



## 6 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 minimize any additional stress on corals. Photographic equipment affects divers' buoyancy and mobility in the water. Divers need advanced skills to take photos and videos underwater.



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



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



**Do** Assess the situation before approaching. Position yourself and your camera without touching the reef.



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



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



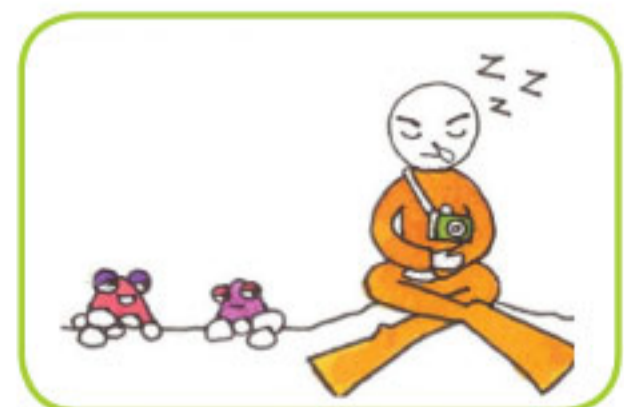
**Do** Avoid stirring up sediment by gently lower your fins down onto the sand.



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



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





**Don't** Touch animals. Touching or manipulating animals adds stress, making them defensive and sometimes aggressive.



**Don't** Invade an animals' space. Getting too close to animals will cause your subjects to flee. If some territorial animals become highly stressed, move on to another subject.



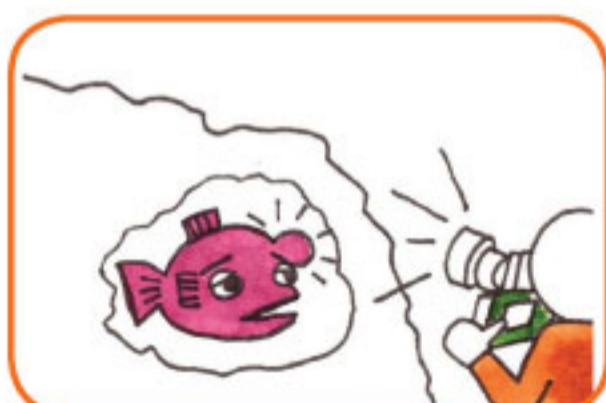
**Don't** Touch or hold on to corals for support or move or break corals to get a clear shot.



**Don't** Take too many shots of each animal. Excessive use of flash light will scare and stress them.



**Don't** Use tools such as sticks or pointers to move marine life for the clear shot.



**Don't** Use strong beams or lights on night dives as this can cause confusion to the animals. Fish can harm themselves by bumping into surrounding reefs.