

Entering the European market for wildlife tourism products

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European tour operators expect local operators offering wildlife tourism products to work under high standards and manage their business sustainably. The market is highly competitive. So working alongside communities and local conservation organisations offers many opportunities for local operators. They can help you improve your wildlife travel products and attract European wildlife tourists.

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1. What requirements and certifications must wildlife tourism meet to be allowed on the European market?

European tour operators that sell wildlife tourism products on the European market are bound by strict regulations. These make sure travellers stay safe and protects them financially. You should be familiar with the relevant regulations.

What are the mandatory and additional requirements that buyers have?

The requirements that European tour operators have for wildlife tourism products in developing countries cover the following:

- The European Package Travel Directive
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Liability Insurance and Insolvency Protection

As a first step, you should read the CBI's [What requirements must tourism services comply with to be allowed on the European market](#). Familiarise yourself with the full details of legal, non-legal, and common requirements.

For wildlife tourism businesses in Africa, [SATIB](#) is a specialist broker in tourism and leisure. They provide insurance for tourism businesses across many countries on the continent. SATIB offers insurance products for accommodation providers, tour operators, and transport/wheel operators. They also have a range of specialist insurance services that include management of wildlife and habitats.

Wildlife tourism is closely linked with adventure tourism. So, check out the CBI study [Entering the European market for adventure tourism](#). It offers detailed information about standards that many businesses operating in

the adventure tourism segment follow. These include the International Organisation for Standardisation's (ISO) [Standard for Adventure Tourism](#) and the [British Standard for Adventure Tourism](#).

What are the requirements for niche markets?

Wildlife tourism is on the rise among European travellers who want new and off-the-beaten-path destinations. Wildlife holidays often cost more than other types of trips. This makes them a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many tourists. There are important requirements that you need to think about when you want to reach this market. Conservation and sustainability are among the most important things to keep in mind, besides health and safety, which guide training.

Sustainability in wildlife tourism

Being a sustainable tour operator is extremely important. This is because awareness of the issues within the tourism industry is growing. Research findings show that more and more European travellers want sustainable travel options. These need to have a positive impact on both people and the planet. Research by Accor found that 71% of European travellers say [sustainability is important to their travel decisions](#).

New laws and regulations are also expected in Europe in the coming years. This includes the [Green Claims Directive](#) and the [European Sustainability Reporting Standards](#). In time, these will require businesses in Europe to operate more sustainably and transparently. As part of this, tour operators must look at their supply chains. They need to re-evaluate the partners and suppliers they are working with, and those that align with their future sustainability goals.

This operator from the Netherlands, [All for Nature](#), tells its potential customers on its homepage that 3 key things make their trips unique - all are concerned with sustainability.

Figure 1: All for Nature Travel - This Makes Your Trip Unique

All for Nature Travel This makes your trip unique



Ultimate wildlife experience

With All for Nature Travel you make the most beautiful wildlife trips. Enjoy unspoiled nature and its animal life.



Small scale

From small-scale, sustainable lodges you can enjoy unspoiled nature and its animal life. Individually or in a small group.



Contribution to nature

With your journey, which meets the highest standard of sustainability, you directly contribute to the protection of the wildlife you see.






Source: All for Nature Travel, 2025

The most commonly used sustainable certifications include those that use the criteria established by the [Global Sustainable Tourism Council \(GSTC\)](#), like [Travelife for tour operators](#). Using the GSTC criteria as a basis for change can be an important tool. For more details about sustainability certification schemes, download the CBI study [Entering the European market for ecotourism](#).

Some countries have developed their own local certification schemes. Check with your national tourism board to see if these initiatives align with your operations. [Costa Rica](#), [Botswana](#) and [Kenya](#) are good examples of destinations that have developed their own scheme. Also, [Uganda promotes Fairtrade Tourism](#) as the go-to scheme within the country.

Sustainability covers all aspects of social, economic and environmental well-being. For wildlife tourism there are specific criteria that are especially important to look at. These help improve operations and meet the needs of the European market.

