

Rewilding
Europe



Wildlife watching hides



An inspirational guide, 1.0

Users of wildlife watching hides

Types of wildlife watching hides

Planning and construction guide

Ownership and maintenance

Baiting or not, how and how not

Case studies and analysis

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1. Introduction

Wildlife watching tourism is a priority enterprise activity within the Rewilding Europe initiative. Wildlife watching tourism can take many different forms, however a primary form is to use hides to facilitate an up-close experience of wildlife which would not otherwise be possible.

Wildlife hides on their own will not generate any rewilding benefits. But if they are part of a well thought-out enterprise (or indeed part of the product offering of several different enterprises), imaginative and well designed wildlife watching hides can help to generate significant finance for rewilding efforts and can help to engage a variety of local stakeholders.

Wildlife watching hides (known as 'blinds' in America) facilitate the following:

- a. **Wildlife** – Allows wildlife to be viewed without being disrupted or unnecessarily disturbed;
- b. **Visitor access** – Visitors can view wildlife in close proximity making viewing more accessible and comfortable, encouraging and attracting more people to wilderness and wildlife areas;

- c. **Safety** – Offers some protection for viewers whilst watching larger species such as bears or wolves;
- d. **Visitor management** – Placement of hides in specific locations can allow conservation area managers to control visitor access / movement;
- e. **Commercial revenue** – Hides are a nature based service that visitors cannot easily undertake, or are not permitted to do on their own. This makes hides an attractive means of generating revenue by providing privileged, paid-for access to nature.

Key points to consider when undertaking a hide planning process are:

- a. **User profile** – Establish what type of user the hide is designed for. Mass-market tourists, small guided groups, and professional photographers all have different needs, expectations and functionality requirements. Hides should always be designed for a specific type of user to ensure they operate effectively and with the least impact on the environment;



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- b. **Functionality** – What are the functionality requirements for these specific users. The most successful hides are not always the most expensive, lavish and elegant. Simple, low profile hides that blend into their environment are generally the most effective;
- c. **Sensitivity to the environment** – What is the aesthetic and physical impact of the hide on the natural environment? Can the hide be moved and the area restored?;
- d. **Management and finance** – Who is going to operate and maintain the hide - has a financial analysis been conducted to confirm that it is commercially sustainable, who will have the rights to use the hide, and when? Perhaps most important is to consider who will be the entrepreneur behind the operation? Building hides without having the operating entrepreneur involved at the start of the planning process usually results in problems further down the line as the design does not fit the eventual target ‘market’;
- e. **Approval** – Have the relevant permissions been obtained to install the hide in a certain location.

Successfully designed, operated and managed hides create a wonderful experience for visitors and attract them to nature by making it more accessible. Poorly styled and operated hides can however ruin a wilderness experience for the user and also cause long term damage to the natural landscape.

2. Users of wildlife watching hides

It is important to establish the type of user that a specific hide is being designed for as this will affect the design, functionality and management of the hide.

Generally users can be classed into four categories:

General public

Some “hides” are often freely open to visitors of public nature conservation areas. These hides are generally large structures aimed at accommodating 10-20 or more people at a time and are often financed using public funding. Typically they offer limited quality wildlife viewing; are located too far from the wildlife; are not suitable for photographers as they are often poorly situated in relation to vegetation backgrounds and the sun, and are poorly operated and maintained. Users will typically stay in such a hide for no longer than 30 minutes depending on the wildlife viewing and will rarely pay to visit such a hide.

Rewilding Europe will only focus on this type of facility in very specific circumstances; such as where there is an opportunity / need to target a certain stakeholder group such as local schoolchildren or families and that it will be possible to design such a hide in a way which will not compromise the possibility to develop the types of hides which are described below (which offer considerably better enterprise opportunities).

Examples of this type of hide are features in 1.4, 1.5 and 3.2 below.

Nature enthusiasts

Nature enthusiasts are typically day or overnight visitors who enjoy exploring natural areas and have limited requirements beyond experiencing nature. They are prepared to pay extra for high probabilities of seeing wildlife. All nature enthusiasts also take pictures and all have cameras/ mobiles. Hides servicing these groups are generally designed for 8-12 people either in one hide or split between two at a single location. Such hides are often slightly more comfortable than the photographer specific hide (summarised below), and often include toilet facilities and a somewhat higher design specification. The emphasis here is more on viewing than photographing, so windows tend to be panoramic (mirorglass) as opposed to thin observation slits.

Users of these hides will typically use the facility for a number of hours, potentially overnight, and are prepared to pay for the experience.

Rewilding Europe will focus on supporting the development of this type of hide within all rewilding areas.

Examples include hides: 2.3, 2.6, 4.5 and 4.6.





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High-level nature photography enthusiasts / professionals

Hides designed for 1-5 people who are serious photography enthusiasts and/or professionals. These users have specific requirements focusing on landscape background, sun position, ground level with no tower or high platforms, visibility and the possibility to take photographs preferably across three sides, and with a look out hole through the back of the hide, correct and sturdy bench dimensions for ball-head or gimbal camera mounts. One type of such a hide features large, double-glassed mirroglass windows which the photographers shoot through, and another, more low-tech type, features a row of holes for the camera lenses (typically two per photographer) that are lined with funnels of cloth that can be strapped around the lens. These hides also usually have a low, panoramic double-glassed windows running across the hide, at eye-level where the photographer is sitting, above the camera-lens shooting holes. These hides typically cater for 1-5 persons, and the design can be simple but with a basic level of comfort, since the clients here will be spending full days and nights and sometime several days in the hide. Insulation against heat and against cold is also a common feature here.

Users can potentially use these hides for a number of days and are prepared (especially if on a filming / professional photography contract) in some circumstances to pay a premium for hide use.

However - most important for their willingness to pay a premium is the likelihood of wildlife walking by outside the hide and how often that happens!

Rewilding Europe will also focus on the development of these kind of hides wherever possible.

Examples include hides: 2.1, 2.2, 2.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7.

High-end tourists

Tourists visiting a natural area that are looking for a specific 'stylish' experience. Hides for this target group will have to have a more considered design specification always including a toilet, and with superior levels of comfort (this can be achieved with furnishings), interior design, luxury and romanticism. Functionality to cater for overnight guests with luxurious furnishings and features, for example a reindeer rug, food and drink hamper with local produce and indoor fire proofed wood burner. A qualified operator is required for this type of hide.

The hide site should be in a secluded location with potential to be serviced (i.e. food and drink provided in a careful and imaginative way so as to not disturb wildlife). These hides are primarily for driving revenue in locations accessible to high-end tourists.

Where the market potential allows, and where there is a suitable operating partner in existence, Rewilding Europe will support the development of these hides.

3. Types of wildlife watching hides

Wildlife watching hides are designed and constructed using a range of materials, styles and techniques to offer different functionality capabilities.

Crucially hides must always be sensitive to the local environment and cultures. Where possible local natural materials and styles should be utilised in hide construction. Existing traditional buildings can also be used to develop hides (For example hide 2.6).

A crucial point when selecting a hide design is to establish what type of hide will best suit (and have the least impact on) the environment and wildlife, and secondly the user.

These are the general types of hides available:

Tent hides and mobile hides

Tent hides often provide superior wildlife viewing experiences. They are easy to carry, set up and take down. Also more stable structures

of plywood can be designed so as to be mobile. Typically these can then be moved using a variety of means for example car, horse, snowmobile, 4 wheel drive vehicle, forest tractor etc. Some are built on a kind of runners or skis, so that they can be pulled through the terrain. They can also be disassembled and then moved in sections.

Advantages

- Lower physical footprint and impact on the immediate wilderness;
- Maximum flexibility and mobility;
- Lightweight;
- Useful for viewing mobile wildlife that infrequently remains in a single location, for example Capercaillie leks and black grouse;
- Low construction and purchase cost.

Disadvantages

- Offers limited protection from rain / snow / wind/ low temperatures;
- Low levels of comfort with no integrated services.





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Examples

A good example of a pop-up tent hide is the "Ameristep dog house" (<http://www.ameristep.com/blinds/doghouse.html>) – an industry standard tent, mainly catering for photo enthusiasts, bird watchers and hunters. It costs approximately €100 and can be erected in three minutes, weighs 4 kilos and comes in a little backpack with no tented bottom. It has capacity for 2 photographers side by side with sufficient room for people to sleep in close quarters either in sleeping bags or on a small inflatable mattress. However, professional photographers are likely to own their own hides of this type so any rewilding area would be better to focus on something marginally more substantial in order to add value. On the other hand, if access is restricted and camping not allowed, the photographers are not allowed to use tent hides of their own, and so providing such tent hides could be a very good business idea for entrepreneurs with the permits and the knowledge of the right locations.

Cabin hide

Advantages

- Higher level of comfort;
- Visitors can typically stay in the hide for longer periods;
- Commands a higher price for use;
- Also cabin hides, if constructed the right way, can be moveable/mobile.

Disadvantages

- More complicated to design and construct;
- More expensive than a tented hide;
- Consuming and costly to operate and maintain;
- Sometimes a degree of visual disturbance on the landscape.

Examples

See section 7.

4. Planning and construction guide

The following is a planning and construction guide for wildlife watching hides which aims to avoid costly mistakes, both financially and for the natural areas in which they are located.

