



## INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE DIVER

*When adventure calls !  
Become the diving ambassadors  
of the Third Millennium...*

with

**Albert Falco** : *Former chief diver and captain of the Calypso  
Honorary president of LONGITUDE 181 NATURE*

**François Sarano** : *Former scientific adviser to Captain Cousteau  
President of LONGITUDE 181 NATURE*



[www.longitude181.org](http://www.longitude181.org)  
email : [contact@longitude181.com](mailto:contact@longitude181.com)

February 2002

**Dear Diver,**

*You are going to visit beautiful coral reefs, rub shoulders with sharks, meet whales, and discover the Ocean universe.*

*To do this you are going to spend a few days in a country where fishermen, farmers and tradesmen live all year round.*

*Their traditions are different from yours.*

*The natural resources on which they survive are often in short supply.*

*Fresh water, in particular, is rare and priceless.*

*The life of the country is not just the hotel you are staying at, however pleasant. Why not use your spare time between dives to meet the locals and listen to their stories ?*

*You may be astonished by their cultural heritage and hospitality.*

*Your purchasing power is, very often, much higher than theirs.*

*Do not push them to damage the sea and, in the long run,*

*impoverish the fishermen by buying sad souvenirs like shark teeth, shells, corals and tortoiseshells. Firmly refuse shark fin and tortoise soups, scandalously raped from the sea.*

*These animals could disappear.*

*Under the water, you will be visiting a living, splendid but fragile world.*

*Collisions and shocks crush and kill the fixed animals which do such much to enchant the seascapes you came to admire.*

*All disturbances can frighten fish which protect their eggs, leaving their fry for the predators.*

*Please do not feed the fish as this disturbs the balance between species and changes their natural behavior.*

*You will expect to find all the treasures of the wild marine universe as wonderful in the future as during your visit today.*

*You would like to share these joys with your friends and your children, so be curious about everything but remain discrete and attentive and watch out for clumsiness !*

*Your behavior today will ensure that future generations of divers can enjoy this marvelous world and the thrills of meeting sharks and whales in an underwater adventure as colorful as yours.*



François Sarano  
President of Longitude 181 Nature



**When adventure calls !  
Become the diving ambassadors  
of the Third Millennium....**

## Guidelines for responsible divers

This charter proposes guidelines and not a list of restrictions!  
 Apply the suggestions case by case since diving spots  
 and situations change from place to place.  
 The basic idea is to get people to think about  
 how to optimize diving conditions  
 to protect and ensure fair sharing of the Oceans' treasures.

### 1 - Prepare your journey

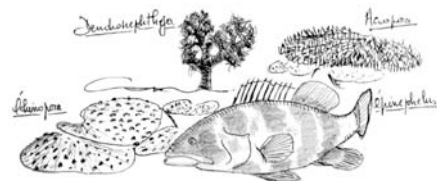
Not all travel agencies and diving centers offer the same services.

Some try to protect the environment they help you explore and share natural resources more fairly with host country inhabitants.

This may cost them money and make your trip more expensive but together you will contribute to the sustainable development of our planet.

The cost per dive should not be your only selection criterion.

- **Choose a travel agency which has agreed to respect ethical guidelines**
- **Prefer Responsible Diving Centers** which are concerned with the protection of sea-beds (treatment of solid and liquid wastes, use of mooring buoys etc.) and have invested in local development projects.
- **Find out about the marine ecosystems** you will be exploring.
- **Find out about the inhabitants** of the country you are visiting : their traditions, economy and resources.



### 2 - Before diving

- **Get fit**

If you have not dived for a long time, train yourself to manage your buoyancy: lung-ballast, weight jacket, optimized ballasting, etc.

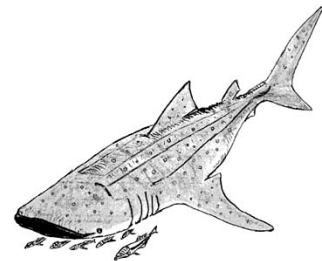
- **Find out about the dive spot** you are exploring before you go.  
 You will enjoy your dives so much more as you will not just be a passive witness in a world in which you cannot speak the language. Learn to read the first pages of the big marine life book. If you can identify the animals, and know how they behave, you will know where to find them. Much of this incredible fauna is hidden.
- **Ask your diving center to give you a presentation** of the local ecosystem
- **Ask for the list of threatened species**, the list of protected species and all relevant regulations.
- **Ask about what the diving center does to protect the sea** (mooring buoys, etc.)

### **3 - On the boat**

- **Never throw anything overboard.**
- **Refuse plastic plates and cups** which take scores of years to break down.
- **Ask for dustbins on the deck for** (if you absolutely need to smoke) cigarette butts (they take months to break down) plastic waste, aluminum foil, etc...
- **Take care to attach spare air valves,** consoles and pressure gauges firmly so they do not dangle and damage fixed flora and the fauna.
- **Use short, recreational, flippers.**

### **4 - When diving**

- **As soon as you enter the water, check your weights** and adjust if necessary.
- **Use you flippers gently,** so as not to collide with fixed marine life
- **Avoid contact with fixed plants and animals.** They are fragile and can be destroyed by repeated shocks.
- **Do not bring anything back** except pictures !
- **Do not bother the animals.** If they take refuge in their hiding-place, do not force them out - they are already stressed enough. Wait without moving until they calm down and come out again.
- **Do not feed the fish.** You change their behavior and unbalance the ecosystem.