Figure 2: GSTC criteria specific to wildlife tourism

<p>D3.4 Wildlife interactions</p> <p>Interactions with free roaming wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, are non-invasive and responsibly managed to avoid adverse effects on the animals concerned and on the viability and behaviour of populations in the wild.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The organization is aware of, and complies with, existing local, national and international regulations and guidelines concerning wildlife interactions, including wildlife viewing. b. The organization engages with the development and implementation of local codes and guidelines for wildlife interactions, including wildlife viewing, as required, based on advice of wildlife experts. c. The organization ensures that all service providers and sites visited comply with existing local, national and international regulations and guidelines concerning wildlife interactions, including wildlife viewing. d. Direct interactions, in particular feeding, should not be permitted, unless specifically sanctioned by internationally accepted standards or, where standards are not available, guided by independent wildlife expert advice. e. Measures are taken to minimize disturbance to wildlife. f. Impacts on wildlife wellbeing are regularly monitored and addressed. 	 
<p>D3.5 Animal welfare</p> <p>No species of wild animal is acquired, bred or held captive, except by authorized and suitably equipped persons and for properly regulated activities in compliance with local and international law. Housing, care and handling of all wild and domestic animals meets the highest standards of animal welfare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The organization is aware of, and complies with, relevant laws and regulations concerning captive wildlife. b. Existing guidelines for specific tourism activities involving captive wildlife are implemented. c. Personnel responsible for captive wildlife have appropriate qualifications and experience and are fully licensed. d. The organization is aware of, and complies with, relevant laws and regulations concerning animal welfare. e. The organization ensures that all service providers and sites visited comply with relevant laws, regulations and guidelines concerning captive wildlife and animal welfare. f. There is regular inspection of conditions of captive wildlife and their housing. g. There is regular inspection of conditions of domestic animals and their housing and handling. 	 
<p>D3.6 Wildlife harvesting and trade</p> <p>Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, sold, or traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable, and in compliance with local and international laws.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The organization is aware of, and complies with, relevant laws and regulations concerning wildlife harvesting and trade. b. The organization ensures that all service providers and sites visited comply with relevant laws and regulations concerning wildlife harvesting and trade. c. Visitors and guides are informed of regulations concerning wildlife harvesting, consumption and trade and of the need to avoid buying illegal products/souvenirs derived from threatened species of wildlife notified by IUCN or CITES. 	

Source: [GSTC Industry Criteria for Tour Operators](#), 2025

Even if you cannot become certified, it is important to implement sustainable practices into your business and promote them widely to your buyers and visitors through your website. Working closely with local communities to protect wildlife and conserve habitats is one of the most important activities that local tour operators can participate in.

Tour Operator Insight

Mohanjeet Brar, MD, [Gamewatchers Safaris & Porini Camps](#)



At Gamewatchers Safaris, we believe wildlife tourism can only be truly sustainable if it protects habitats and supports the people who share their land with wildlife. Through our [Porini Conservation Programme](#) we partner with Maasai landowners, paying fair leases to keep thousands of acres open for wildlife, rather than having them lost to fencing or farming. This approach secures vital migration corridors, protects biodiversity and provides a reliable income to local families.

Our eco-camps are deliberately small, solar-powered, and designed to leave no permanent footprint. Guests enjoy authentic, crowd-free wildlife viewing, knowing their stay directly supports conservation and benefits the local community. This creates a powerful cycle – healthy ecosystems, thriving communities and unique experiences that high-value travellers increasingly seek.

We've expanded this model through initiatives in partnership with [EarthAcre](#), which involves developing nature asset payments directly to communities as stacked payments on top of tourism revenues, ensuring that tourism aligns with emerging 'nature-positive' investment frameworks. These mechanisms channel funds not only into wildlife protection but also directly to individual community members working towards making the protection of biodiversity and nature the most financially viable option for communities.

For community groups seeking to establish sustainable tourism enterprises, my advice is straightforward: prioritise conservation and community benefits at the core of your business. Keep operations light on the land, ensure local people are genuine stakeholders, and design experiences that tell the story of both wildlife and culture. In the long term, this approach not only sustains tourism but also regenerates nature and livelihoods.

More information on certifications and running a sustainable tour operator can be found in these CBI reports:

- [Be a sustainable business](#)
- [Tips to go green](#)
- [Tips on how to become more socially responsible in the tourism sector](#)
- [Sustainable operator case studies](#)
- [Regenerative tourism](#)

Tips:

Consider becoming certified as a sustainable tourism business. Check if your government or any local development agencies can offer support and guidance in the process. You can also download CBI studies to help you.

Collaborate and learn from others. To support your sustainability journey, join local associations and other groups, like the [EcoThailand Foundation](#).

Write a sustainability policy for your business and promote it on your website. This will help your buyers understand what sustainable actions you take. For guidance, see [Experience Jordan](#) and [Eternal Landscapes Mongolia](#).

Work with eco-friendly and sustainable accommodation providers and partners. That way you can market the whole tourism offer as sustainable, which will be appealing to your buyers.

Welfare of animals in tourism

Tourism plays a major role in the [conservation of many species worldwide](#), through things such as conservation fees for park entry and general awareness among the population. But with the rise in popularity there have also been growing concerns about the ethics and well-being of certain species.

In August 2025, people in the industry were very upset when [footage emerged](#) of vehicles and tourists on foot blocking the wildebeest migration in the Maasai Mara. This was happening because tourists wanted the best photo. Industry leaders have been naming operators who allowed this to happen. The park has now taken action to make sure rules and regulations are in place to stop this kind of behaviour. Many parks now have rules to prevent it. For example, in [South Luangwa National Park](#) there are strict rules on the number of vehicles allowed for wildlife viewing at any time. SAN Parks also offers guidance on working within their national parks through their [Code of Conduct Report](#).

Figure 3: Rules for visitors



Rules of the Galapagos National Park for incoming visitors



Sources: Kenya Wildlife Service 2025; Latin Trails 2025

According to ABTA, the Association of British Travel Agents, [two-thirds of people express concern about the impact of tourism on animal welfare](#). Elephant rides, wildlife performances, or handling animals and taking photographs or 'selfies' with them are no longer considered to be acceptable practices. Images that promote human interactions with a wild animal are unacceptable to European wildlife tourists these days. Take a look at [ABTA's animal welfare requirements and unacceptable practices](#) to make sure you understand them clearly.

