



AIDA 1 and AIDA 2

ONE OCEAN created by AIDA GREEN

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Please note, that when the word Ocean is used in this material, it includes the entire Earth's water systems such as seas, rivers and lakes

The ocean covers 71% of the earth's surface, 97% of the Earth water and it is the home of millions of unique marine plants and animals.

The ocean is a crucial part of the world's ecosystem, producing around 70% of the oxygen we breathe, absorbing one third of global CO₂ emissions and regulating the Earth's climate.

Oceans are affected heavily by human activities, pollution, overfishing and plastic.

As a freediver you are one of the first to witness the consequences of environmental changes that happen in the ocean. The ocean enables us to do what we love, the ocean is our arena. Even though freediving is a gentle way to approach the underwater environment we still have an impact to take responsibility for. Let's do our best to limit this impact, to protect the ocean and the waters we dive in.

With this chapter AIDA Green wishes to encourage all freedivers to be ambassadors of the ocean.

The information you are about to receive is not only limited to the classroom, we are asking you to implement an environmentally focused code of conduct into your diving and training and to adopt the core principles of this code in your everyday life. We all have a responsibility for the ocean's health so let's work together to preserve it.



DAILY ACTIONS

AIDA Green encourages all of its members to be environmentally responsible. AIDA Green advises you to implement the following recommendations in your day to day life.

- Say no to plastic in your everyday life, as much as you can. - Reduce, reuse, recycle and refuse. Refuse single use plastic such as cups, plates, cutleries, bags, straws, bottles etc. Reduce the purchase of any item containing plastic.
- Buy a refillable water bottle/ container and carry it always with you, so you will not need to buy bottled water when you are thirsty.
- Reduce your use of fresh water as it is a valuable resource: take a shower instead of a bath and after diving rinse your gear while you shower.
- Avoid buying unnecessary products. Avoid consumerism. When you buy freediving equipment choose environmentally friendly products whenever possible and encourage your favourite brands to find a sustainable alternative.
- Be a considered traveller: Travel as sustainably as possible, use the most environmentally friendly way of traveling whenever possible. When flying, look into flying in a way that is more environmentally responsible. Carbon offsetting reduces your impact, this way you pay for trees to be planted, which will help absorbing a small part of the carbon emitted by your flight. Research carbon offsetting when you book your next flight.
- Also remember to acknowledge the values of diving locally rather than flying far away, saving CO2 emissions.
- Buy local, eat local. Cut down your consumption of fish, meat, dairy and further animal products, chose plant-based alternatives. Globally animal agriculture and animal-based food production are one of the largest sources of carbon dioxide (CO2) and further greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous dioxide (<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/197623/icode/>). Animal agriculture is also one of the major causes of deforestation, soil degradation, water pollution and extinction of many wild species of animals and plants. On the other hand the fishing industry is the major responsible of depletion of ocean fish stocks and consequent disruption of most marine ecosystems.



PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- When you decide on a dive site have a look for its rules and regulations. Be aware of protected areas. Consider your means of transportation (you can always share a vehicle with your friends or choose accommodation that is as close as possible to the dive site). Be considerate about access to the water. Be sure not to damage any plants or marine life.
- Set limits on the number of divers. Poor planning and preparation can lead to decisions that compromise the safety of divers and the environment.
- Avoid the use of soap when putting on your suit; if you can, put your suit in the water. If this is not possible try to find a brand of soap that is biodegradable.
- Avoid the use of any chemical sunscreens in the ocean as they severely harm corals and other marine organisms. Please read the ingredients of the sunscreens before buying them. The only ingredients which are safe for the ocean and for all forms of marine life are the non-nano zinc oxide, the titanium dioxide and the natural plant based oils, such as carrot seed oil, sesame seed oil etc. All other ingredients as well as sun tanning products have a severe impact on marine life, corals in particular. Another convenient alternative to sunscreens are protective clothing such as rash guards or lycra t-shirts.



MAINTAIN PASSIVE INTERACTION

As we are visitors in the underwater environment, we have a responsibility to ensure that our actions do not damage or disturb it.

- Do not chase animals, let them come to you or follow from a distance that does not affect their natural behaviour.

