

# Wildlife Experiences amid COVID-19: Guidelines - DRAFT

This document is a draft distributed for global review from 08 to 12 July 2020. It is not ready for use. The text of this document will be reviewed, improved, formatted, and designed and it is expected to be published 21st of July. If you have comments and suggestion use the review template provided at:

<https://www.adventuretravel.biz/covid19guidelines-review/>

## We're on a Team

The COVID-19 pandemic has entered a new phase, travel is restarting, and travelers want to travel and companies want to operate while minimizing COVID-19 contamination risk. ATTA Activity Guidelines for Adventure Travel have been developed jointly by ATTA, Cleveland Clinic and a cohort of operators.

The **Wildlife Safaris amid COVID-19: Guidelines** were designed to be used together with [Adventure Travel COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines](#)

While the current knowledge (June 2020) indicates that the risk of the coronavirus being passed on to others outdoors is reduced when people maintain social distancing, operating under these Guidelines should only be undertaken after thorough risk and safety assessment and compliance with existing destination government guidance.

These guidelines are intended to be a flexible framework for ATC's (adventure travel companies) to use in reopening. Companies should tailor their actual policies and practices based on their unique operations, applicable laws, regulations, and health standards in their locales, and consult with their own legal, safety, and financial advisors to develop a reopening guide for their situation.

These guidelines are not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible actions nor are they meant to encourage ATC's to resume operations before they are ready to do so. These guidelines are designed to be used as a supplement to ATC's current risk and crisis management plans, operating procedures and protocols, legal documents (e.g., terms and conditions and liability waiver), and customer trip materials – not as a substitute.

Note: This is a living document. As international and national restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new advice and changes to guidelines when they emerge. Guidelines have been developed in line with the most recent information coming from international and national sources related to health, tourism and outdoors activities. We welcome you feedback any time: [covid19guidelinesreview@adventure.travel](mailto:covid19guidelinesreview@adventure.travel)

Disclaimer: The information contained within these operational guidelines may change from time to time due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. It must not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document must independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarized themselves with governmental, health authority, and regulatory guidance prior to re-opening and will have implemented all relevant requirements. Adventure Travel Trade Association does not assume, and expressly disclaims, any legal or other liability for any inaccuracy, mistake, misstatement, or any other error of whatsoever nature contained herein. The information accessible in this document has been compiled from many sources that are not

controlled by Adventure Travel Trade Association. While reasonable care has been taken in the compilation and publication of the contents of this document, Adventure Travel Trade Association makes no representations or warranties, whether express or implied, as to the accuracy or suitability of the information or materials contained in this document. Adventure Travel Trade Association shall not be liable, directly, or indirectly, to the user or any other third party for any damage resulting from the use of the information contained or implied in this document. By proceeding to use this Adventure Travel Trade Association document you are accepting this disclaimer.

## **Wildlife Experiences**

As with any activity, wildlife experiences have advantages and disadvantages for implementing strategies to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Advantages include the small group nature of safaris, that they take place outdoors, and that spacing, and protection measures are easy to implement. Disadvantages include the wide-ranging nature of how safaris are conducted (vehicle-based, on foot, boat-based, etc), the inclusion of lodging for multi-day safaris, and the common use of vehicles for transportation. These factors must be assessed, and measures must be put in place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

### **1. Group Management**

- a. Small groups, FIT, or household groups should be favoured to promote distancing. Strive to keep trip participant numbers as low as reasonably possible.
- b. Physical distancing does not need to apply to household units.
- c. Consider offering the possibility of private trips for people who prefer not to sit in a vehicle with other guests or ensure that distancing measures are implemented with a group of members from different household units.
- d. If undertaking a walking safari or wildlife experience, distancing measures for group members should be considered. For further information see [Trekking amid COVID-19: Guidelines](#)
- e. Consider using face coverings when in situations of higher risk of viral transmission, such as when using transportation, in enclosed spaces, or when guests are in close proximity to one another.

### **2. Pre-Arrival, Instruction and Briefing**

- a. Have screening procedures in place. Before joining the activity or experience ask guests to self-assess their physical condition and self-screen their risk profile. Inform guests that if they have symptoms, however mild, or are in a household where someone has symptoms, they are advised to stay at home.
- b. In longer stays, consider additional pre-trip recommendations and screening, such as suggesting steps to limit exposure to COVID-19, using screening questionnaires, or testing.
- c. Daily screening and monitoring measures should be extensive for staff members.

## WILDLIFE SAFARIS AMID COVID-19: GUIDELINES - **draft**

- d. Set clear standards and boundaries for COVID-19 health and safety measures and guest participation. Make available relevant information about the activity, such as the risks involved and the measures you are taking to manage COVID-19 risks. Ensure guests understand the risks and what is expected of them to participate.
- e. Provide ample access to hand washing facilities and sanitizer. Ask that guests sanitize hands when entering any building, kitchen, or dining facility, before starting an activity and as often as needed throughout the activity.
- f. Events and briefings should accommodate for social or physical distancing. Adapt the spaces and briefings to avoid the need to get close to guests and to increase guests' understanding and compliance with the necessary additional COVID-19 measures.
- g. When closer contact is required consider the use of face coverings.