If you sell your wildlife experience through an online travel agency (OTA), such as Airbnb Experiences, be sure to check their requirements. For example, Airbnb follows an [Animal Welfare Policy](#) created with [World Animal](#)

Protection, and other OTAs have similar codes of conduct. OTAs rely heavily on reviews, which play a big role in whether travellers choose to visit. See below how reviews can influence wildlife travellers.

Figure 4: Examples of Negative and Positive Reviews of Animal Attractions

●○○○○
Poor elephant
Apr 2025 • Couples
This is NOT an ethical elephant sanctuary! The elephants are forced into standing still all day while people feed them. If any of the elephants try to move away they get pulled by the ears back which I really wouldn't call ethical. Then u take the elephants down to a mud pool and rub mud all over them. One elephant tried to move and again got pulled back by its ears. Also the enclosure is small and the elephants are not free. They may have been rescued from worse place but still there only purpose is human entertainment
Written 17 April 2025

●●●●●
Fantastic experience
Aug 2025 • Family
This is an amazing place doing incredible work. You can tell the elephants are cared for and they look healthy. It is 50 acres in size so they have loads of room to stretch their legs. I would recommend this place to anyone. The guide Michael was lovely and great with our little one who was a little nervous. Overall a fantastic experience and remember these elephants need tourists to help feed them and keep them healthy. Lovely place.
Written 27 August 2025

Source: Viator (Tripadvisor), 2025

Both these reviews featured on Viator, which has its own [Animal Welfare Policy](#). The OTA removes products found to be in breach of its policy. In 2019, it announced it [wants to end relationships with businesses that breed or import whales and/or dolphins for captive establishments](#).

Responsible Travel, a UK-based OTA, has strict codes of conduct for partners promoting their packages on its site as well. They will not work with operators who do not follow these guidelines. Read their articles such as [Our stance on captive animals, animal welfare and tourism](#), a code for [happy horses in tourism](#), and articles on other issues like [photos with captive wild animals](#) and [wildlife souvenirs](#).

Foundations and associations like the [Jane Goodall Institute](#), [The Brooke](#) and the [Born Free Foundation](#) have also developed guidelines and policies that support all aspects of the industry. The goal is to improve and increase awareness..

The global animal welfare organisation Four Paws publishes a [free guide about being an animal-friendly traveller](#). The Brooke organisation has also published guidelines for animal treatment. Some operators, like [Experience Jordan](#), have chosen to follow them. Use examples like these to guide your own animal welfare policy.

Figure 5: Travel do's and don'ts



Source: Four Paws, 2025

Tips:

Familiarise yourself and your team with what is ethically correct. ABTA's [Animal Welfare Guidelines](#) are a good place to start.

Make sure you understand and follow the policies set by the European Tour Operators to craft responsible and ethical long-term relationships. For example, read the WeTravel Academies article on [best practices to support animal welfare and tourism](#).

Make sure that your company and all your employees are aware of the rules and regulations of the national parks or destinations within which you operate. Do your research and check out their website or other online resources to locate them.

Show your commitment by signing pledges and participating in campaigns for ethical wildlife tourism. For example, the [World Animal Protection – Wildlife Friendly Pledge](#) and the World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) – [Nature Positive Travel & Tourism initiative](#).

Go that extra step and write a Nature Positive Tourism Strategy using this guide from [Animondial](#).

Provide experienced and knowledgeable guides

Demand for knowledgeable and experienced wildlife guides is on the rise. Guides usually have the most interaction with your guests. They can set the tone for the overall experience. So, whether you are a small operator in Mexico or a large, high-end safari operator in Malawi, having qualified and well-trained guides is essential for the success and growth of your business.

Wildlife tourism attracts a diverse range of tourists when it comes to knowledge, expectations and experience. For some guests it may be their first time on safari, and they want to see the Big 5. Others may have been on safari several times and are mostly interested in seeing specific bird species.

Wildlife guides should be professional, attentive, and aware of all health and safety concerns. They also need to have had in-depth training on the rules and regulations in the parks or areas where they are guiding. They must be very knowledgeable about the native animals and know the best places to view them, on land or at sea. In southern Africa, the [Field Guides Association of Southern Africa \(FGASA\)](#) offers a range of relevant qualifications for safari guides. Some destinations, such as Zambia, have regional training programmes, like [Bedrock Africa](#). Guides should be able to speak the language of the travellers to a good level.

Where funding or guide training is not available, some organisations develop their own training programmes. These may include comprehensive skills development, like:

- Wildlife identification and behaviour;
- Tracking and navigation;
- Rifle handling;
- Wilderness medicine and first aid;
- Guest interaction and storytelling.

Giving people correct information from the start is very important for health and safety and effective management of expectations. Making sure your guides are equipped and trained in this area is important. See the example below, which gives details on what you should include.

Figure 6: Template for guide activity introduction

PRE SAFARI OR WILDLIFE ACTIVITY - GUIDES' BRIEFING MANUAL

“Great People Enjoy Safe Reserves.”

G – Greeting

P – Plan

E – Expectations

S – Safety

R – Respect for Nature

Greeting

- Introductions.
- Ensure guests are wearing the correct clothing and have the correct equipment (e.g., water, sun hats, sun cream etc.).