Location of the hide

Location and positioning of a hide is fundamental to its effectiveness for viewing and photographing wildlife. The following considerations should be taken into account when selecting a suitable hide location:

Orientation

Hides should be orientated correctly to enhance the experience they offer. Orientation considerations include:

- Positioning of the sun at the times of day when wildlife is most likely to visit the hide location (typically sunrise and sunset). The angle of the sunrise or sunset in key seasons should be carefully considered for the purposes of photography;
- Background view – a backdrop that is not sky is preferred, perhaps a forest or hill / mountain to provide a broken horizon across the image / view; or other background subject to the kind of photography being undertaken;
- Orientation to best suit the user. Photographers will prefer dawn and sunset light, tourists and overnight guests will prefer sunset.

Wildlife

Ensure the hide is positioned in a location where the chances of viewing wildlife are highest. This will change for different species throughout the year. Keep in mind when the main visitor period will be, for example summer. Hides should preferably be mobile to adapt to wildlife migration and prevent excess damage to the landscape.

User profiling

Identify the target user group / market that the hide will service.

It is essential to understand the type of visitors the hide is being designed for:

- i. General public;
- ii. Nature enthusiasts;
- iii. High-level nature photography enthusiasts / professionals;
- iv. Top market tourist users.

Physical or mobile hide selection

Always select the hide that can accomplish its purpose with the least impact on the environment and wildlife.

Hides will either be:

- i. Tented / mobile hide / semi permanent;
- ii. Cabin hide.

In no circumstance should a hide be built on a concrete block / foundation or other permanent basis unless there is no other way.

Hide users are very sensitive to maintaining the wild integrity of the landscapes in which they are situated. Concrete slabs simply send the wrong message and if there is definitely a requirement for some permanent foundations, these must be considered very creatively so as to avoid visual impact.

Cabin and semi permanent hides should be built using sustainable sourced local materials and there may be opportunity to consider local construction styles where appropriate.

If possible hides should be located within existing features of the landscape for example camouflaged into bushes and hedges, in depressions in the ground, integrated into walls or rock features.





Interior design

The interior design of the hide will depend on the type of hide, user, and purpose. Generally hides should incorporate the following as a minimum:

Nature enthusiasts

- Chairs/benches to accommodate the capacity of the hide – think about how to do this imaginatively (don't just buy some garden chairs – think about the experience you want to create).

High level photography enthusiasts / professionals

- Chairs/benches to accommodate the capacity of the hide and the needs of the photographer. They will be sitting for long periods of time so they must be very comfortable if possible;
- Connected toilet facility – this must be directly linked to the hide (or minimum under the same roof). The toilet should be designed with waste processing and any odours/smells in mind so as to not impact on the environment, the visitor experience and/or put off wildlife;
- A berth or room for a bed – in narrow hides a berth space can also act as a sitting bench. Beds can fold down from the wall;
- Sturdy bench along the viewing holes to connect a camera through mounting the camera mounts/ball heads in holes in the bench; at least 25-30 cm deep and 4-5 cm thick bench board underneath, going from wall to wall with

- 45 degree support legs all the way down to the floor. This bench then should have a number of holes drilled in it in from the camera position/ hole, to allow for all kinds of ball heads and camera supports to be screwed onto it, and at different distances from the hole. Bolt screws, with the standard ball head thread of 3/8" inch and about 10-15 cm long should be supplied in the hide, together with distances of varying thickness, each with a hole in it, so that many different kinds of ball heads can be attached;
- Separate viewing (with double-glass mirror glass windows) and camera holes; or double-glass mirror glass covering the whole front of the hide. Best is a German brand of glass, used by for example Bence Maté, an ingenious and famous Hungarian photographer and hide designer. It is called "Stopsol Classic Clear" 4mm glass. This can be bought through several providers, but Bence buys his from: Jülich Glass, www.julichglas.hu. It can be tailor-made to fit the exact size you need. The mirror glass hide gives the best visitor experience, but costs a bit more and needs daily cleaning of the glass. Rain is a problem, so this style needs a long overhang of the roof. For photography in this type of hide design, the photographers will need to bring their own tripods;
- Overhanging exterior cover/board/roof to protect camera lens fronts from rain and snow;
- Insulation to protect from the weather and regulate the inside temperature. This should include floor and roof insulation;

