

Four readers suggest great locations where you can watch wildlife in its natural surroundings.

1. Kevin: Hallo Bay, Alaska

The first time you see a bear your mouth definitely goes dry. Unlike in other more frequently visited areas, the bears at Hallo Bay don't associate humans with food, so they pose no risk to people. For me, Hallo Bay's a magical place. I've always been a person who was structured and organised, but I've said for years now that I lost my list in Alaska. One thing which makes Hallo Bay so special is that the remote camp has just a dozen guests at a time, with guided groups of no more than half that many heading out to search for the bears. For me, even without the bears it would be a gorgeous place to visit.

2. Ray: Playa Grands Sanctuary, Costa Rica

With concerns mounting about the pressure on the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica's popularity as a wildlife venue could be about to take off, and deservedly so. Costa Rica has it all: iguanas at your feet, capuchin monkeys overhead, sloths (*ленивец*) and jaguars are to be seen. However, perhaps the most magical thing to do here is to watch turtles lay their eggs on a moonlight beach. It does require patience; we waited two nights, napping on hard benches at the Playa Grande sanctuary, before one of the wardens shook us awake. We were allowed quite close to watch the turtle dig a hole with her flippers and deposit hundreds of eggs. She then casually covered them up and headed off back down the beach.

3. Sarah: Madikwe Game Reserve, South Africa

It's so hard to recommend just one location in Africa to go in search of the big five! However, if you've never been on Safari before, then travel is straightforward in South Africa and its parks are the cheapest if you're short of money. The parks have well-equipped campsites and good-quality roads, so it's perfectly possible to hire a four-by-four and head off on your own. There's also an impressive selection of volunteer projects involving animals, particularly around the country's biggest parks. I spent four weeks helping at a veterinary practice with African Conservation Experience. I got the chance to work with lion, cheetah, elephant and buffalo. The work's extremely hands-on and you have to be ready for anything, whether it's taking a lion's temperature or treating a dog for a snake bite!

4. Amy: Chitwan National Park, Nepal

With tigers, snow leopards and one-horned rhinoceros, Nepal certainly has its share of endangered animals. I visited Chitwan at the foot of the Himalayas. The park was set aside for wildlife in 1959 and is the place to see Indian rhinoceros as well as being one of the last refuges of the Bengal tiger. One of the best ways to view both is from the back of an elephant — something that is rather fabulous in itself. We were having breakfast one day when two elephants were being taken for their daily wash on the river bank near our hotel. We made a small donation and asked to help — it was one of the most amazing animal encounters possible, sitting on the backs of those huge elephants scrubbing their backs whilst they knelt in the water and sprayed us from their trunk!

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Which reader got involved in activities designed to help various types of animal directly?

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