



Underwater Photography Guidelines

The world's coral reefs are under threat from many stresses and pressures. Each year millions of divers hit the water. Most Divers are concerned to protect the environment in which they dive and avoid stressing animals, minimising their effect on the environment

and organisms we encounter. The last thing we want to do as divers is add extra pressure to the world's coral reefs.

Photographic equipment effects diver's buoyancy and mobility in the water. Divers need advanced skills to take pictures and videos underwater. Remember your buddy, Safety first.

DO Practice buoyancy control and photography skills in a pool before diving near sensitive and fragile marine life, where the subject will not be damaged or stressed by your trial and error. Photographers should have exceptional and precise buoyancy skills to avoid damaging the fragile marine environment and its organisms.

DO Secure gauges, regulators and other equipment so they do not trail over reefs and cause damage.

DO Assess the situation before approaching. Prepare yourself and your camera without touching the reef, and pass on a subject that cannot be accessed without causing damage.

DO Learn to fin slowly backwards, so you can move away from the reef without causing damage.

DO Use a finger to steady yourself on a rock, if you feel unsteady push yourself away from the reef.

DO Gently lower your fins down onto a bare patch of sand to prevent stirring up sediment and to provide you with stability, inhale to lift yourself away from the bottom and minimise disturbance.

DO Use your guide or buddy to stabilise yourself if you feel unsteady or ask them to take difficult shots for you.

DO Respect an animal's space and back off if it looks like it is becoming stressed.

DO Be still and patient. The subject will relax and allow you to take better shots.

DO Think of your bubbles and fragile corals overhanging you; take care in caves and caverns and wrecks where bubbles may become trapped under overhangs as this can be lethal for marine life.

DON'T Touch animals. Touching or manipulating an animal will stress them out, making them become defensive and therefore not allow you to take good shots.

DON'T Invade an animal's space and push the camera near to get a close-up shot. Getting too close will cause your subject to bolt. This is especially true for compact cameras. Some territorial animals will become highly stressed, if animal exhibits different behaviour move on to another subject.

DON'T Touch or hold onto corals for support or move or break corals to get a clear shot.

DON'T Queue to photograph a rare subject such as a seahorse, or take too many shots of each animal. Use bright focusing lights excessively this will scare the subject. Save the animals eyesight. Flash photography should not be used on rare subjects such as seahorses; repeated bursts of bright light can kill some animals.

DON'T Kill marine life to attract other animals to them. Animals should never be handled or irritated to create a reaction and sedentary ones should not be moved onto an alien background which may kill them.

DON'T Use strong beams or lights on night dives as these can dazzle fish and cause them to harm themselves banging into the surrounding reef, others may become confused and disturbed if torch beams or lights are pointed directly at them, use edge of beam to minimise disturbance.

DON'T Check you LCD monitor on the back of the camera until you are clear of the reef. Remain conscious of your position and marine life around you at all times.