

Press Release
28 October 2021

REEF-WORLD LAUNCHES GREEN FINS ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICE FOR UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHERS POSTER New guidelines for underwater photographers

The Reef-World Foundation – the international coordinator of the [UN Environment Programme's Green Fins initiative](#) – has launched the newly updated [Green Fins Environmental Best Practice for Underwater Photographers](#) poster with new guidelines. These guidelines help dive and snorkel operators encourage their guests to follow environmental best practices while taking photos underwater, in order to protect the marine ecosystems they are photographing.

Underwater photography is becoming increasingly popular as cameras and underwater housings become more accessible, coupled with the prevalence of sharing these sightings on social media. However, using a camera on a dive can be distracting and can lead to changes in buoyancy and body positioning that may cause damage to the marine environment. Additionally, moving or manipulating marine life and coral in order to get the perfect shot is common - a practice that causes stress to marine life and can erode the ecosystem's health.

The latest global survey of reef health, The Sixth Status of Corals of the World: 2020 Report, found the critical need to reduce local pressures on coral reefs in order to maintain their resilience while global threats posed by climate change are addressed. This includes the negative impacts from marine tourism. The Green Fins Environmental Best Practice for Underwater Photographers' poster aims to help marine tourism professionals promote environmental best practices to underwater photographers and prevent practices that are harmful to the coral reefs and other marine ecosystems.

The guidance includes a wide range of recommendations, from improving buoyancy skills to not fixating over a particular species. These recommendations are consolidated from dive professionals and professional underwater photographers with years of experience working in the industry.

Samantha Craven, Programmes Manager at Reef-World, said: "Underwater photography is a powerful conservation tool that can bring the delights of the ocean to the surface and foster connection with the marine environment. However, if poorly managed, it can damage the very animals we love to photograph. [Our research](#) showed that divers holding a camera (either compact or SLR) accounted for 52.7% of observed diver contacts with the reef*. These guidelines will help everyone - from operators to photographers themselves — reduce their impact and protect future photography subjects!

The Green Fins Environmental Best Practice for Underwater Photographers poster is available for free on the Green Fins website. Anyone can download the poster [here](#).

For more information, please visit www.reef-world.org or www.greenfins.net. Dive and snorkel operators interested in signing up to Green Fins can find the membership application form at: www.greenfins.net/how-to-join.

- Ends -

TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER

Notes to editors

*Research by Roche, R.C., Harvey, C.V., Harvey, J.J. et al., titled 'Recreational Diving Impacts on Coral Reefs and the Adoption of Environmentally Responsible Practices within the SCUBA Diving Industry'. Published in the *Environmental Management* 58, 107–116 (2016). The full article is available here: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-016-0696-0>

For more information, images or an interview with a spokesperson from The Reef-World Foundation, please contact:

Teresa Moh

press@reef-world.org

+60 16 4077 905 (WhatsApp)

About Reef-World

The Reef-World Foundation is a registered UK charity which delivers practical solutions for marine conservation around the world. The charity promotes the wise use of natural resources - particularly coral reefs and related ecosystems - for the benefit of local communities, visitors and future generations. It is dedicated to supporting, inspiring and empowering governments, businesses, communities and individuals around the world to act in conserving and sustainably developing coastal resources.

Reef-World leads the global implementation of the UN Environment's Green Fins initiative, which focuses on driving environmentally friendly scuba diving and snorkelling practices across the industry globally. As such, the charity provides low cost and practical solutions to local and industry-wide environmental challenges associated with the marine tourism industry. It provides education and capacity building assistance to empower environmental champions (within the diving industry, local communities, authorities and governments) to implement proven coastal resource management approaches.

Please visit www.reef-world.org to learn more or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

About Green Fins

Green Fins is a proven conservation management approach – spearheaded by The Reef-World Foundation in partnership with the UN Environment – which leads to a measurable reduction in the negative environmental impacts associated with the marine tourism industry. The initiative aims to protect and conserve coral reefs through environmentally friendly guidelines that promote a sustainable diving and snorkelling tourism industry. It provides the only internationally recognised environmental standards for the diving and snorkelling industry and has a robust assessment system to measure compliance.

Green Fins encourages and empowers members of the diving industry to act to reduce the pressures on coral reefs by offering dive and snorkel companies practical, low-cost alternatives to harmful practices - such as anchoring, fish feeding and chemical pollution – as well as providing strategic training, support and resources. By reducing the local direct and indirect pressures tourism puts on coral reefs, it helps make corals healthier and more resilient to other stresses such as the effects of climate change. Look for the Green Fins logo when booking your next dive trip.

Please visit www.greenfins.net to learn more or follow the initiative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER