

# Fifty Shades of Green: Small Steps Towards Sustainability of Tourism Sites for Small Operators

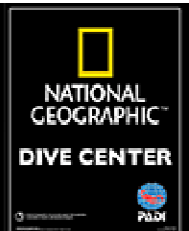
A Presentation by Russell Hosp  
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- Background
- Company History
- Locations
- Philosophy
- Sustainability Initiatives
- Reaction Management
- Questions



## Background: Great Barrier Reef

- 2,600 KM long, from southern tip of Papua New Guinea to Lady Elliot Island, near Bundaberg
- Composed of 2,900 individual reefs, 900 islands, and 300 sand cays
- Declared Marine Park in 1975, UNESCO World Heritage in 1981



## Background: Cairns Tourism Industry



- Population of Cairns: Approximately 151,000
- Approximately 2.5 million visitors each year to Cairns
- Tourism in Far North Queensland: \$2.2 billion/year
- 20% of population employed in Tourism
- Approximately 650,000 visitors to Great Barrier Reef each year



## Company History



- Started in 1987 by Alan Wallish and Steven Carter
- May 1989: First passengers traveled from Cairns to Cape Tribulation
- Boat had no roof, second hand truck engines, a sail paid for by a night club, and only 10 sets of snorkeling gear to be shared between 40 passengers.





## Company History



- 1997: Original boat cut in half and 4 meters added to the centre
- Increased the boat length from 14 to 18 meters and passenger capacity from 45 to 70.
- Itinerary now Upolu Cay and Paradise Reef [Breaking Patches]



## Company History

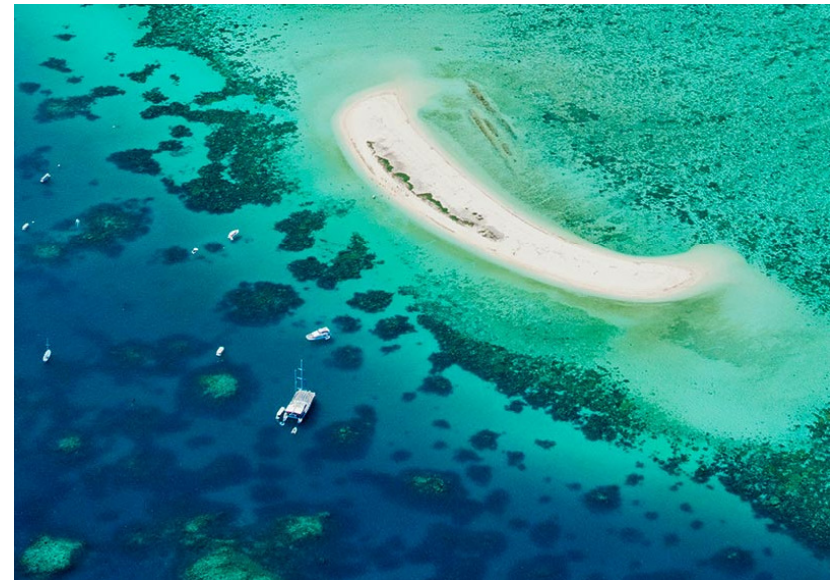


- 2001-Present: Custom 25 meter, 80 passenger, \$2 million fiberglass sailing catamaran
- Current itinerary: Michaelmas Cay and Paradise Reef
- Currently take 25,000 visitors to the reef each year



## Locations-Michaelmas Cay

- Michaelmas Cay: Located on Michaelmas Reef, 33km east of Cairns
- Previously used as target practice for Australian Navy and sea cucumber harvesting





## Locations-Michaelmas Cay



- Main breeding species:
  - Common noddies,
  - sooty terns
  - crested terns
  - lesser crested terns

Migrating species include: *little terns, brown boobies, lesser frigate birds, ruddy turnstones, silver gulls, bridled terns, black-naped terns, reef herons, & roseate terns*



