

## Reef Etiquette

### ***"take only pictures and memories... leave only bubbles!"***

The Reef is a very special, but fragile environment. Please help to look after it by using good diving and snorkelling practices:

- **Go slow**  
Slow down while diving and snorkelling – you are less likely to bump into things accidentally and cause damage to yourself or the reef. You are less likely to get a cramp or tire yourself out, and you'll also be amazed how much more you see when you slow down.
- **Keep your distance**  
Be mindful of your position in relation to the reef! Snorkelers: don't touch or step on the reef. Coral is sharp but also very fragile, so it's easy to cut yourself or damage the reef. If you need to rest, float on your back – don't stand on the coral. Divers: be careful not to accidentally kick the coral (or your buddy) or kick up the sand and sediment with your fins and make sure none of your equipment is dangling down where it damage the coral by bumping into it or dragging on it. Attach your hoses to your BCD. If you're confident in your buoyancy aim to be at least 1m away from the reef at all times. If you're not yet confident, stay out of kicking distance!
- **Be neutrally buoyant**  
Maintaining neutral buoyancy is tricky at first, but probably the most useful diving skill – you'll enjoy your dive more, use less air, and be able to get closer to the reef without harming it or yourself. Make sure you're properly weighted (ask our staff to help you conduct a weight check if you're not sure), and practice maintaining neutral buoyancy. Why not consider doing a peak performance buoyancy dive course?
- **Don't touch**  
Although not all marine life is dangerous to us, we can easily damage many things without realising it. For example, by touching coral, even gently, you are scraping away the protective layer of mucus that protects the coral from picking up an infection. .. unless the staff hand something to you... please don't touch anything.
- **No souvenirs!**  
Please don't take anything away from the reef, except rubbish. The Aroa Marine Reserve is a marine protected area with laws on collecting to protect marine life for future generations to enjoy. Items such as shells and corals can be bought in souvenir shops around the world, but there is no guarantee they've been collected legally or sustainably, and there may be laws on importing them to your own country. We believe that photos and books make better souvenirs!
- **Be a responsible photographer**  
Please don't damage the reef (or yourself) just to get a good photograph. Be careful how you position yourself and your camera equipment, adjust your buoyancy appropriately, and don't harass, chase or feed marine life in order to take a photograph.
- **Don't be a lemming!**  
Just because you see someone else doing something, doesn't mean it's safe or that you have to do it too. Do only what you're comfortable with in the water.
- **No littering**  
Thousands of marine animals die needlessly every year because our rubbish ends up in the sea. Plastic bags and bottles and cigarette ends, etc. can all do a lot of damage, so please **"reduce, recycle, reuse... or bin it"**.
- **Don't feed the animals**  
Human food, like bread and meat, is not suitable for marine animals and may damage their health. Fish feeding may also result in undesirably aggressive behaviour. Better would be to bang two dead peaches of rock under water together.
- **Report injured animals**  
If you notice any dead, sick or injured marine animals, such as turtles, or seabirds, please report your observations to the staff in our Dive Centre at any time (20238).