

# POLICY PACK 2026

## SAFEGUARDING CIVETS & UK CONSUMERS FROM CIVET COFFEE TOURISM

Include civet coffee attractions in  
The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023



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# Executive Summary

## Policy Needs



### What is the problem?

To meet consumer demand for civet coffee, civets across Asia are captured, caged, and force-fed coffee in low welfare and hazardous conditions.

### How does this impact UK citizens?

**Nine out of 10** leading travel companies claim to have animal welfare policies, but all have been found selling tickets to civet coffee attractions on their platforms. This misleads to the public, who rely on the information provided by their travel company to make informed welfare-wise decisions about their holiday experiences.

## Policy Needs

Civet coffee attractions meet all the requirements of the [Animals \(Low-Welfare Activities Abroad\) Act 2023](#) and should therefore be included in its list of prohibited activities. We ask that you use your platform to raise this important issue, through...

- Oral & Written Parliamentary Questions on this issue
- A letter to the Defra Minister showing your support for the inclusion of civet coffee tourism on the banned list of activities under the Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023.
- Help the Civet Project secure a meeting with the Defra officials to discuss this important topic.





## What is civet coffee?

Civet coffee (known as 'kopi luwak' in Indonesia and 'Caphe chon' or 'weasel coffee' in Vietnam) is a **luxury coffee created through the digestive tract of Asian civets**, small nocturnal carnivores found across southeast Asia. Civet coffee is famous as the most expensive, rare, and unique coffee in the world. One cup of civet coffee can reach prices of up to \$50.00 USD, a price justified on the false claims of its rarity and uniqueness. While it is said there is only 127kg of civet coffee available in the world per year (Marcone, 2024), in reality, civets are farmed for civet coffee throughout southeast Asia.

It is claimed the civets digestive enzymes enhance the coffee, but this has been strongly refuted by experts. Research has even shown that humans can create digested coffee with comparable structural characteristics to civet coffee (Hooper et al., 2022).

### MYTHS

#### MOST UNIQUE



Coffee digested by a human has the same structural characteristics as civet coffee. The authentication process is also highly flawed and rarely applied to civet coffee sold on the international market. Caged produced civet coffee is often labelled as wild collected.

### FACTS

### MYTHS

#### MOST RARE



According to the civet coffee industry, one kilo of civet coffee can cost \$260 because there is only an annual availability of 127kg per year. Yet the global civet coffee market is set to reach a net worth of \$10.9 billion by 2030, which is made possible by mass caged production.

### FACTS

### MYTHS

#### MOST EXPENSIVE



The most expensive coffee in the world (human-digested coffee) sold for more than \$300.00 for one cup. While civet coffee can sell for \$50.00 per cup outside of Asia, most civet coffee tours sell civet coffee to tourists for approximately \$5.00 per cup.

### FACTS

## MYTHS

### TRADITIONAL



Civet coffee is rarely consumed as a traditional beverage in southeast Asia.

Civet coffee's mass production is the result of consumer interest that emerged in the early 2000's after it was featured in popular film and television media.

## FACTS

## MYTHS

### MUTUALISTIC



Civet coffee tours often include messaging to the tourists claiming that their civets are well cared for.

It is not possible to meet the welfare of civets in civet coffee farms/tours. Civets are nocturnal, solitary, and require a varied omnivorous diet. Caffeine toxicity alone will kill them.

## FACTS



## What is civet coffee tourism?



Civet coffee tourism first emerged in 2010, following international interest in the novelty of the production process. Now, civet coffee tourism occurs across civet range countries in southeast Asia. Civet coffee tours can be found in Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and southern China. Civet coffee is also widely sold in cafes and restaurants in cities across southeast Asia, which signpost tourists to the larger rural tours.

Civet coffee “agrotourism” typically comprises guided tours in “plantations” where tourists can observe coffee plants, civets, and local people, in a **highly curated representation of “traditional coffee production.”**

Research has shown that civet coffee tours are not the sites of civet coffee production. Instead, caged civet coffee production occurs in hidden farms, away from the view of tourists (Cahill, 2017, Hooper, 2022, Trinh et al. 2024). Caged methods of civet coffee production are increasing in order to supply the tourism market.



Right: tourist poses in front of sedated civet. Left: endangered Owston's civet caught in snare traps commonly used in civet coffee industry.

