



THE GREEN FINS ICONS EXPLAINED

Protect coral reefs by following these environmental tips



Do not touch, kick, kneel, lie or step on coral

Watch your feet and fins at all times. Divers and snorkellers can easily break coral with their feet or fins. Corals are very fragile and take a long time to grow. Stepping on or kicking coral can break it, expose it to diseases or even kill it – not to mention cutting your feet.



Do not stir the sediment

If you are not careful, your fins can stir up the sediment and debris, upsetting small habitats and covering corals. This reduces the ability of the coral to photosynthesise and could cause it to die. This can also lead to the spread of disease as well as small animals being washed away or increasing their chance of predation.



Do not chase or touch any marine life

This can cause great stress to any animal. It can also transmit diseases or remove the protective coatings of fish, mammals, invertebrates and other species. Look but never touch and try not to get too close. By giving marine life plenty of space, you're also more likely to have a longer and more enjoyable encounter.



Do not feed the fish

Feeding fish and other species can cause them to rely on that food source. This also makes fish more aggressive towards divers because they expect to be fed. It can even lead to corals getting smothered in algae as the fish no longer eat this natural food source. Fed fish may become sick and are also more likely to leave their nests empty and vulnerable to predators.



Do not litter

Throwing trash in the ocean kills marine life, poisons seafood and can cause injury. Chemicals in the waste can also contaminate the ocean and enter the food chain. Marine pollution and microplastics can be dangerous for humans too as they have been found in the food we eat and the water we drink.



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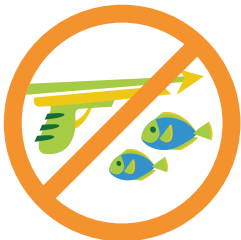
Do not buy corals or marine life as souvenirs

This encourages people to remove tonnes of marine life, dead or alive, from marine ecosystems to sell as souvenirs. Many of these species play vital roles in maintaining healthy reef ecosystems. If the buying stops, the killing and collecting can too.



Do not support shark finning

100 million sharks are killed each year by the shark fin trade. Sharks are primarily killed for their fins, which are used for soup. In some countries, shark liver oil is believed to be a nutrient supplement and a cure for certain illnesses. Removing these top predators can create an imbalance in the marine ecosystem. Don't eat in restaurants or buy from shops that sell shark products.



Do not spearfish

This method of fishing removes the largest and slowest reproducing species, which can change the balance of the ecosystem and dramatically upset the food chain. It is also likely to injure a species if it is not speared correctly, leading to a slow death. Spearfishing can also lead to damage to other marine life, including corals.



Do not anchor on coral reefs

Anchors are heavy and often have a long chain attached. When dropped onto a fragile coral reef, they cause great destruction. If the boat changes direction with wind or currents, the anchor and chain will drag and cause more damage to our valuable reefs.



Do not take marine life – dead or alive

Removing species that would normally break down and be recycled into the sea leaves other animals without nutrients and elements that they need for growth. Even empty shells on the beach play an important role in the wider ecosystem. Take nothing but pictures. Leave nothing but bubbles.



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Do not wear gloves

Wearing gloves gives you a false sense of protection and can encourage you to hold on to things, like coral, underwater. In addition to potentially damaging marine life and spreading disease, wearing gloves can be dangerous for you too. Gloves will not provide any security against injury from harmful or venomous marine life.



Wear a life jacket at the surface

This is recommended for all levels of snorkellers and swimmers. From beginners to experienced swimmers, wearing a life jacket – and remaining horizontal in the water – helps you avoid standing on or kicking shallow corals. Broken corals can take many years to recover.



Use mooring buoys

The destructive impacts of anchors can be avoided by using mooring buoys. This practice also sets a good example for others and raises awareness of the highly damaging practice of anchoring.



Report environmental violations

Report destructive practices and violations of environmental laws. Tell your dive guide, dive operator, community leaders or government officials. By informing key authorities, you are being part of the solution as raising your concerns can lead to appropriate action.



Participate in conservation projects

By taking part in conservation projects, you can have a positive effect on the environment and help educate others. A little help from everybody goes a long way.