### **5 - After diving**

- **Save fresh water.** It is the most valuable commodity on Earth.
- **Ask for equipment designed to conserve fresh water** like equipment wash tanks and controlled flow showers.

### **6 - During your holidays**

- **Try to get outside your diving center or hotel.** There is a world out there waiting to meet you !
- **Do not buy souvenirs ripped from the sea** like shark teeth, tortoiseshells, starfish, sea horses and other dried fish, coral and shells.
- **Boycott restaurants which serve shark fin soup,** tortoise meat, cetaceans and fish caught by destructive means like dynamite, cyanide, etc.
- **Ask restaurants how the sea fare they propose is fished** and what agreements they have with local fishermen.

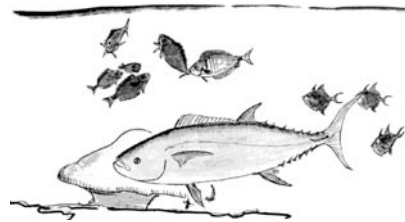
## Guidelines for diving centers

*This charter proposes guidelines : and not a list of restrictions !  
Apply the suggestions case by case since diving spots,  
situations change from place to place.  
The basic idea is to get people to think about  
how to optimize diving conditions  
to protect and ensure fair sharing of the Oceans' treasures.*

Diving centers are ideal places for visiting divers to meet the underwater world and learn the lore and language of the host country. Center managers are the ideal people to awake divers' curiosity and provide information about underwater treasures as well as the local cultural heritage.

### 1 - When divers arrive

- **Present the center in its context** : the country, the inhabitants, their traditions and the economy.
- **Present the underwater ecosystem.** In addition to the beauties and uniqueness of the diving spots, explain their fragility (protected, threatened and endemic species), the importance of the relationships between the species and the vulnerability of the smallest and mimetic species.
- **Detail the precautions to take when diving**, the legislation concerning protected species (detention and trade) and regulations inside reserves.
- **List the fish and seafood served in restaurants** and detail the species that can be eaten without endangering the ecosystem and those that should not be eaten to prevent their disappearance.



### 2 - Responsible diving instructors

- **Instructors have a marvelous responsibility.** Over and above teaching diving and safety, it is up to you to make divers curious and enthusiastic about respecting and protecting the natural habitat you are helping them to explore.
- **Take every opportunity to remind your visiting divers that the marine environment is fragile** and that is up to them to protect it.
- **You can also remind them that your center is located in a community** with which it shares the natural resources (fresh water, food, marine life...)
- **Never forget that you are the role model for your divers** and that they will always do as you do.

### 3 - Understanding diving spots and long-term management

- **Diving spot health inventory and follow-up.** To protect all the marine treasures in diving spots, the first step is to make an inventory of what exists. Team up with other centers working in the same spots to prepare this list or work with local environmental association or call in consultant biologists who will explain the essential factors to monitor. Regular audits will tell you what is happening and what needs to be done for long term protection. This inventory is a vivid source of information for visiting divers.
- **Mooring buoys should be installed in each diving spot** to prevent the destruction of fixed flora and fauna by random anchoring.
- **Limit the number of divers** to protect marine life from excessive disturbance.
- **Stop diving in over-visited spots** and spots sheltering fragile species during the seasons when they reproduce.
- **Promote the creation of protected areas** in agreement with local authorities. Use these areas as control zones to measure what is happening elsewhere. These protected area will replenish populations in damaged areas.

### 4 - Ecological diving centers

Your diving center exists to help others discover the beauties of nature. Protect nature with waste management systems and use renewable energies.

- **Waste recovery and treatment.** Limit the waste generated by the center (plastic plates, mugs, bottles, etc...). Collect and take spent batteries, used oils and toxic wastes to reprocessing or recycling plants.
- **Fresh water saving and recycling.** Washing diving gear in rinsing tanks, fitting controlled flow showers, building rainwater catchment systems and recycling of used sanitary water in toilets are all good ideas.
- **Renewable energies.** Wind and solar power are the best.

### 5 - Fair shares In an interdependent economy

- **Train and use local inhabitants** in the diving team.
- **Share fresh water fairly with local inhabitants**, particularly farmers, in countries where water is rare.
- **Select the fish served in restaurants.** Diving center managers, fishermen and local authorities should jointly decide on the authorized fishing quotas for the most fragile species (lobsters, groupers, etc.). Consumers are quite happy to eat less fragile species if they are told why. Center restaurants should never serve fish or seafood fished with destructive methods, gravid crustacean shellfish or undersized fish and fry.
- **Finance local development projects** using a percentage of your income from diving (a dollar or two). Projects can include schools, irrigation systems, water saving systems, solar energy and the organization of fishing to ensure sustained development.