## Civet Welfare

**Positive civet welfare cannot be achieved in civet coffee farms or tourist attractions because civets have species-specific requirements for nocturnal and solitary environments and highly varied diets (Duckworth, et al. 2016).**

Research has shown the conditions of civet coffee farms includes\*:

- small, barren cages and high stocking densities
- lack of access to shelter, privacy and fresh drinking water
- daily feeds containing high quantities of coffee cherries
- lack of veterinary care
- lack of hygiene and biosecurity
- drugging (specific to civet coffee tours where civets are sedated to allow safe handling by tourists)

As such, the civets in civet coffee farms frequently experience\*:

- malnutrition
- caffeine toxicity
- acute and chronic physical and psychological stress
- abnormal repetitive behaviours (commonly pacing and self-mutilation)
- disease
- infected wounds
- premature death

4 \*see Carder et al. 2016; Hooper, 2022; Whelan-Smith, 2024; Wootton 2024.

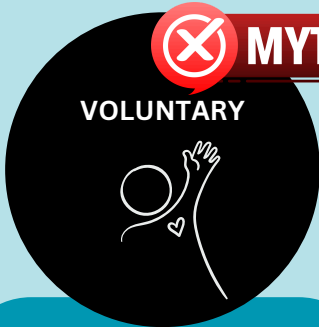


**MYTHS**

RESCUED

Some tour operators will claim that their display civets are rescued animals. However, civet coffee tourism sites are not sanctuaries. Most civets in civet coffee tours are wild-caught. Tours often buy civets directly from trappers or unregulated commercial farms that can be linked with illegal poaching.

**FACTS**



**MYTHS**

VOLUNTARY

Some tour operators will claim that their display civets are let out of the cages at night to forage and will return voluntarily in the morning. This is not true. No wild civet will voluntarily return to display cages. Civets are solitary and elusive animals and nest high up in the tree canopy to avoid being seen.

**FACTS**



**MYTHS**

SLEEPING

Civet coffee tours can feature uncaged civets that rest on display plinths and coffee tables. Tourists are informed these civets are sleeping because they are nocturnal. However, evidence suggests these civets have been drugged so that tourists can safely pose with them.

**FACTS**

## Civet Conservation

Caged civets provide a visual representation of the civet coffee production process for tourists. However, these **displayed animals represent only a small fraction of the actual production scale** (Cahill, 2017; Hooper, 2022).

95% of surveyed civet farmers in Vietnam self-reported the death of new born captive-bred civets, and 75% restocked with wild-caught animals (Trinh et al, 2022). Civet farms and wildlife markets often **exceed the legal quotas** of wild civet collection, and civet coffee farms are often used for the **laundering of endangered civet species** into the black market (Shepherd, 2012; Trihn et al., 2024).

Vulnerable and endangered species including Binturong (*Arctictis binturong*) and Owston's Civet (*Chrotogale owstoni*) have each been recorded in civet coffee farms despite legal trade restrictions. Owston's civets are already experiencing local extinctions, and their last remaining stronghold in Vietnam is surrounded by the civet coffee tourism sector.



## Zoonotic disease

Excessive wildlife removal has resulted in Asia's forests suffering from "empty forest syndrome," a lack of animal life due to excessive hunting, habitat fragmentation and land clearance (Wilkie et al., 2011). Without pollinators and seed dispersers like civets, **forests become less resilient and this in turn contributes to the emergence of novel pathogens and the spread of disease that can pass to humans.**

**Demand for civet coffee places humans and civets in greater proximity.** Tourists and civet coffee operators are at risk of encountering disease as civet coffee facilities lack basic biosecurity and hygiene practices.

**Poor welfare in civet coffee attractions lowers civet immune systems,** making them more susceptible to disease. **Disease can be shed in faeces,** which civet coffee attraction workers and tourists are encouraged to engage with.

Tourists then travel back to their home countries, potentially **spreading disease across vast geographic distances.**

# Tourism Operators

## A Call for Change



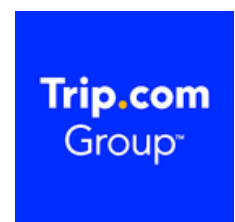
### Why are operators important for civets ?

