

TripAdvisor bans ticket sales for trips that involve touching wild animals



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TripAdvisor will no longer sell tickets to attractions that involve physical contact with wild

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Among the experiences being banned by the company and its subsidiary, Viator, are elephant rides, tiger petting and swimming with dolphins.

The change will be implemented fully by early next year, and some attractions have already ceased booking through TripAdvisor, though the company would not confirm specifically what had been removed.

When The Independent checked the site this afternoon, it was still selling tickets for at least one elephant ride attraction, as well as to SeaWorld, which has faced heavy criticism over its alleged poor treatment of captive killer whales.

Certain experiences will be exempt from the ban, such as those involving domestic animals, feeding programmes under the supervision of zoological specialists or wildlife officials, and voluntourism for endangered species preservation.

Customers will still be able to review all animal attractions, even if they don't meet the new guidelines.

"TripAdvisor remains committed to its philosophy that travelers have the right to write about their travel experiences – be it positive or negative," the company said in a statement.

The site intends to introduce an education portal to inform travellers about conservation and how interactions with tourists affect wildlife. For this it has partnered with organisations including Global Wildlife Conservation, Asian Elephant Support and Think Elephants International.

The move has been welcomed by the likes of Peta, whose executive vice president said: "By refusing to sell tickets to businesses that treat animals as entertainment or playthings, TripAdvisor is making a precedent-setting statement about the use and abuse of animals for entertainment."