



AquaMarine Diving - Bali

Mola-Mola Code of Conduct

These guidelines are designed to provide a satisfying and safe diving experience while ensuring the lowest sustainable impact on the Ocean sunfish population of Bali.

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure Mola-Mola can settle onto cleaning stations without being disturbed. The removal of parasites at the cleaning stations is critical to the health of the Mola-Molas. Once settled, they can remain for longer periods, offering better quality interactions for divers.

In the recent past aggressive divers routinely disturbed Ocean sunfish on their cleaning stations. This greatly decreased the time they spent near shore and greatly limited the number of sightings. Records collected since the early '90s show in earlier years "Bali sunfish" were seen in much higher numbers. More importantly, the fish were more stationary and seemingly at ease at cleaning stations - the Ocean sunfish did not show any reaction to divers and remained in position for long periods. This allowed divers to enjoy the Mola-Molas' **natural behaviour** and longer encounters with this mysterious giant fish.

These encounters gave Bali its reputation as a world-class area for diving with Ocean sunfish *Mola-Mola*.

By voluntarily adopting these guidelines, it is hoped divers can lessen the pressure on Ocean sunfish and allow these fish to resume their natural cleaning station behaviour and previous high numbers. The quality of interaction, diver safety and the value and sustainability of this unique diver experience can also be maintained and ideally improved as the Mola-Molas will be less likely to be frightened away.

CODE OF CONDUCT - DIVING WITH OCEAN SUNFISH

- ✎ Always approach an Ocean sunfish **very slowly** within its field of view.
- ✎ If the fish are just entering the cleaning station, do not approach until the cleaning has begun and the fish have been stationary for at least 1 minute.
- ✎ Maintain a minimum of 3m from the closest Ocean sunfish when the animal is at a cleaning station.
- ✎ Maintain a minimum of 10m when the animal is not yet cleaning and is approaching the reef.
- ✎ **DO NOT TOUCH.** You'll remove mucus protecting it from infection.
- ✎ Do not swim behind an Ocean sunfish as this can startle the animal.
- ✎ Do not swim under the fish as your bubbles will disturb cleaning behaviour.
- ✎ Do not block an Ocean sunfish's escape route off the reef or pathway onto a cleaning station.
- ✎ If a Mola-Mola approaches, remain still.
- ✎ Do not use flash photography as this often disturbs the fish.
- ✎ Do not use personal underwater motorized propulsion vehicles or make unnecessary loud noises.
- ✎ Be courteous to other divers and restrict your viewing time to 5mins when other groups are present.
- ✎ Always, always follow the directions of your dive guide.
- ✎ As always, AMD-B will restrict group sizes to max 4divers and 1guide; for more than one group, entries will be staggered to avoid overcrowding the site.

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