- Shelves for storage;
- Ventilation through a high out-hole and low in-hole to regulate temperature;
- Mosquito netting over all ventilation holes;
- In some cases wi-fi network connectivity and electricity where possible to charge cameras, upload images;
- Live webcam – to be considered in certain instances for PR and publicity reasons;
- **The floating hide**, which is the most uncommon. The idea is to get down low and close to water fauna – water birds, beavers, otters, seals etc. This type of innovative hide is very appreciated by bird enthusiasts and is definitely something that is difficult for the visitor in any area to achieve on his/her own. This represents a true added value service and is very uncommon. Two main styles can be identified: the one-person, floating hide, in which the photographer/visitor is in a wetsuit or even better a dry suit, and can move around the hide by paddling with fins or electric motor. And the bigger, multi-person pontoon one, which is typically built on a pontoon/floatbridge structure, with a cabin structure on top, and has shooting windows/openings as far down close to the water as possible. The colder the water and the more marine conditions, the better it is to consider the pontoon, multi-person hide. This also results in better worktime/income ratio for the operator. The pontoon can easily be towed around with a boat and placed temporarily or semi-permanently in a certain location, and anchored up there. Attracting the fauna could be done in various ways, especially by providing some food matter. **The pontoon hide is definitely recommended for most tourism operators in wetland/lake/coast/river areas.**

High end tourists

Should include all the features of the 'high level photography enthusiast / professional hides' but also the following:

- More comfortable bed (double if possible);
- Furnishings;
- Suitable interior wall material;
- Higher quality toilet facilities;
- Possibilities for imaginative food/drink provision.

Factory-made hides/standard item hides

The only company that we know of today that delivers factory-built photo hides is Eero Kemilä, who developed these together with Kari Kempainen in Finland. These are work-men

cabin-like boxes, for max 3 photographers, that can be lifted onto location by a forest tractor. Insulated and ventilated.

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Production of factory-made hides is a possible new rewilding business development opportunity. Who will become Europe's first serious wildlife watching hide producer, catering for the explosion of wildlife hides that will come from the wildlife watching business gaining popularity in Europe?



JUAN CARLOS MUÑOZ ROBBEJO / WILD WONDERS OF EUROPE



STAFFAN WIDSTRAND / WILD WONDERS OF EUROPE



5. Ownership and maintenance

It is essential that the hide is operated and maintained by someone who knows what they are doing! Often this is not the same people/organisation who owns the land, although it can be if that entity is experienced in wildlife tourism service provision. An engaged entrepreneur is absolutely fundamental for wildlife watching hides to become part of a good business. The involvement of an entrepreneur is important both for building the hide and then for running it and selling the access to it.

In planning and designing any wildlife hide, we very strongly recommend that the operator of that hide is identified at the earliest stage possible and strongly involved in, or in charge of the planning and design process. This could be a local ecotourism company, a local hotelier/accommodation provider or a team from the relevant hunting ground owner/leaser if they have the necessary skills and experience.

The operator/entrepreneur will be responsible for all maintenance, cleaning, and servicing of the hides.

“If you can design a wooden box with a roof, window and door, you can design a bird-hide; but why stop there? One good way to stimulate design ideas is to visit as many existing bird-hides as you can, use them, and then assess how well they work for you and how they could be improved...”

– Birds Australia

6. Baiting or not, how and how not

The purpose of a hide is to view wildlife and the ability to do this on a regular basis will have implications on the commercial sustainability of the hide. Baiting is to be considered carefully and is only to be used when really needed and after the environmental impact of baiting there has been assessed. The Rewilding Enterprise team will be able to advise, drawing upon the experience of professional photographers and wildlife watching entrepreneurs across Europe.

A hide location around natural features that channel or attract wildlife, for example a permanent water source or a well-used river crossing, can also be very useful for high quality wildlife viewing.

Human introduced bait

For use of animal matter, a permission from the veterinary authorities is in most cases required. There is no EU law today banning the feeding of wildlife with animal matter but regional and national legislation can impose some restrictions on this. The way out of that is in many cases to apply for a "pilot project" over a number of years, to test it, since this in most locations is a completely new industry.

- i. Vegetable based products including bird seed, dried fruit, nuts – (Squirrels, ermines, martens, squirrels);
- ii. Grains – (Geese, ducks, swans and cranes, small birds);
- iii. Salt lick and ensilage (lactic acid treated hay), hay, grain – (Bison, cattle, moose boar and deer);
- iv. Fish – (Herons, pelicans and storks);
- v. Large carcasses such as pigs – (Vultures, eagles, bears, wolves, wolverines, jackals and foxes);
- vi. Small carcasses such as pigeons, hens, grouse birds, roadkills – (Bears, goshawk, eagles, foxes, jays);
- vii. Honey, molasses, syrup, dog food – (Bears, badgers, foxes);
- viii. Fruit, like apples or plums – (Bears and boar, but very visible in the images)
- ix. Corn (dried, on or off the cobs). Also very visible and spreads all over the place, does not look that good.

Please note: Lynx and wild cats virtually never visit bait sites. Iberian lynx tend to hang around places where rabbits are released from breeding facilities.





