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# What are we saving now?

15 November 2010 | By Lori Robertson



A loggerhead sea turtle swims in an aquarium in Cape Town, South Africa. (BBC)

Want to see the world, and save it at the same time? Eco-minded travellers have ample opportunity to help threatened species and make a difference in scenic habitats in far flung corners of the planet. Here are five volunteer tourism spots that take animal encounters to a new level.

- **Related article: Volunteering in Costa Rica**

## Snow leopards in Altai Republic

This off-the-beaten-track destination in Central Asia is surrounded by Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia. The views alone of the snow-capped Altai Mountains and open steppe in this Russian republic are worth the trip. But while marveling at the landscape, travellers can take part in two-week scientific expeditions to help study the endangered snow leopard. Travellers track the animals' movements and take stock of their prey, such as the argali (wild sheep) and ibex. Up to 12 people are guided by a scientist and a group leader from Biosphere Expeditions, a U.K.-based nonprofit, which helped obtain protected status for the snow leopard's habitat. Participants need to hike 1 to 9 miles a day and be comfortable living at a base camp, complete with shower tents, at 7,200ft above sea level. "If you want to access your inner scientist, this is the way to do it", says Stephanie Moreland, a Biosphere Expeditions publicist.

## Lionfish prey in the Caribbean