

6.2 6.2 The Archipelago Azores Environmental Policy Statement

We have long been interested in the environment and the issues that affect it. We feel also that the guests, who come for a holiday with us, tend to have a similar interest. With these points in mind we decided to work with Campaign for Environmentally Responsible Tourism (C.E.R.T.) to formulate an environmental policy and action plan for Archipelago Azores. The aims of our policy and action plan are to benefit the environment, the fauna and people of the Azores and the guests that come for a holiday with us. We hope that you feel our ideas are worthwhile.

We first tried to identify the major environmental impacts of our tours and came up with the following list:

- ◆ ◆ rubbish created by extra visitors to the islands
- ◆ ◆ pollution caused by burning of fuel by aircraft, buses, boats and taxis involved in tours
- ◆ ◆ extra imports to the islands caused by the demands of running the tours
- ◆ ◆ contributing to reduction in water table of the islands
- ◆ ◆ influences on the local culture
- ◆ ◆ wear and tear of footpaths around wildlife habitat

We then tried to come up with an environmental policy statement that showed our commitment to eliminating or reducing to a minimum, the affects of the above.

We are committed to the following policies:

1. 1. Buying local produce whenever possible and fair trade tea and coffee
2. 2. Recycling wherever possible.
3. 3. Cutting down on paper use wherever possible and reducing waste
4. 4. Communicating our environmental policies to our employees and clients.
5. 5. Regularly assessing our environmental performance and improving our environmental policy.
6. 6. Contributing to conservation projects which help preserve the flora and fauna on the islands.
7. 7. 2006 review of office practices.
8. 8. Long term aim for environmental awareness and responsible travel

One On tour, we will recommend that when buying produce in supermarkets and restaurants, you choose home grown products e.g. the delicious local cheeses and wines. If you take any of our guided walking or research trips, we shop mainly at the local market for the meals we provide. This will help cut down on exports and not only aids the Azorean economy; it also reduces the use of fuel in shipping/flying foreign produce over. In the office we try to buy, where possible, Fair Trade teas, coffee and other products.

Two In our UK office, we regularly reuse paper if only one side is printed on, especially for the numerous faxes we send out. All true waste is taken to recycling sites regularly.

Three We try to order just the right number of brochures when having them printed. It saves us money but more importantly it helps to cut down on the felling of trees. When having brochures printed we make sure the paper is from sustainable forests. We inevitably have a few left over and these are sent for recycling.

Four It is most important that our employees and clients know of our environmental policies as the policies stop working if nobody knows about them. We have tried to give you, the clients, ideas about how to help the environment in this pre departure information booklet. Also, all our staff are informed of our policy during their interview and induction. We also have twice yearly meetings where staff can raise any issues that concern them and implement feedback from clients.

Five We regularly assess our environmental performance by taking note of newspaper, magazine and TV/radio articles on the environment, to see if there are ways we can use the information they contain to improve our own operation. We try to incorporate new ideas to improve our environmental action plan. We regularly assess our environmental performance by listening to our clients' comments on the way we run our tours. We would love to hear of any ideas you have to add to this section, or the environmentally friendly traveller section above. So why not think carefully about anything we have missed out and jot it down for inclusion in our policy and next year's pre departure information booklet.

Six We donate annually to **SPEA (Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves)** and specifically to their Azores Bullfinch project. There are estimated to be just 100 breeding pairs found in a small area in the forests in the North East of Sao Miguel. These are currently threatened by the loss of native vegetation and their habitat through forestry and farming. Our donation contributes to several projects in the Special Protection Area where this species breeds.

Seven In 2006 we reviewed how the office was run looking at how we can reduce waste, save energy costs recycle more. We now try to **RE-USE PAPER**, in the fax machine or for note paper, do duplex printing where possible and ask ourselves whether we need to print certain documents. **ENERGY SAVING**, all computers are now switched off in the evening, lights turned off when not required, curtains and windows are closed in the winter to keep the heat in and heating is on timers and monitored on a daily basis. **RECYCLING**, we try to recycle everything – paper, plastics, tins, carrier bags, toner cartridges, card and old computers. We have reduced our weekly waste to one small bag a week.

Eight We have a simple goal to implement a few changes every year and take on board new ideas from staff and clients. Our long term aim is to reduce our environmental footprint by reducing use, recycling and conveying our ideas and policies to clients and suppliers. In 2007 we will be offering a voluntary carbon offsetting scheme for clients. In 2007 Archipelago Azores

will also offer all its employees 1 annual day paid leave to volunteer for projects within the local community or to a global project.