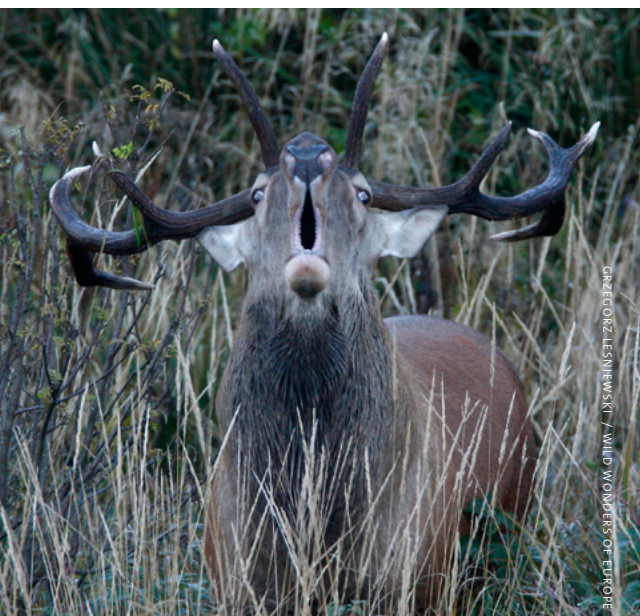
7. Case studies and analysis

The following are a selection of wildlife watching hide designs with explanatory analysis around positive and negative features of each design. They are presented within four general categories and some hides qualify across the sections:

1. Weak exterior construction;
2. Strong exterior construction;
3. Weak interior design and functionality (for specific user);

4. Strong interior design and functionality (for specific user).

Please note that we are only making some broad observations based upon what we can see in the photographs included. For example, we do not comment on the interior if we can only see the exterior. The checklist at the foot of each section ranges from green for 'good' and red for 'poor'.



7.1. Weak exterior construction

7.1.1. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1452017>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	■		■
Nature enthusiast	■		■
Photography professional	■		■
High-end tourist	■		■

General comments

- Permanent structure;
- Poor hide with limited consideration on the requirements of any user.

Positives

- Relatively discrete colours;
- Potentially moveable, lifting it using the hooks in each corner.

Negatives

- Concrete base;
- Aesthetically inappropriate in the open country;
- Limited rain protection;
- No covered access;
- Seemingly no windows to look through – only photo holes and no cover for the cameras – wildlife can see the user.

7.1.2. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.wildsweden.com/news/big-bear-in-front-of-hide/>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Green		Green
Nature enthusiast	Orange		Orange
Photography professional	Orange		Orange
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- Large hide partially built in local style;
- Poor situation in unsightly landscape in front of the hide (possibly due to over baiting).

Positives

- Suitable photo holes and windows;
- Heating furnace inside with chimney;
- Covered access.

Negatives

- Indiscreet, non-moveable, permanent hide;
- Aesthetically poor design;
- Large impact on the landscape;
- The wildlife, especially bears, have destroyed the immediate vegetation;
- Bones and carcass remains litter the area making it unappealing for photographers.

7.1.3. Cabin hide / semi mobile



Source: <http://www.pbase.com/image/13253171>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Red		Red
Nature enthusiast	Orange		Orange
Photography professional	Green		Green
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- Factory-built Finnish grade hide.

Positives

- Insulated, dry, warm;
- Panoramic windows above the camera holes with reflective glass;
- Moveable – even without machinery;
- Chimney to spread human smell at a higher level (6 metres up);
- Discrete colour.

Negatives

- Aesthetically inappropriate;
- 2-4 person capacity (this is low for the size and structure of the hide);
- No covered access;
- Roof does not cover lenses against the rain although the flaps do.

7.1.4. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.virtualvisit-northernireland.com/>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Green		Green
Nature enthusiast	Orange		Orange
Photography professional	Red		Red
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- Public hide – probably in a national park;
- Not appropriate for close proximity wildlife viewing or photographers;
- Aesthetically OK with efforts to blend into the landscape.

Positives

- Grass roof – blends into landscape;
- Wood walls – should be sourced locally and sustainably ;
- Suitable for interpretation / talks with large groups;
- Covered access.

Negatives

- Size makes it aesthetically intrusive;
- Poor functionality and structure for photographers;
- Large viewing holes – wildlife can see users;
- Viewing holes high on the wall – not suitable for photographers;
- 25 metres of reeds in front of the hide;
- Unlikely to generate revenue.

7.1.5. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/8615010.article>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	■		■
Nature enthusiast	■		■
Photography professional	■		■
High-end tourist	■		■

General comments

- Beautifully designed, publicly financed public visitors centre. Excellent example of what modern visitors centres possibly should look like;
- This is NOT a hide – it functions as an observation deck;
- Visitor centres can either be important for nature tourism development or extremely detrimental to it depending on how they are run.