The internet plays an important role in tourism. Tourists will engage with various online platforms before, during, and after their tourist experience. A travel destination might be selected based on exposure to trends on social media and the marketing efforts of tourism operators.

Every day tourists across the world turn to review sites to make informed travel decisions and to leave their own opinions of the places they've visited. It is therefore vital that the interests of animals are present within e-commerce.

Animal welfare organisations have long called for greater action from the tourism sector to better protect animals from harmful touristic practices. Thankfully, this has resulted in a positive move towards greater action for animal welfare in tourism. **Nine out of ten major tourism operators now include animal welfare within their policy guidelines.**

However, all have been found to sell tickets to civet coffee tourist attractions. All mislead customers into believing the attraction meets the platforms animal welfare standards.



# Key Findings



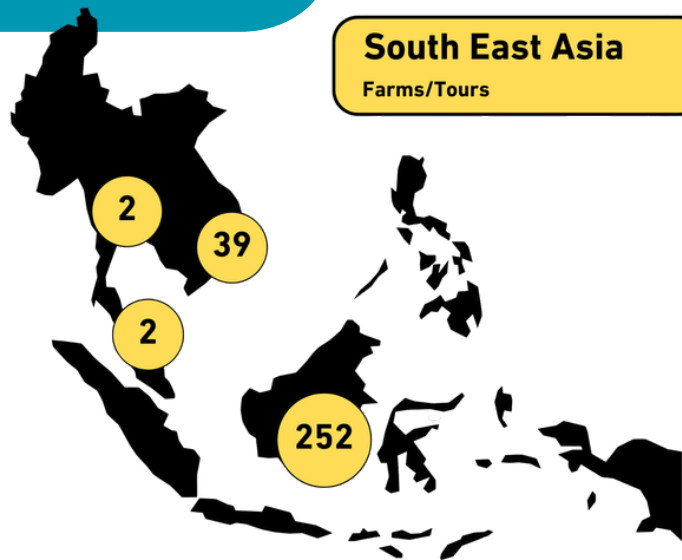
## Scale & type of civet coffee attractions

Our 2024 investigation into Tripadvisor revealed 369 civet coffee listings on the Tripadvisor website, with civet coffee tours covering seven countries.

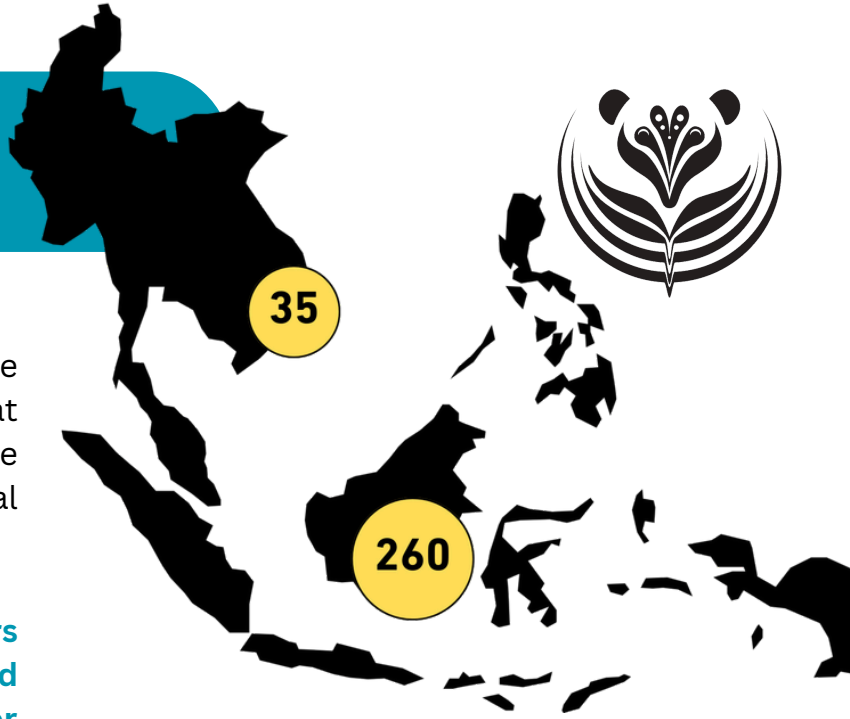
**367 civet coffee listings were spread across six countries in Southeast Asia:** Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore. A further two listings were recorded in India. Civet coffee tourism is featured on Tripadvisor in the following ways:

