

# BSAC Diving environmental guidelines

## Climate change and ocean acidification

- Think about reducing your fuel consumption:
  - Do you have to dive at a site that's a long drive away? If so, plan your travel to minimise the number of cars your group uses.
  - How about a dive holiday that doesn't involve long-haul flights?
  - Could your dive boat be more fuel-efficient?
  - Could you do a shore-dive instead?

## Pollution

- Take care with oil and fuel from your boat and clean up after yourself.
- On the coast, go with the kit to do a beach clean.

## Boats

- The slower you drive your boat, the better it is for reducing underwater noise, fuel consumption and the risk of hitting marine life. If you have a RIB, operate at the slowest possible planing speed.
- Turn off your echosounder in transit if it is safe to do so. Echosounders create underwater noise which harasses marine life.

## Sensitive tourism

- If you do choose a dive holiday abroad, especially in a developing world country, pick one based on good environmental credentials.
- Don't allow or encourage an operator to behave in ways that might give you an exciting dive experience, but which are not good for the environment, such as anchoring on reefs or chasing/swimming with marine life. It's your responsibility to say no.
- Avoid visiting sealife centres or aquaria which keep captive whales and dolphins; this is not appropriate, unless it is immediately after rescue.

## Take care underwater

- Be careful with your buoyancy, fins and other equipment such as cameras so you don't damage marine life.
- Observe local rules on interacting with sea life.
- Leave a dive site as you'd like to find it.

## Don't disturb wildlife

- When you are diving or driving your boat with or near marine life, try to leave animals in peace.
- Never chase dolphins, porpoises, whales or sharks in your boat. If dolphins do ride your bow wave, maintain a steady course and speed.
- Avoid disturbing rafts of seabirds on the water; enter the water with care if whales, dolphins or sharks are present.
- The WiSe scheme has good advice on minimising disturbance.
  - <http://www.wisescheme.org/>

### **Sustainable seafood**

- Whenever you eat seafood, make an effort to find out where and how it was caught. Use the Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide to help you:
  - [www.goodfishguide.org](http://www.goodfishguide.org)
- It's better not to take any animals from the sea, but if you decide to do that, be careful and moderate.

### **Contribute to marine research**

- Divers are in a great position to contribute to citizen science projects such as Seasearch dives:
  - <http://www.seasearch.org.uk/>

### **Become an expert**

- Educate yourself about marine life and conservation – it will add to your diving enjoyment. BSAC has its own Marine Appreciation Course:
  - [www.bsac.com/mla](http://www.bsac.com/mla)

### **Get involved**

- Political decisions affect your diving, Getting involved with marine conservation charities and engaging with your local politicians to encourage increased protection for the marine environment through legislation on pollution, underwater noise, fishing and Marine Protected Areas can really make a difference.