Positives

- Design elegance. Wheelchair access and nice view / interpretation possibilities;
- Perfect nature tourism agency location, a hub for visitors;
- Concealed entrance when viewed from ground level along the path.

Negatives

- Limited commercial value beyond selling refreshments and souvenirs;
- Poor functionality for photographers.

7.1.6. Cabin hide



Source: Staffan Widstrand / Rewilding Europe

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Red		Red
Nature enthusiast	Green		Orange
Photography professional	Orange		Orange
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- A hunting tower in Velebit, Croatia. Hunters have very different needs and requests compared to photo enthusiasts and wildlife watchers. Hunters need the animal at a reasonable distance with a clear shot. In Eastern Europe they often use a tower to get off the ground so the animals cannot smell them easily, and so the terrain stops the bullet. This is a well built tower, comfortable for 1-2 people, but not ideal for photography.

Positives

- Reasonably comfortable to sit in;
- Use of local materials.

Negatives

- High angle, wildlife watchers and photo enthusiasts prefer ground level;
- Limited capacity;
- Wildlife can see the people inside and the camera poking out;
- Poor rain protection for the lens;
- No covered access;
- Mosquitoes have easy access.

7.2. Strong exterior construction

7.2.1. Cabin hide / semi mobile



Source: Wild Wonders of Europe (<http://www.wild-wonders.com/>)

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Red		Red
Nature enthusiast	Green		Green
Photography professional	Green		Green
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- Classic Finnish design;
- This operator has 15 hides like this in the area. All are moveable by snowmobile during winter. They usually move a couple of them each year and charge €200 - €250 per night per person;
- Reasonable facilities including sitting air mattress and biological toilet;
- This is a 5 - 6 person hide.

Positives

- Panoramic observation window at eyelevel above the photo holes;
- Mobile functionality;
- Rain protection from the roof;
- Windows and photo holes across three directions;
- Constructed with local materials.

Negatives

- Primitive aesthetics;
- Not attractive for amateur users.

7.2.2. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.spatiwildlife.com/en/wildlife-photography-network-of-permanent-hides/index.html>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Red		Red
Nature enthusiast	Orange		Orange
Photography professional	Green		Green
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- Complimentary and sensitive to the landscape with natural colours and constructed with local materials.

Positives

- Ground level with low profile;
- Aesthetically pleasing in the open landscape;
- Mirror glass with separate photo holes.

Negatives

- Potentially small with a 2-3 person capacity;
- Only one photo direction;
- No covered access;
- Permanent, but not obnoxious;
- Windows beside the photo holes; they would be better placed above the photo holes.

7.2.3. Cabin hide



Source: http://www.hidephotography.com/getpage.php?pg=one_hide&hid=6

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Orange		Orange
Nature enthusiast	Green		Green
Photography professional	Green		Green
High-end tourist	Orange		Red

General comments

- Professional photo hide with 2-3 people capacity;
- The specific hides in these photos are some of the most sought after and most revenue generating hides in Europe and in our view provide one of the strongest examples of a subtle, innovative hide with minimal impact on the landscape.

Positives

- Discrete, low profile;
- Covered with material fitting the landscape – in this case grass;
- Mirror glass;
- Ventilation system;
- Rain cover for the lenses;
- Concealed trench entrance.

Negatives

- Permanent construction.

7.2.4. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.hidephotography.com/>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Orange		Orange
Nature enthusiast	Green		Green
Photography professional	Green		Green
High-end tourist	Orange		Red

General comments

- Professional looking ground level hide.

Positives

- Mirror glass;
- Low angle / ground level;
- Good rain cover;
- Grass on roof;
- Trench in front of the hide preventing wildlife from attacking the glass.

Negatives

- Permanent, concrete and steel structure;
- Orange colour too visually disturbing – although may blend well with the grass and bank in drier periods.

7.2.5. Natural / semi-permanent hide



Source: <http://www.spatiawildlife.com/en/wildlife-photography-network-of-permanent-hides/index.html>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	Red		Red
Nature enthusiast	Green		Orange
Photography professional	Orange		Orange
High-end tourist	Red		Red

General comments

- Using old barns, sheds, houses, stonewalls etc is a great way to camouflage hides, especially in open landscapes;
- A perfect solution to develop a hide using an existing building or ruined stone wall with minimum impact on the local environment.

Positives

- Very appealing design, in, or in the same shape as traditional structures/sheds/houses;
- Using existing building as hide – no new impact on landscape;
- Natural temperature control.

Negatives

- Anticipated to have an awkward photo shooting functionality.

7.2.6. Semi-permanent hide



Source: <http://www.kaingo.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Hippo-Hide-2.jpg>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public	■		■
Nature enthusiast	■		■
Photography professional	■		■
High-end tourist	■		■

General comments

- Water side hide in Africa;
- Dual functionality for tourist and photography enthusiasts.

