



10 Tips for Underwater Photographers

1. Photograph with Care

Dive carefully as many aquatic creatures are fragile regardless of size. Improper photo techniques can damage sensitive aquatic life and harm fragile organisms with the bump of a camera or tank, swipe of a fin or even the touch of a hand.

2. Dive Neutral

Camera systems may add weight or be buoyant. Make sure to secure photo and dive equipment and be properly weighted to avoid contact with reefs or other vital habitat. Practice buoyancy control and photography skills in a pool before swimming near sensitive and fragile environments.

3. Resist Temptation

Avoid touching, handling, feeding, chasing or riding aquatic life. Avoid altering an organism's location to get the perfect shot. Many aquatic creatures are shy and easily stressed. These actions may interrupt feeding, disturb mating or provoke aggression in a normally nonaggressive species.

4. Easy Does It

While diving, move slowly and deliberately through the water. Be patient and still while photographing - allow organisms to show their natural behavior for a more significant and meaningful shot.

5. Sharpen Your Skills

Make sure the difficulty of the dive and the environmental conditions are appropriate for your current skills and comfort level. Avoid stabilizing underwater by grabbing onto the reef for a better photo. Enroll in PADI's Underwater Photographer, Digital Underwater Photography and Peak Performance Buoyancy Specialty courses to become a more skilled and successful photographer.

6. Be Informed

Be aware of local regulations and protocols regarding behavior around marine mammals and other species before entering the water. These regulations protect creatures and aim to assure their preservation for future generations.

7. Be an AWARE Diver

Consider enrolling in an AWARE - Coral Reef Conservation, Project AWARE Specialty or Underwater Naturalist course to learn sustainable dive techniques and increase knowledge about the environment you're photographing.

8. Take Only Pictures, Leave Only Bubbles

Avoid souvenir collection. Nearly everything found in the aquatic realm is alive or will be used by a living creature. Removing specimens such as corals and shells can disturb the delicate balance and quickly deplete dive sites of both their resources and their beauty.

9. Share Your Images

Use images for conservation by reporting environmental disturbances or destruction using your photographs as evidence. Assist scientific research and improve resource management by contributing your photos to The Whale Shark Project and other monitoring programs. You may also submit your photos to Project AWARE. Your images have the power to change perspectives and influence conservation.

10. Conserve the Adventure

Join Project AWARE Foundation, the dive industry's leading nonprofit environmental organization. Your support helps conserve underwater environments through education, advocacy and action.