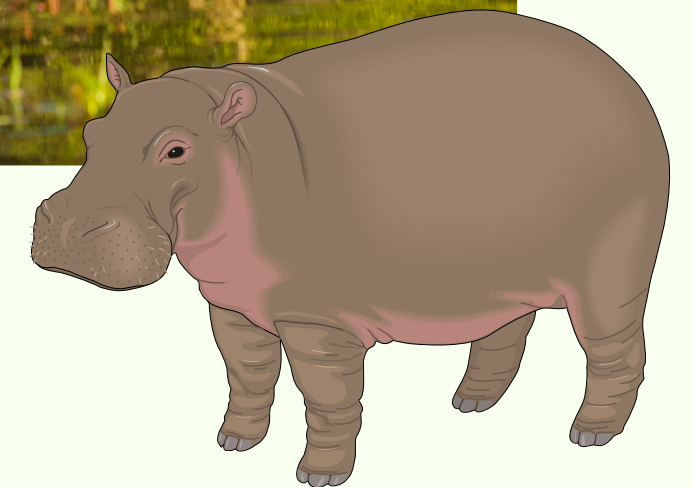
Ethical ways to view big cats in the wild exist. Seeing animals on their terms is the best way to do it! Places like Anagma work with locals to give tourists an amazing experience viewing nature and animals safely.

03 Think of Ways to Donate

Responsible big cat conservation is extremely important with their dwindling numbers. Doing your research and donating to real and responsible conservation efforts will be important for the future of these animals.

Not All Safaris are Safe

Perhaps your friend is thinking of going on a safari to view some of the most majestic wild animals that roam this world. Your friend assumes since they are not holding an animal, taking them out of their natural habitat, or seemingly threatening them that this is a great and responsible traveling option. But not so fast - not all safaris are responsible and sometimes in the moment tourists can make bad decisions. How do you make sure your friend is going on a responsible safari? How do you make sure you find yourself on an ethical trip?



If you are asked...

How Do I Find An Ethical Safari?

Ensure that the safari or organization you are visiting follows these guidelines:



- **No Interactions:** You are not able to interact with the animals at any point during your visit. Human interaction causes undue stress to wild animals.
- **Rangers:** Research who does the actual tour and what their qualifications are. Rangers have extensive background knowledge and training to be able to provide an awarding and ethical trip.
- **No Promises:** A good safari will not make promises of getting "close to lions eating, elephants mud bathing, or animals dueling"




STAYING ON THE ROAD

Ethical safaris do not allow tourists to get close to animals, causing them stress. Some unethical tour organizations may promise to get 3 - 5 feet near an animal. This is too close! It can be dangerous for you and the animals.


What Do I Search For?

ON THEIR TERMS




Safaris should not allow tourists or guides to dictate when wild animals appear. It should always be on the animal's terms if they want to be seen. And when these animals do come out it will be so much more rewarding than them being lured.

TRANSPERANCY



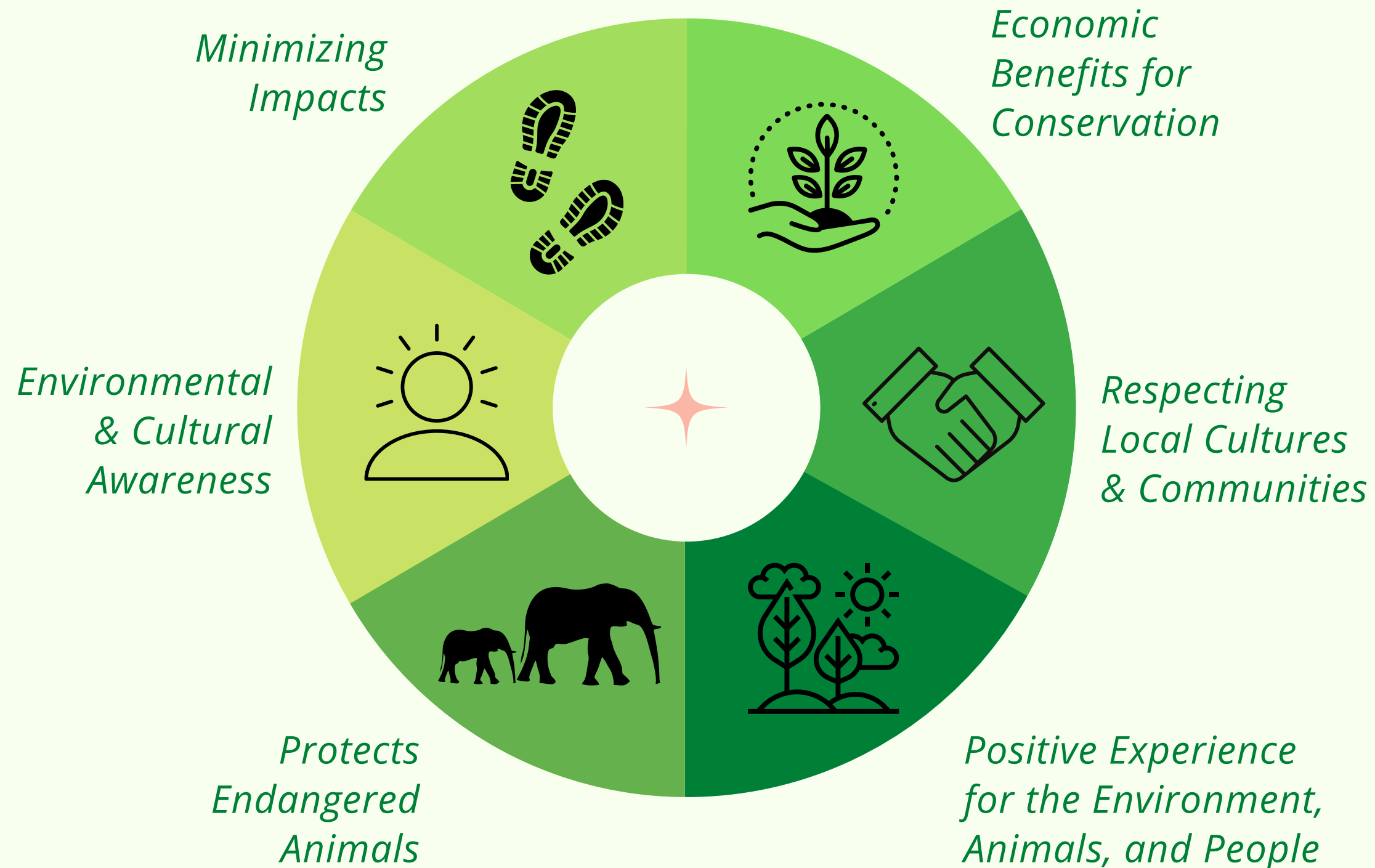
Is the organization being transparent about its safaris? Do they provide a lot of information about the animals you may see or about how they are ensuring the animal's safety? Don't be afraid to look at reviews they can be an important tool.

LOCAL COMMUNITY



It is always smart to research if a safari operator or tourist spot you are thinking about works with the local community and supports them. If they don't this is a sign something about the relationship with the organization and the animals may be off.

Ethical Tourism ECOTOURISM



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RESOURCES

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