Plan

- Explain the plan for the activity. Including, length, timings and direction.
- Ensure you update guests of any last minute changes.

Exceptions and Interests

- Find out the guests' interests, what wildlife they would like to see or what information they are interested to learn.
- Manage their expectations by explaining what wildlife is easily seen and what might be more difficult to find.

Safety

- Find out from the guests whether they have any conditions or disabilities.
- Explain the animal safety protocols and explain that guests should listen to your guidance at all times.
- Show the guests your first aid kit and explain where it is kept.
- Provide information on how radio or phones are used in an emergency.

Respecting Nature

- Leave no litter; take everything you bring.
- Do not pick plants or disturb natural habitats.
- Observe wildlife quietly and from a safe distance.

Tips:

Invest in external training or think about building your own programme. Make sure that you offer regular refresher courses and promote colleagues teaching each other.

Look for online training resources that might be relevant to your operations and destination, like the [Nature Tourism Guide Handbook in Colombia](#).

Train staff in first aid, and make sure they always keep their certifications up to date and valid. Use qualified experts for yearly refresher courses.

Drivers and boat captains must be qualified and insured. Make sure your business complies with all relevant laws in your destination.

Read the CBI reports on other niche markets within the wildlife tourism market: [birding](#), [diving](#), [fishing](#), [adventure](#)

Be flexible and embed unique experiences into your itineraries

More and more European tourists are looking for unique experiences in remote, off-the-beaten-track destinations. Now that wildlife tourism is growing, operators must adapt by offering more than a standard 2-hour game drive. Travellers want deeper, more meaningful encounters with nature. This requires careful selection of destinations that avoid overcrowded, overly popular areas.

At the heart of any successful wildlife tourism experience is having a great and varied number of wildlife living their life, whether on land or at sea. Observing animals in their natural habitats, where they live in the wild, is still an important part of wildlife tourism activities.

Offering different activity options can be very important for meeting guests' needs. Depending on the destination, guests may enjoy activities like boating, walking, riding or jeep safaris. Other things such as visiting local conservation organisations or participating in cultural activities can also add an exciting element to the experience.

Figure 7: Walking Safaris are popular safari options



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting, 2025

Mixing guests of different interests and abilities will probably negatively impact their experience. You should gather as much information as possible at the time of booking. This will help you to match them with the most suitable guests and guides. Some guests may even be willing to pay more money for a private guide. Make sure you offer this option when people book.

More and more guests are looking for sustainable experiences that help the local people and ecosystem. Including community and conservation experiences in your itineraries can be a big selling point. Make sure that the experiences are done ethically, and comply with local guidelines and legislation.

Below are some ideas for you to think about:

- Make sure that your business employs local people, pays a fair wage, and provides appropriate training.
- Work with a local conservation organisation to ensure that you minimise the impact of your wildlife tourism product on the local wildlife and environment.
- Provide food that is locally sourced and seasonal.
- Develop adventure-themed infrastructure, such as canopy walkways, nature trails, or bird hides.
- Provide activity and/or educational programmes for children, such as storytelling, painting/drawing animals, bug collecting, and animal track identification.
- Work with providers of eco-friendly accommodations, for example [Distant Relatives Ecolodge and Backpackers](#).
- Visit local community projects, shops, markets, cafes and restaurants.
- Develop programmes that are suitable for volunteers. These programmes need to focus on conservation of animals and habitats, and/or projects suitable for academic, educational or scientific research.

2. Through which channels can you get wildlife tourism products on the European market?

Wildlife tourists are diverse and common in Europe, and have many motivations for travel. They often book trips through specialist wildlife tour operators, online tour operators (OTAs), or directly with local providers. All these channels offer opportunities for local tour operators.

How is the end-market segmented?

Wildlife tourism is a popular activity whilst on a trip to many destinations across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It is estimated that up to 40% of all international tourists have an interest in some form of wildlife watching. Wildlife tourists encompass a diverse range of markets, particularly adventure tourists and fully independent tourists (FITs). They include individuals of various ages and generations. They have many motivations for travel: the chart below describes broad groups of wildlife traveller and their motivations and typical behaviours.

You can read more details about the market in the CBI study, [The European Market Potential for Wildlife Tourism](#)

