

10 TIPS FOR

PHOTOGRAPHING

MARINE LIFE

By Richard Smith

PHOTOGRAPHY is a fantastic practice to help promote the need to save marine life – but aggressive photography, one that intrudes upon marine life’s welfare, can be detrimental to the oceans. Dr Richard Smith brings you 10 fantastic tips on photographing marine life

01

PASS ON SUBJECTS THAT AREN’T EASILY ACCESSIBLE

It’s not worth destroying a habitat in order to get a shot: If it’s not accessible, then move on

02

REMAIN AWARE

Be aware of your surroundings when you shoot – be careful not to damage other marine life

03

ANTICIPATE THE SHOT

Rather than manipulating your subject, exercise patience and wait for the animal to move into a beautiful space. Learn its territory or preferred hiding spots to anticipate the shot

04

BE PATIENT

Allow your subject to become accustomed to you before shooting. If they’re relaxed, they’re more likely perform natural behaviour, which always makes for the best images

05

DON’T TOUCH

Don’t touch or move your subject in any way. They are fragile and easily stressed. Besides, you’ll get better, natural images if they aren’t defensive

06

DIM THE LIGHTS

Avoid bright focus lights. Marine animals are typically used to low-light conditions

07

BE PREPARED

Often as not, there will be only one opportunity to catch that moment of fleeting animal behaviour you’re after. Have your strobes set, your settings ready, and keep your wits about you

08

UNDERSTAND YOUR SUBJECT

Take time to learn about your subject. Read all you can, observe behaviour, and talk to local guides who know the species well

09

AVOID OVERKILL

Don’t take too many shots. Be discerning about how you take your photographs, and spare the animal’s retinas

10

KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE

Back off from an animal that is becoming stressed and changing its behaviour