Positives

- Camouflaged, blends in well with the environment;
- Covered access;
- Small viewing hole for tourists – wildlife cannot see them, with suitable and separate area for photographers;
- Natural materials;
- No concrete – minimal impact on environment;
- Close proximity to wildlife.

Negatives

- Not comfortable;
- Potentially dangerous;
- No cover for cameras if it rains.

7.3. Weak interior design and functionality

7.3.1. Semi-permanent hide



Source: Wild Wonders of Europe (<http://www.wild-wonders.com/>)

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		■	■
Nature enthusiast		■	■
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist		■	■

General comments

- Stone hide for great bustards in La Serena, Extremadura, Spain;
- Very uncomfortable, but in the right place;
- €100 per day;
- These particular hides are fully booked the entire season!

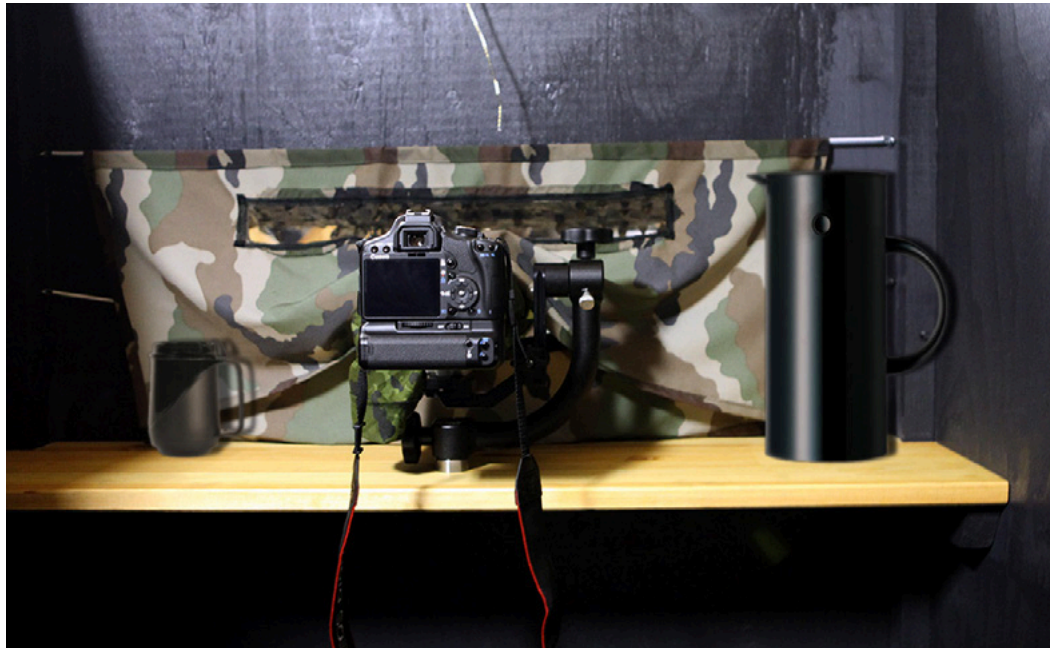
Positives

- Roof is rainproof;
- Old classic stone hut used – no new construction

Negatives

- Sandy, dusty, sand floor (bad for camera gear);
- Very small – single person capacity with limited photo shoot options;
- Very cold in morning, very hot during day;
- Very uncomfortable.

7.3.2. Cabin hide



Source: http://www.fotothing.com/photos/158/158beao8fd23c61922938f6e44da9f94_c67.jpg

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		■	■
Nature enthusiast		■	■
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist		■	■

General comments

- Typical old style photo hole in primitive hide.

Positives

- The swivel arm / ball head is great to use;
- The bench is reasonably thick but should be even thicker;
- There is a hole and a screw to mount the ball head / swivel arm with;
- Textile covering the camera lens.

Negatives

- Very poor visibility other than through the camera;
- Difficult for action or bird photo;
- Very boring for a non-photographer;
- No windows.

7.3.3. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/home/small-projects-part-2/>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		■	■
Nature enthusiast		■	■
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist		■	■

General comments

- Mass-market hide with limited appeal for photography enthusiasts.

Positives

- Wooden material (should be locally sourced);
- Variable height benches to attach cameras to;
- Views across two sides;
- Mirror glass.

Negatives

- Wildlife will see you through the gaps in the wood;
- Aesthetically does not blend into the landscape;
- No shooting holes for cameras;
- Far away and elevated position from the wildlife.

7.3.4. Cabin hide



Source:http://www.egnu.com/country_info/kenya/images/aberdare_003.html

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		■	■
Nature enthusiast		■	■
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist		■	■

General comments

- African public hide.