- Tours
- Farms
- Cafes
- Shops
- Restaurants

Tours and farms were the most prevalent type of civet coffee listing on Tripadvisor at the time of our investigation and accounted for 81% (n = 299) of the total 369 observed listings. **All but two of the tours and farms we observed included evidence of captive civets.**



# Booking options

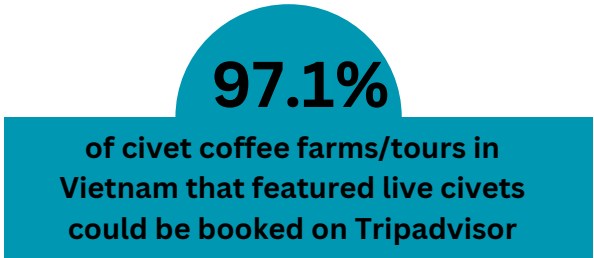


Less than 10% of the 295 civet coffee listings found on Tripadvisor that included live wild animals, were compliant with the company's animal welfare policy, which states:

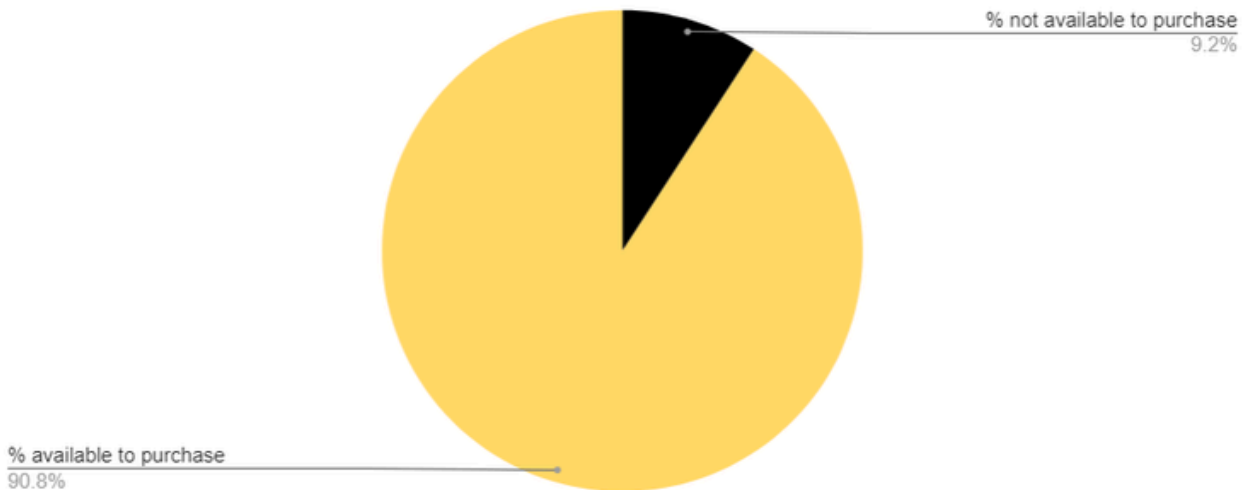
**“...it should not be possible for users to book tickets to these [captive wild animal] attractions via the Tripadvisor website”.**

In total, 268 (90.8%) of the 295 wild civet listings featured purchasing options. All of these listings occurred in Indonesia and Vietnam.

Of the 260 Indonesian civet coffee listings that featured live wild civets, 234 could be booked via the Tripadvisor platform. Similarly, of the 35 civet coffee listings that featured live wild civets in Vietnam, 34 could be booked via the Tripadvisor platform.



Percentage of civet coffee listings featuring wild animals that included booking (purchase) options (n = 295)





# Recommendations

## The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023

We are asking MPs and Peers to stand up for civets who have no voice. Defra are currently considering the implementation of the Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023 and are reviewing which activities will be banned from the advertising and sales to British consumers travelling abroad.

We ask that you use your platform to raise this important issue, through...

- Oral & Written Parliamentary Questions on this issue
- A letter to the Defra Minister showing your support for the inclusion of civet coffee tourism on the banned list of activities under the Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023.
- Help the Civet Project secure a meeting with the Defra officials to discuss this important topic.

Together we can make a difference to defenceless civets.

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