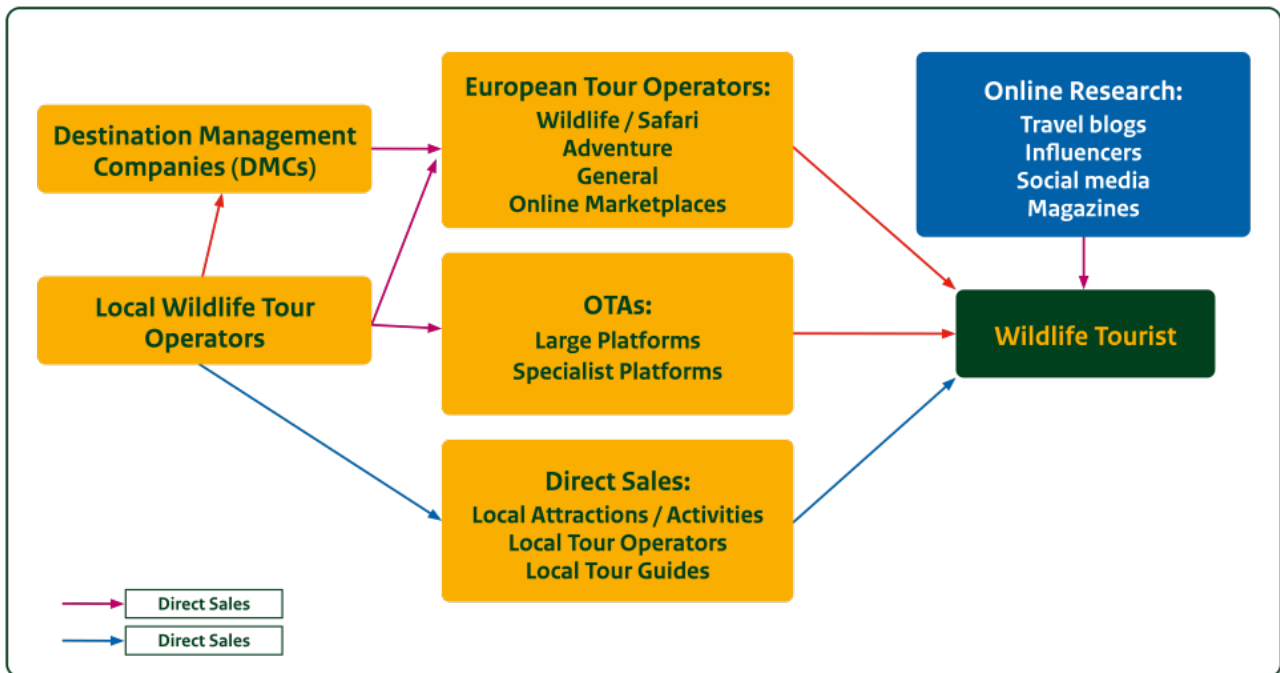
Tip:

To find out more about the different markets for European wildlife tourism, download and read the following CBI studies: [What are the opportunities in the European Adventure Tourism Market](#), and [What are the opportunities in the European FIT tourism market](#).

Through which channels do wildlife tourism products reach the end market?

Most wildlife tourism trips are booked through European tour operators. These design full or partial itineraries with support from local operators. Some tours are guided, others self-guided. FITs often plan and book their own trips, but may also use operators or OTAs for certain elements or shorter experiences. The chart below shows the main sales channels.

Figure 8: Wildlife tourism sales channels



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting, 2025

The sales channels are further described as follows:

Destination Management Companies (DMCs)

DMCs sell inbound travel and often act as intermediaries between European tour operators and their clients. They offer local knowledge and make good connections and relationships with local suppliers. DMCs selling wildlife experiences as part of their packages include [Zambian Ground Handlers](#), [Best of Costa Rica DMC](#) and [Blue Lanka Tours](#).

European Tour Operators

There are both wildlife-focused and more general adventure, photographic, or luxury tour operators who sell wildlife experiences to the European Tourism Market.

- Specialist Wildlife/Safari Operators: [Africa Private Safaris](#) (Netherlands), [Yellow Zebra Safaris](#) (UK) and [Wildfoot Travel](#) (UK).
- Adventure tour operators: [Explore](#) (UK), [Diamir](#) (Germany), [Terre Voyages](#) (France) and [Experience Travel](#) (Netherlands).
- Luxury tour operators: [Audley Travel](#) (UK) and [Guinness Travel](#) (Italy).
- Photographic operators: [The Odyssey Collective](#) (UK) and [Natures Lens](#) (UK).
- Voluntourism and conservation: [GVI Expeditions](#) (UK).

Online Marketplaces

Many tour operators also sell their holidays through online marketplaces or directories. They are important resources for wildlife tourists who spend time researching where they want to go and what they want to see before making a decision. [SafariBookings](#) and [Responsible Travel](#) are two important platforms.

Online Travel Agents (OTAs)

OTAs are another crucial channel, allowing customers to research and book a diverse range of travel products and services online, including trips, tours, and experiences. [TripAdvisor](#) and [Viator](#) are two examples.

Local Tour Operators and Guides

These play a major part in the supplier chain, selling wildlife travel products to European tour operators and directly to FITs. A selection of local tour operators is profiled in the section below. [Which companies are you competing with?](#)

Direct Sales

FITs make direct bookings with a wide range of suppliers, including accommodation providers, transport, guides, and individual attractions. They are likely to find them through online research, recommendations, social media, and destination websites.

Tips:

Research which tour operators already sell trips to your destination and evaluate whether they could be good business partners. For further guidance, download the CBI study, [10 Tips for Doing Business with European Tourism Buyers](#).

Target potential partners who do not already offer competing products in your area, and approach them with clear, detailed proposals on how you could build a successful partnership together.

Connect with local accommodation providers to promote your trips. They may allow leaflets and/or other marketing materials to be displayed inside their property.

Use high-quality videos and photos to help you stand out from your competitors.

What is the most interesting channel for you?

European tour operators, OTAs, and online marketplaces, like SafariBookings (for tour operators specialising in Africa), are the most interesting sales channels for wildlife tourism products.