### **3. Transport**

- a. The use of vehicles to transport clients includes a higher degree of COVID-19 transmission risk. Measures to mitigate risk should be used whenever possible; Open vehicle windows, provide space in between passengers, and have passengers wear face coverings. Consider the use of face shields or the use of private vehicles for transportation as additional measures.
- b. The choice of vehicle should also be considered. Most safari operators use open air 4x4 vehicles, which are preferred, that allow for reasonable spacing between guests.
- c. If members of more than one household unit are sharing a boat to undertake a water based wildlife safari, the choice of boat and number of guests allowed on the boat should be considered to allow for adequate spacing. For further information see [Small Vessels amid COVID-19: Guidelines](#)

### **4. Commencement of activity or experience:**

- a. The manner of screening and monitoring of COVID-19 related symptoms should take into account the activity or trip length. Besides considering health screening customers such as checking temperatures and asking questions such as if they feel any symptoms at the start of the activity, consider what additional measures to put in place for ongoing monitoring and screening.
- b. Consider procedures for when wildlife is encountered that allow for safe distancing between guests whilst still enjoying the experience.
- c. It is important to also ensure guests remain distanced from any wildlife (Whilst there have been very few cases of human to animal transmission of the virus, there is very little science or evidence to prove that humans cannot transmit the virus, but this could have a devastating consequence in species such as the Great Apes).
- d. Consider the use of face coverings throughout the experience.

## WILDLIFE SAFARIS AMID COVID-19: GUIDELINES - **draft**

- e. Maintain your company standards of distancing and sanitation when encountering other groups - remember they might not know nor be following the same health and safety standards that you require of your group.
- f. When administering first aid, some distancing methods need to be adapted or cannot be used. Use Personal Protective Equipment - PPE such as face coverings and gloves.
- g. Consider the need for defining additional COVID-19 evacuations protocols.

### 5. Dining

- a. Distancing: consider alternatives to provide spacing, such as ample guest seating and spaced tables, offering private or outdoors eating locations, and scheduled meal times.
- a. Prevent surface contact where needed, for example:
  - i. Identify high use areas and touchpoints, such as; workstations, tables, menus, doors, utensils, or condiments.
  - ii. Clean high use areas and touchpoints often with a rigorous enhanced sanitation regimen.
  - iii. Prevent contact in high use areas when possible.
  - iv. Food and beverages should be served by staff members trained and observant of precautions.
- c. Consider serving individually served meals rather than buffet or self-service.
- d. Consider how meals are transported, covered, and consumed. Attempt to individually pack food items and cover meals with a reusable lid. For food samples, consider how the customer will handle and consume safely.
- e. Ensure food safety and restaurant cleaning is in line with local official guidance.
- f. For further information on food handling see [Culinary Experiences amid COVID-19 Guidelines](#).
- g. For further information on food preparation in the field see [Camping amid COVID-19 Guidelines](#).

### 6. Lodging

- a. FIT or household groups should be favoured to promote distancing. Avoid members of separately booked groups sharing bedrooms.
- b. Attention should be paid to increased levels of sanitization and disinfection. Distancing and screening measures should all be implemented in line with hotel, local and official guidelines.
- c. For further information on lodging see [Small Lodges amid COVID-19: Guidelines](#).

## 6. Equipment

Enhancing sanitation is a key part of mitigating COVID-19 risk. When at all possible, participants should avoid sharing equipment and should care for and carry their own personal equipment.

- a. Prevent surface contact where needed, for example:
  - i. Identify high use areas, such as, at base, office, transport
  - ii. Clean high use areas and touchpoints often with a rigorous enhanced sanitation regime.
  - iii. Prevent contact in high use areas when possible.
- b. Each person should have their individual gear - binoculars, walking poles, lifejacket, etc.
  - i. Individual gear that is worn next to skin (e.g. helmet, neoprene, sun guards) should be thoroughly washed after each use as a prevention against COVID-19 transmission via surface contact.
  - i. Have guests size and choose equipment with minimum handling, care for and carry their own equipment.
- c. Use recommended methods for cleaning and sanitizing that have been determined to kill the COVID-19 virus, such as, appropriate rest time in between uses, or using soap and water or bleach solutions. Follow manufacturer's instructions and the recommendations of official health and safety agencies.
- d. Consider implementing safe-handling procedures for personnel who use cleaning products to clean equipment to prevent harm from chemicals or cross-contamination.
- e. Consider sanitizing any equipment or item that could be a vector for COVID-19 transmission.

## 7. Additional resources

- a. [ATTA COVID-19 Guide for the Adventure Travel Industry](#)
- b. Cleveland Clinic
  - i. [Return to work amid COVID-19 a Hotel Guide: A Cleveland Clinic Guide](#)
  - i. [COVID-19: Creating a Safe Workplace](#)
  - ii. [Advice on Reopening Business: Frequently Asked Questions](#)