

Underwater Photography Guidelines

The world's coral reefs are under threat from many stresses and pressures. Each year millions of divers hit the water. Although most divers are concerned with protecting the environment, the goal is to minimise any additional stress to corals and marine life. Photographic equipment affects divers' buoyancy and mobility in the water.

Dos

✓ Practice buoyancy control and photography skills

Practice buoyancy control and photography skills in a swimming pool before diving. Photographers should have advanced buoyancy skills to avoid damaging the fragile marine environment.

✓ Secure your equipment

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

✓ Assess the situation before approaching

Position yourself and your camera without touching the reef.

✓ Learn to fin backwards

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

✓ Hold on to rock or dead patch reef

If it is necessary to hold on to something, touch only on a rock or dead patch reef.

✓ Avoid stirring up sediment

Avoid stirring up sediment by gently lowering your fins down onto the sand.

✓ Be patient

Be still and patient so that the subject will relax and allow you to take one best shot only.

Don'ts

✓ Don't touch animals

Touching or manipulating animals causes stress, making them defensive and sometimes aggressive.

✓ Don't invade an animal's space

Getting too close to animals will cause your subject to flee. If animals show signs of stress by hiding, changing colour or trying to swim away, move onto another subject.

✓ Don't touch or hold on to corals

Don't touch or hold on to corals for support or move or break corals to get a clear shot.

✓ Don't take too many shots of an animal

Excessive use of flash light will scare and stress them.

✓ Don't manipulate marine life

Don't use tools such as sticks or pointers to move marine life for a clear shot.

✓ Don't use strong beams or lights

Don't use strong beams or lights on night dives as this can confuse the animals and may lead to them harming themselves.



Lead by example
Divers need advanced skills to take photos and videos underwater.