Direct sales to FITs are also important. They often like to book tours and trips once they have arrived at their destination. You should consider what new features might benefit your website. Some features that might be helpful are direct booking and easy communication options, such as WhatsApp for Business. Keeping an up-to-date social media presence is also important, as it highlights recent sightings and guest feedback.

To join SafariBookings as a partner, you will need to be a fully registered safari company with the required licenses to operate. There are several criteria that you must fulfil to join. Find out whether your business can join on the page, [Become a Partner](#). A SafariBookings account and review services are free. Promoting the business and tours is charged on a pay-per-quote request. Find out more [about how to use SafariBookings for your business](#).

Download the CBI studies, [How to be a successful tourism company online](#) and [How to work effectively with OTAs](#) for a wide range of useful tips to help you.

3. What competition will you face in the wildlife tourism market?

Wildlife tourism is a global phenomenon. The table below shows its widespread presence and the diverse range of opportunities available to experience it. This shows that wildlife tourism is a very competitive market.

Which countries are you competing with?

All the countries featured in the table below should be seen as competing destinations. Profiles of 4 of these countries are provided as key competitors:

- Ecuador (Galapagos Islands)
- Sri Lanka
- Kenya
- Uganda

Table 1: Examples of wildlife varieties in their natural habitats in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America

Continent	Wildlife Species Present	Destination, Country
Africa	The Big 5 – elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, rhino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moremi Game Reserve, Botswana • Masai Mara, Kenya • Kruger National Park, South Africa • South Lunagwa National Park, Zambia • Liwonde National Park, Malawi • Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania • Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe
	Great Migration of zebra and wildebeest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masai Mara, Kenya • Serengeti, Tanzania
	Many species of iconic African wildlife – elephant, lion, hippo, leopard, wild dog, hyena, cheetah, baboon, buffalo, zebra, gazelle, crocodile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Okavango Delta, Botswana • Amboseli National Park, Kenya • Samburu National Reserve, Kenya • Etosha National Park, Namibia • Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, South Africa • Selous Game Reserve, Tanzania • Mana Pools National Park, Zimbabwe
	Flamingos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Bogoria National Park, Kenya • Lake Natron, Tanzania
	Cape fur seals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skeleton Coast, Namibia
	Gorillas, chimpanzees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda • Kibale Forest, Uganda • Loango National Park, Gabon • Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Uganda
	Elephants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chobe National Park, Botswana • Etosha National Park, Namibia • Addo Elephant Park, South Africa
	Lemur, including black & white ruffed lemur, blue-eyed lemur, golden bamboo lemur, and grey-headed lemur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainforests of the Atsinanana, Madagascar
	Whale watching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa

Continent	Wildlife Species Present	Destination, Country
Asia	Bengal Tiger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, India • Bandhavgarh National Park, India • Kanha Tiger Reserve, India • Jim Corbett National Park, India
	Bornean Orangutan	• Kinabatangan River, Borneo
	Javan rhino, Javan leopard, Sumatran dhole, smooth-coated otter	• Ujung Kulon National Park, Indonesia
	Sri Lankan elephant, Sri Lankan leopard, Sri Lankan sloth bear	• Yala National Park, Sri Lanka
	Asiatic lion, Indian leopard, golden jackal	• Gir National Park, India
	Sumatran rhino, Sumatran tiger, silvery gibbon, Sumatran orangutan, Sumatran elephant	• Gunung Leuser National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia
	Indian rhino, South Asian river dolphin, Bengal tiger, Indian elephant, Asiatic black bear	• Kaziranga National Park, India
Central and South America	Squirrel Monkey, black-handed spider monkey, mantled monkey, white-faced capuchin	• Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica
	Giant leatherback, hawksbill, and loggerhead turtles	• Tortuguero National Park, Costa Rica
	Jaguar, black caiman, green anaconda, howler monkey, South American tapir	• Pantanal, Brazil
	Penguins, Galapagos land iguana, giant tortoise, whale shark, hammerhead shark, Galapagos sea lion, blue-footed booby	• Galapagos Islands, Ecuador
	Whales, sea turtles, sea lions, sea birds	• Sea of Cortez, Mexico

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Ecuador

The world-famous Galapagos Islands (Ecuador) are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. They are home to an incredible variety of wildlife. Much of it found nowhere else in the world, from the giant Galapagos tortoise to the tiny Galapagos penguin. Tourism has experienced a lot of growth in recent years, with over 330,000 visitors recorded in 2023. Most of this growth has come from land-based visitors, who now outnumber cruise passengers by three to one.

This rapid increase has raised serious worries about overtourism. The pressure of more people staying on the islands has led to an increase in problems. These include as invasive species, illegal fishing, litter, and greater disturbance to fragile habitats. Local authorities are now working on new ways to regulate land-based tourism more effectively to protect the islands for the future. Some of their measures are creating policy, [awareness leaflets](#), and other resources to support a responsible tourism industry.

Figure 9: When in the Galapagos

WHEN IN GALAPAGOS

We hope that your encounters with the wildlife of Galapagos leave you with lasting memories. It is important that visitors respect the rules set by the Galapagos National Park to help protect this fragile ecosystem. Here are some of the key things to remember:

KEEP TO PATHS AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Young animals touched by well-meaning people may cause their parents to abandon them. Please keep your distance!



DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

Please don't feed any of the wildlife you encounter. It can cause them health problems or even death.



DON'T USE FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

Using a flash can be intimidating to wildlife and is outlawed by the National Park.



BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU BUY

Don't buy any souvenirs or trinkets that contain illegal materials such as black coral, shells, lava rock, animal parts, or any native wood or vegetation.



Source: [Galapagos Conservation](#), 2025

To keep tourism sustainable, strict rules are already in place. Boats are limited to 100 passengers, and the number of cruise ships has been capped for many years. The most responsible operators follow Smart Voyager standards. This is a sustainability certification created with the Rainforest Alliance. All guides must be residents, trained, and licensed by the Galapagos National Park.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is recognised as a leading wildlife tourism destination in Asia. What makes it special is its high biodiversity within a relatively small geographic area. The country's protected areas, including Yala, Wilpattu, Udawalawe and Minneriya national parks, offer habitats for many different species. Among these species are leopards, elephants and sloth bears, and a wide range of birdlife.

Also, Sri Lanka's marine environment supports seasonal whale and dolphin watching. This is especially along its southern and eastern coasts. The diversity of Sri Lanka's land and marine ecosystems means the country is a major location for wildlife-based tourism. This helps both conservation awareness and the national economy.

Kenya

Kenya has a long history as one of Africa's leading safari destinations. It has some of the best places to view wildlife, including the Masai Mara National Reserve, which is the site of the annual Great Migration. During this event, more than 2 million zebra and wildebeest travel between Kenya and the Serengeti in Tanzania in search of new grasslands and water. Other important wildlife watching parks include Lake Nakuru (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), Mount Kenya National Park, Amboseli National Park (located at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania) and Aberdare National Park, which is home to a rare species of rhino.

Kenya's 23 national parks and 28 national reserves are managed by the [Kenya Wildlife Service \(KWS\)](#). Around 8% of the country's landmass is protected for wildlife conservation. More and more Kenyan communities are taking a major role in providing safaris as custodians of the land and wildlife. They do this through the development of conservancies, estimated to account for 11% of Kenya's land.

Figure 10: Elephants, Amboseli National Park



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting, 2025

Uganda

Uganda is home to more than half the world's endangered mountain gorillas. They live in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, on the border with Rwanda. Tourism in this area has been regulated and well managed to keep the 11 gorilla families that are used to tourists safe. Tracking permits are limited daily for a maximum of one hour, and prices to visit are high, with funds spent to protect the parks and the gorillas.

In Uganda, wildlife is valued as a major driver of tourism. The [Uganda Wildlife Authority](#) conserves and manages 10 national parks, 12 wildlife reserves, 5 community wildlife management areas, and 13 wildlife sanctuaries. Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Parks are excellent destinations for wildlife, with tree-climbing lions found in Queen Elizabeth. Chimpanzees can be tracked in several locations, including Queen Elizabeth National Park, Budongo Forest, and Kibale Forest National Park. Uganda is also one of the world's best destinations for bird watching. The Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary offers guided foot tracking to view the rare white rhino.

Key Takeaways

- Do your own internet research to find out about responsible wildlife tourism within your region or destination.
- Make sure your guides are aware of all the codes of conduct that are present in the destinations you operate, and inform guests before the activities.
- Create new products that help give you a competitive advantage. Try to create products and circuits that take travellers to quieter destinations, or to view wildlife that is more niche and harder to find.

Which companies are you competing with?

Local tour operators who serve the wildlife tourism market range from small, family-run businesses specialising in these niche experiences to larger operators offering a range of adventure and cultural activities. This section provides information on both types within the destinations profiled in the previous section.

Companies in the Galapagos (Ecuador)

[Galakiwi](#) is a land-based tour operator in the Galapagos that operates sustainably. It makes sure that its tours support local people and minimise their impact on the environment. All tours employ local guides and boat operators, stay in accommodations that are family-owned and operated, and eat at local restaurants that serve food from the region.

[Nature Galapagos](#), based on the Floreana Islands, is a local operator that has a strong online presence. Their social media following is healthy, with over 12,000 followers on [Instagram](#) and over 34,000 followers on [Facebook](#). This will help them attract the FIT tourist market. They also have a clean and professional website that is available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, German, and Russian.

Companies in Sri Lanka

[The Fabulous Getaway](#) is a luxury DMC based in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. They create unforgettable and unique trips across Sri Lanka, which include wildlife elements. What sets them apart is their commitment to sustainability. They have started their journey with [Travelife for Tour Operators](#). They also have a detailed [sustainability policy](#) published on their website for transparency.

[Wild Tours](#) is a local operator with a primary focus on wildlife. They offer tailor-made and group-set itinerary tours. What sets them apart is their team experience. The team includes photographers, experienced naturalists and specialist birders. This helps them reach specialist niche markets within the wildlife tourism sector.