- Do not feed marine animals, including fishes. Feeding animals induce drastic changes in their natural behaviour and it disrupt the food web of the ecosystem where the animal live, jeopardizing its delicate balance. On top of that, most marine animals do not possess the enzymes required to digest the food that humans offer them, such as bread, causing severe inflammation in their digestive system that can lead them to die.
- Avoid touching animals, including fishes, corals or turtles. Most marine animals produce a protective layer of mucus as a defencing system against parasites, bacteria, fungus etc. By touching them, you will inevitably remove such protective coat, exposing them to potentially lethal diseases. Most animals also trigger a defensive reaction to an unwanted contact, which can put either themselves or yourself in danger. Touching corals or walking over them will result in the sudden death of hundreds of polyps, which are the colonial organisms that build the corals, causing the decay of the whole colony.
- Avoid supporting companies/tour operators that chase animals just to get them close to you. It is more important to protect the animal and its environment than it is to get a photo. The better the diver you become, the longer the time you will have to respectfully discover life in the ocean.
- Do not stir sediments with your hands or fins as stirring the sand can damage corals, reefs and seagrass by hiding them from the life giving sun. Small creatures are displace and killed by stepping on them or by moving of sand.
- If fishing/spearfishing, avoid catching endangered species. Respect the minimum size and quantity allowed. Catch only what you need. Make sure you know the local or global regulations for species, size and season. Avoid hunting for trophy pictures. Remember, the ocean is already overfished.

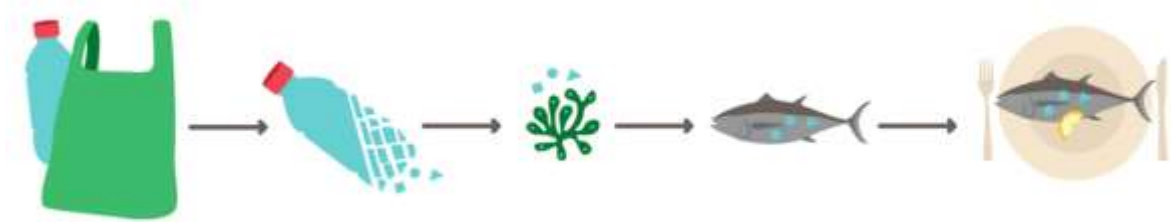


TAKE NOTHING

Anything found naturally underwater such as shells, corals or fishes, have a significant role in preserving the ecosystem and they should be left where they are.

- Refrain from taking souvenirs such as empty shells, as they are either reused by marine animals like hermit crabs, or recycled in many different ways to preserve and nourish of the reef/ecosystem.. It is also wise to remember that some fishes and shells contain toxins.
- Do not buy souvenirs that originate from the sea, such as shells, corals, sea stars, shark teeth and turtle shells.

- Boycott restaurants that serve shark fin soup, turtle, cetacean or endangered species of fishes. Do not be afraid to ask how the fish has been caught. Avoid fish caught by cyanide fishing, dynamite fishing, long lines, tuna ships and trawlers.



LEAVE NOTHING

- Leave every place you visit as beautiful or even more beautiful than when you found it. Never leave anything in the water that was not originally there, as it will compromise the the ecosystem.
- Bring your trash back with you, look behind you when you leave and see if anything has been left behind.
- Make every dive a clean-up dive. As long as it does not compromise safety, collect all unnatural materials like rubbish and plastic from the ocean. Be a good example for others to follow.
- You always have the option to organise your own beach clean-up. Take a mesh-bag with you while diving or carry a float with enough space inside. Remember to use protective gloves, as the garbage collected may contain toxins and bacteria.



BE MINDFUL TO THE COMMUNITY

- Choose eco-tourism dive sites, as they are conceived to provide a sustainable livelihood for local communities. Make sure that rules are followed and the fees are paid: these costs often contribute to the improvements of the local environment.
- Be an example of how to behave respectfully towards the environment. Inspire other people to do the same.

- Report any pollution/dumping of waste to the appointed authorities.
- Join local activities that are pro-marine conservation - or collaborate in organising it, such as beach clean ups, underwater clean ups, workshops, etc.
- Save freshwater, water is valuable: rinse your gear as you shower, use a shower instead of a bathtub.



SAY THANK YOU TO THE OCEAN

With every breath you take you are connected to the ocean. The oxygen that we breathe, and that sustain the whole planet life is produced mostly by the ocean. There is only one ocean, everything you do will affect someone, something or somewhere else. Be considerate and remember this at all times.

You are an ambassador of the ocean.

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