



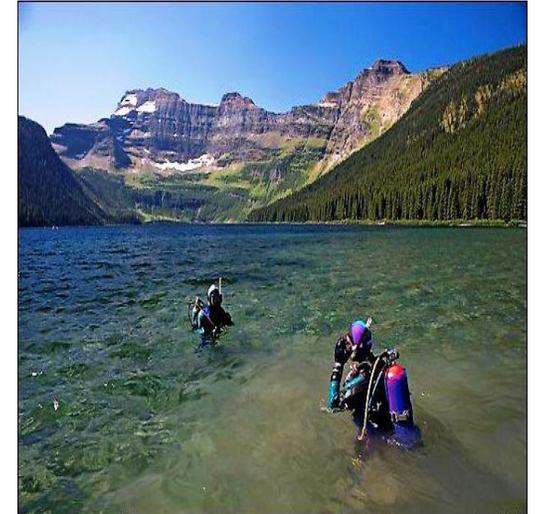
Why not dive over reefs when learning?

While divers hopefully never have intention to do harm to the environments they visit, they indeed cause immense damage to ecosystems.

“Damage associated with intensive recreational tourist use has been documented extensively on coral reefs”

- Lamb et al, 2014

Why would divers, who tend to be more interested in marine ecology and conservation, be the issue in reef health? The issue comes from experience.



**LEARN TO
DIVE CLOSE
TO HOME**

Give reefs a rest!

It's simple! Learn here, dive there!

"Diver-induced damage decreases with increasing number of logged dives"

- Jameson et al, 1999

It's true, divers with less experience do more damage to reefs. This is mainly due to an unfamiliarity with their equipment. If scuba equipment isn't carefully organized around the diver to stay tight to their body, it is easy to catch it on something on the reef. Not only can the equipment be damaging, but so can the diver themselves. If divers aren't used to controlling themselves underwater, they also could easily damage the ecosystem.



Source: earthzine.org



There is more equipment involved in diving than you'd originally think!
Source: Theguamguide.com

If divers learned to control both themselves and their equipment before visiting reefs, there would be less chance of causing damage to this fragile ecosystem. Learning simple skills, such as controlling one's buoyancy while underwater, as well as proper gear management would help immensely in curbing inexperienced divers damaging the reefs they visit. These are things better suited to a pool environment, where there is nothing fragile to damage.



Downtown Aquarium, Denver, CO

How do I get the experience I need?

There are many opportunities for gaining experience diving beforehand. On one extreme, you can get your full open water certification without traveling out of the state! Taking pool classes and completing your 4 open water test dives at the Denver Aquarium and Chatfield Reservoir will gain you more than enough experience to give you an edge in protecting reefs.

If this whole certification seems expensive (it is!), consider a more reduced program. There are many Try Scuba programs that allow you to get a taste of the scuba world for a much-reduced cost. While the instruction is greatly reduced, gaining the feeling of being underwater with all your equipment on is incredibly worthwhile.