Companies in Kenya

[Porini Safari Camps](#) comprise a range of eco-camps situated in various private wildlife conservancies throughout Kenya. These include Ol Pejeta Wildlife Conservancy, which is home to the world's last remaining 2 northern white rhinos, and the Ol Kinyei Conservancy within the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem. Each camp is small and remotely located. They offer activities that include guided walks together with by local Maasai warriors, as well as night game drives. Next to TripAdvisor awards, the camps are Gold Eco-Rated by [Ecotourism Kenya \(EK\)](#). EK is Kenya's ecotourism society that promotes responsible tourism.

[Kwezi Safaris](#) is a Kenyan local tour operator that offers a range of wildlife safari options. These include family-friendly, luxury and honeymoon options. Kwezi is listed on [Safari Bookings](#) and has a strong profile. It has 91 reviews and an overall 5-star rating. Many of the reviews highlight the guides' excellent knowledge and expertise.

Figure 11: Safari Bookings Guest Review

“Adventures of a Lifetime”

★★★★★ 5 /5

Our tour operator and driver were professional, knowledgeable, helpful, friendly, and very accommodating. With their local knowledge, we were able to see more than we imagined. They knew where to find the animals in their daily habits. Each excursion was simply amazing.

Source: Safari Bookings, 2025

Companies in Uganda

[Bamboo Ecotours](#) promotes sustainable, eco-friendly, and ethical gorilla trekking in the Bwindi National Park. It is based in Kisoro village on the Uganda-Rwanda border. It also organises gorilla and chimpanzee trekking tours across the borders in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The operator is a Ugandan social enterprise set up to promote tourism as a means of creating [economic stability for local communities](#).

[Bright Safaris Uganda](#) organises eco-friendly safaris. They do this to raise funds for providing basic care and education to orphans and vulnerable children. This is done through the Bright Orphan Project, a charity managed by the operator. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife fully registers the operator and has also partnered with national tourism organisations. The operator has partnered with several national organisations. These include the [Uganda Wildlife Association](#), the [Uganda Tourism Board](#), and the [Association of Uganda Tour Operators](#). It also sells its trips on SafariBookings and Tripadvisor.

Key Takeaways

- Keep your website current and user-friendly, with online booking platforms and other useful information. Use high-quality images and videos to market your tours.
- Invest in training for your guides, and ensure they know a range of different areas to meet your guests' needs.
- Join local associations to support conservation, share best practices, and feature their logos and links on your website.
- Include customer testimonials on your website. You can link reviews to your website from your TripAdvisor listing or Google page. This kind of user-generated content (UGC) is one of the most effective forms of marketing, and it is free.

Which products are you competing with?

Wildlife holidays or experiences are typically one part of a broader adventure trip. So other adventure activities are the main competitors to your business. For more information about the adventure tourism market, download the CBI study [What are the opportunities in the European adventure tourism market](#).

4. What are the prices of wildlife products on the European market?

Prices for wildlife experiences, trips, and holidays vary widely. Prices are constructed to include (or exclude) many different components. These are things such as accommodation, local transport, guides, entry fees, food and beverages, contributions made to conservation or other charitable organisations, and others. You should be aware of all the different price components in your own tourism product. The table below gives a broad indication of prices on the European market.

Table 2: Example Prices for Wildlife Experiences, Trips, and Holidays in 2025

Trip/Experience	Country	Duration	Price pp (€)
(Part-)Day Experiences			
Private Jeep Safari at Minneriya National Park	Sri Lanka	3 hours	33.00
Adventure with Turtles and Lava Tunnels	Ecuador	Half day	57.00
Amboseli & Maasai Village Day Trip from Nairobi	Kenya	1 day	64.00
Whales and Dolphins Watching Tour	Sri Lanka	3 hours	64.00
Amboseli & Maasai Village Day Trip from Nairobi	Kenya	1 day	64.00
Nairobi National Park and Baby Elephant Tour	Kenya	Half day	74.00
From Kampala: Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary Experience	Uganda	1 day	238.00
Short Trips, 2-6 Days			
Overnight Safari to Saltlick through Tsavo East Park	Kenya	2 days	430.00
Wildlife Wonders of Sri Lanka Private 5-day Tour	Sri Lanka	5 days	505.00
Galapagos Enchanting 3 Islands	Ecuador	5 days	1,800.00
Bwindi NP, Kibale NP & Queen Elizabeth NP Tour	Uganda	6 days	2,244.00

Trip/Experience	Country	Duration	Price pp (€)
Holidays, 7 Days +			
Island Hopping Adventure in The Galapagos	Ecuador	10 days	2,967.00
The Big-5 Uganda Tour	Uganda	7 days	3,474.00
Kenya Safari Adventure	Kenya	8 days	3,506.00
Wonders & Wildlife – Premium Adventure	Sri Lanka	14 days	4,398.00
Luxury Galapagos Islands Cruise	Ecuador	10 days	7,862.00

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Tips:

Consult the CBI study, [10 tips for doing business with European buyers](#), and scroll to tip 7: Set a fair price for your product.

For more advice about setting prices for your tours, download this guide published by SafariBookings, [Calculating Tour Rates](#).

Conduct your own competitive research to find out typical prices in your destination.

Acorn Tourism Consulting Limited carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).

Disclaimer: The statistics quoted throughout this study are drawn from a range of sources. Due to variations in data collection and presentation methods, figures may not always be directly comparable.