

Creating nature tourism destinations

By supporting and connecting local businesses, Rewilding Europe is helping to develop attractive itineraries that provide unique experiences for nature travellers.

This establishes our rewilding areas as high profile nature tourism destinations.



To develop well-balanced nature tourism destinations, people and nature need to work together. For such destinations to succeed, Rewilding Europe identifies unique nature-based offerings, provide technical support to local businesses, extend financial assistance where necessary, and engage in effective marketing and sales activities. Working closely with local tourism partners who are embracing rewilding allows us to ensure long-term sustainability.

Travellers connect businesses and rewilding areas through their nature-focused activities. Examples of such activities include guided tours, rental of specialised photography hides, enjoyment of local gastronomy, rental of accommodation and even visits to local markets. The impact of nature-based tourism is not confined to natural areas, but extends, vitally, to local communities. All these factors must be taken into account as we look to create sustainable nature tourism destinations.

Creating unique, highly attractive tourism destinations together with local partners is one of our core activities, and the process can be very effective in bringing particular areas to the attention of the global travel community. The process of building itineraries and opening up such areas to tourism typically begins with 'early adopters' taking the first steps, followed by other entrepreneurs, and leading to a diversity of possibilities interested travellers can choose from.

Local entrepreneurs take the lead

A good example of nature-based entrepreneurship can be found in Western Iberia. Here, within the Faia Brava Reserve, "Star Camp" is owned and run by local entrepreneur Sara Noro (see her personal story on page 46 of this Annual Review). This enterprise directly supports local rewilding efforts and the ongoing management of the reserve.

In 2015, two years after conception, Star Camp held its soft opening. Over the course of an initial three-month period, various tourism and media



› Fernando Romao, owner of Wildlife Portugal, looking out of a wildlife hide in Cõa Valley, Western Iberia, Portugal

partners experienced this unique offering, kick-starting the property's promotional campaign. This soft launch helped to develop other avenues of the business, and allowed Sara Noro to streamline the camp set-up and daily operations.

In April 2016 Star Camp will officially open and welcome its first guests. As well as enjoying the camp's unique accommodation, guests will be able to undertake a range of activities which highlight the rewilding process, supporting further expansion of the reserve through rewilding fees.

As part of Faia Brava's development, a new photographic business is also being established by a local wildlife guide and photographer. Wildlife Portugal's owner, Fernando Romano, is investing in

specialised wildlife hides, and these will generate further financial support for the reserve.

Community Involvement

Imagine watching dolphins swimming in the Adriatic Sea in the morning. Imagine searching for brown bears in the mountains in the afternoon. Imagine savouring the day's highlights over an open fire in a remote tented camp after dinner. In Velebit, thanks to two newly designed wildlife hides and one small safari-style tented camp, this kind of utopian day is now a real possibility.

Creating itineraries which incorporate new and specialised nature-based offerings can significantly raise the profile of wild areas. The two new hides