

The experts

Essential travel advice ★ Agenda ★ Q&A ★ The books to pack

1 Does it have a conservation element?

When nature is your main selling point, it would be foolish not to care for it. So safari camps, 'nature resorts' and dive lodges worth their salt minimise their impact on the environment. The best of them go several steps further and work to improve the health of ecosystems, conserving endangered species by protecting their habitat.

In the Matthews Range in **northern Kenya**, elephants were poached almost to oblivion in the 1980s. Persuading local communities that wildlife tourism was a better business than poaching reduced the slaughter (though, regrettably, it is now rising again). Safari camps such as Sarara (www.sararacamp.com) provide income for the local Samburu people and try to help populations of elephant and Grevy's zebra to recover.

In the **Seychelles**, the private Frégate, Cousine and North islands are as well known for conservation work as for boutique lodges. All three have programmes to eradicate invasive species, plant indigenous trees and provide a habitat for critically endangered endemic birds such as the magpie robin and Seychelles white-eye. You can book a trip to the Seychelles through Audley Travel (www.audleytravel.com); the company is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (www.aito.co.uk), which is committed to sustainable tourism.

In the Raja Ampat archipelago of **Indonesia**, Misool Eco Resort (www.misoolcoresort.com) has established a 1,220-square-kilometre protected marine area, in consultation with the local community. Such zones act as nurseries for fish, providing marine life for scuba divers and improved catches for local fishermen. In cooperation ➤

Samburu guides at Sarara Camp, northern Kenya



AGENDA GREEN CREDENTIALS

IF YOU BELIEVE IN
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM,
THESE ARE THE **SIX**
QUESTIONS YOU
SHOULD ASK ABOUT
YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY

Sustainable tourism and its close relative, responsible tourism, have gone from the margin to the mainstream: even luxury lodges now trumpet their green credentials, so nobody need pack a hair shirt in their luggage. But the issues involved have become more complex, and the problem of 'greenwash' has grown. Tour operators and hotels which take sustainability seriously should have a written statement of their policy; beyond that, establishing their good faith involves asking the right questions, formulated here by Paul Miles, who also offers suggestions on where to go and with whom