Positives

- The visitors are visible, but this hide is designed more for the protection of humans from the wildlife;
- Aesthetically well designed mat walls.

Negatives

- Open side with no covering so the wildlife can see the user;
- Mosquitos will be able to enter the hide;
- Bench far too low for any tripod head arrangement and the bench prevents tripod usage.

7.4. Strong interior design and functionality for specific user

7.4.1. Cabin hide



Source: Wild Wonders of Europe (<http://www.wild-wonders.com/>)

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		Red	Red
Nature enthusiast		Orange	Orange
Photography professional		Green	Green
High-end tourist		Red	Red

General comments

- Professional hide, correctly positioned by a fish pond.

Positives

- Mirror glass hide;
- Big windows makes it suitable for the wildlife watcher and photographer;
- Close to the wildlife;
- Flexible in its functionality.

Negatives

- Permanent construction.

7.4.2. Cabin hide



Source: <http://hidephotography.com/getpage.php?pg=search&sr=Egretta%20garzetta>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public			
Nature enthusiast			
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist			

General comments

- Poor hide but shows good use of shelving and space for mattresses
- Very professional photo hide interior;
- Not designed for any other user.

Positives

- Shelves and spacing for equipment;
- Floor mattresses.

Negatives

- No benches for sitting;
- Not aesthetically pleasing – only suited to photographer enthusiast;
- Poor interior walls.
- No standing room.

7.4.3. Cabin hide



Source:<http://hidephotography.com>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public			
Nature enthusiast			
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist			

General comments

- Only designed for professional photographers;
- Very professional photo hide, maybe not an interior design winner, but for serious photography it is great;
- The mirror glass result can easily be seen here – birds 1 metre away.

Positives

- Mirror glass;
- Curtain for sleeping in overnight;
- Ground level;
- Storage shelves;
- Big window – full flexibility.

Negatives

- 2-3 people capacity;
- Not aesthetically pleasing – only suited to photographer enthusiast;
- Permanent construction.

7.4.4. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.jensbirch.smugmug.com>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public			
Nature enthusiast			
Photography professional			
High-end tourist			

General comments

- Only designed for professional photographers;
- Primitive but efficient;
- For a nature photo enthusiast a decent design and functionality;
- Space for 1-2 photographers.

Positives

- Variable shooting level including floor level;
- Heating (good in Northern or mountain climates);
- Looks insulated;
- Padded chair;
- The tripod-head mount arms – a creative solution that would seem to work, especially if there is a slider as well in-out on the arm.

Negatives

- No viewing panel above the camera hole makes it difficult to follow action and birds;
- A panoramic view window right across and above the shooting holes is crucially important;
- Not aesthetically pleasing – only suited to photographer enthusiast;
- The primitive feeling.

7.4.5. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.findtripinfo.com/south-africa/mpumalanga/kruger-park-accommodation.html>,
<http://www.safarinow.com/go/ShipandaniSleepoverHideKrugerNationalParkSANParks>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		■	■
Nature enthusiast		■	■
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist		■	■

General comments

- A public wildlife watching hide in South Africa;
- Beds fold up against the wall to provide for comfortable overnight accommodation.

Positives

- Good use of local materials and design;
- Mosquito mesh over flaps covering viewing hole;
- Study bench for attaching camera;
- Well designed overnight functionality;
- Comfortable;
- Viewing from three sides.

Negatives

- No reflective glass or canvass to cover user;
- Permanent structure;
- Far away from the wildlife;
- Elevated angle for professional photographers.

7.4.6. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.outdoorphoto.co.za/forums/showthread.php?13216-Help-Giants-Castle>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		■	■
Nature enthusiast		■	■
Photography professional		■	■
High-end tourist		■	■

General comments

- A vulture watching hide in South Africa located next to a vulture nesting site.

Positives

- Unobtrusive in the landscape;
- Concealed entrance with access from around the corner;
- Constructed using local materials;
- Large mirror glass viewing windows above covered camera shooting holes;
- Rain protection;
- Benches for securing cameras;
- Wide viewing angle.

Negatives

- Permanent;
- Concrete base.

7.4.7. Cabin hide



Source: <http://www.rukakusamo.com>

	Exterior suitability	Interior suitability	Design functionality
General Public		Red	Red
Nature enthusiast		Orange	Orange
Photography professional		Green	Green
High-end tourist		Red	Red

General comments

- A bear viewing hide for photographer enthusiasts.

Positives

- Reflective and well proportioned viewing windows;
- Separate canvas covered camera holes;
- Bench suitable to mount camera on;
- Viewing from at least two angles;
- Comfortable chairs.

Negatives

- Not aesthetically pleasing.

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