## Locations-Michaelmas Cay

- Also occasional nesting ground for green turtles
- Large populations of giant clams



## Locations-Paradise Reef

- One nautical mile north-northeast of Michaelmas Cay
- Shallow patch reef, our company has exclusive mooring
- Large schools of small fish





## Philosophy

*“At Passions, the day starts and ends with our trip. We have always been, and remain, a small dedicated operator focused on providing passengers with exceptional customer service and a fun day.”*

-Owner & Managing Director  
Alan Wallish



## Philosophy

*“Being a small operator allows us a lot of flexibility to look after our sites—to make things happen. We are the stewards of our locations, and we need to be proactive about protecting them. It’s about sustainability.”*

-Owner & C.E.O.  
Scott Garden





## Sustainability Initiatives

The boat:

- Designed to be comfortable, attractive, easy to maintain & clean
- Fiberglass composite hulls and superstructure, with balsa wood carpentry
  - total weight 32.6 tonnes



## Sustainability Initiatives

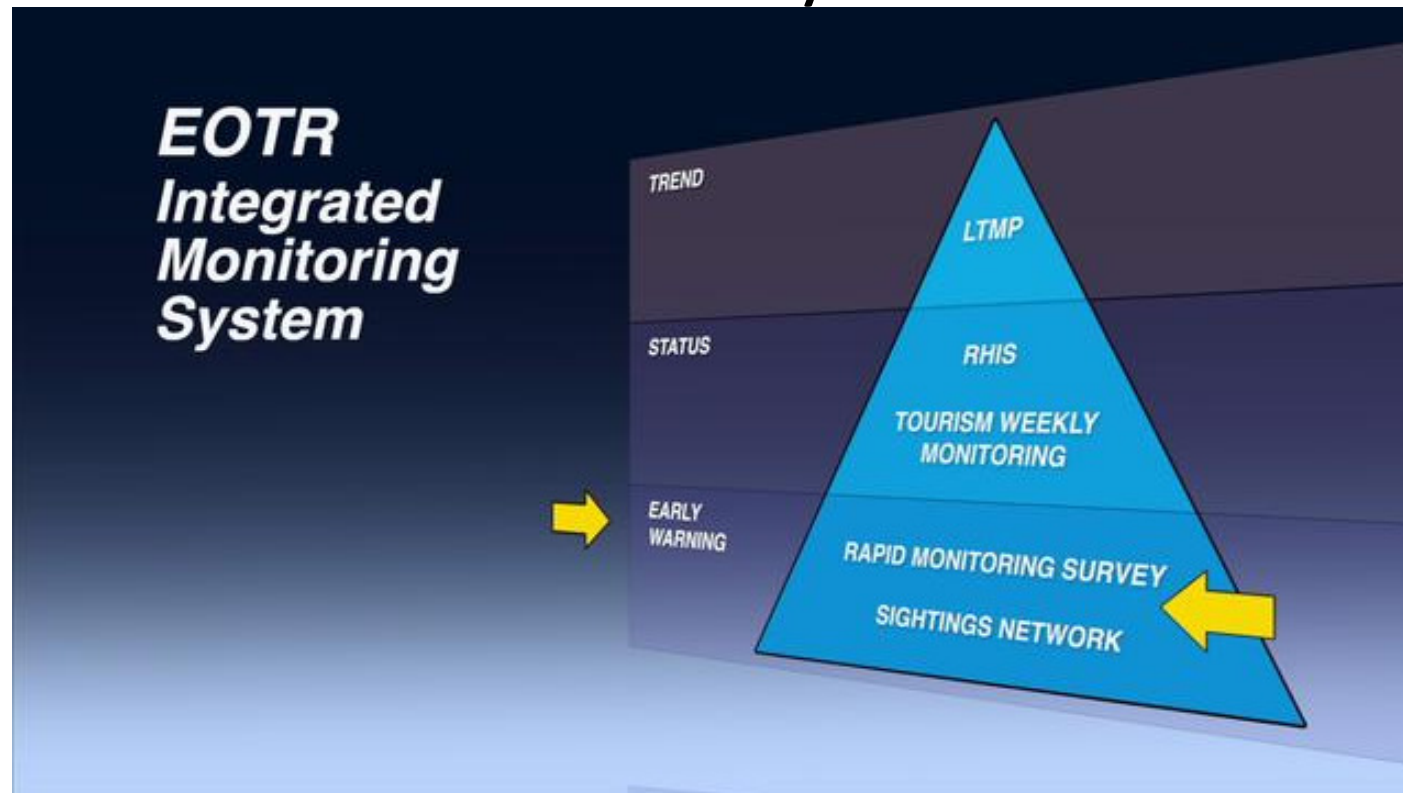
### Eye on the Reef

Started in the mid-1990s, Eye on the Reef is a partnership program between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the Great Barrier Reef tourism industry and the reef research community.

The Eye on the Reef program started with a very specific goal in mind: to document observations made by marine tourism staff who work on the reef every day.

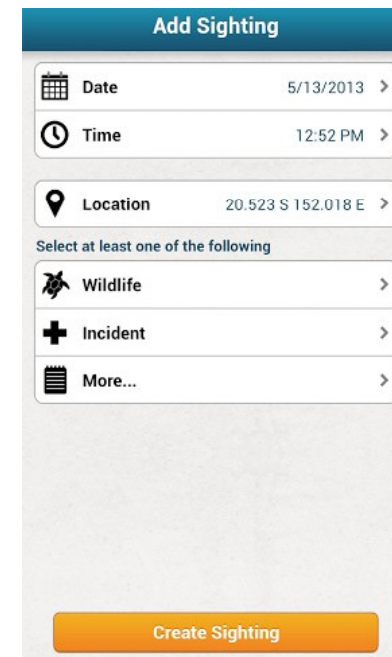
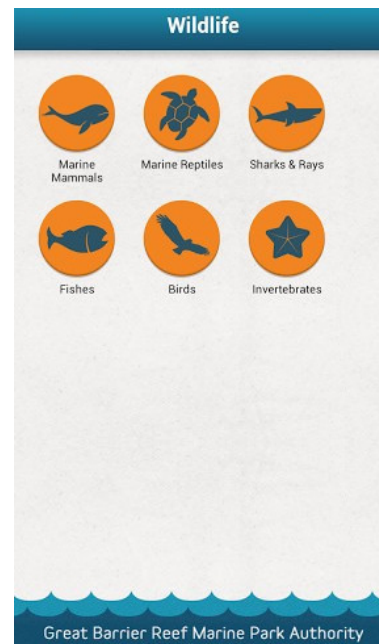
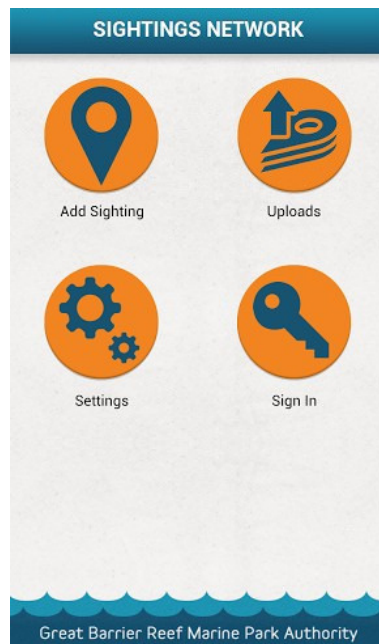


## Sustainability Initiatives



# Sustainability Initiatives

## Eye on the Reef-Sightings Network





# Sustainability Initiatives

## Eye on the Reef

What gets monitored weekly?

- Water quality
- Reef health indicators
- Crown-of-thorns starfish predators
- Iconic, Indicator, and Protected species
- Spawning and Mating activity (species, time, estimate numbers, comments on behaviour).

 *Eye on the Reef...* 

**Weekly Log sheet**

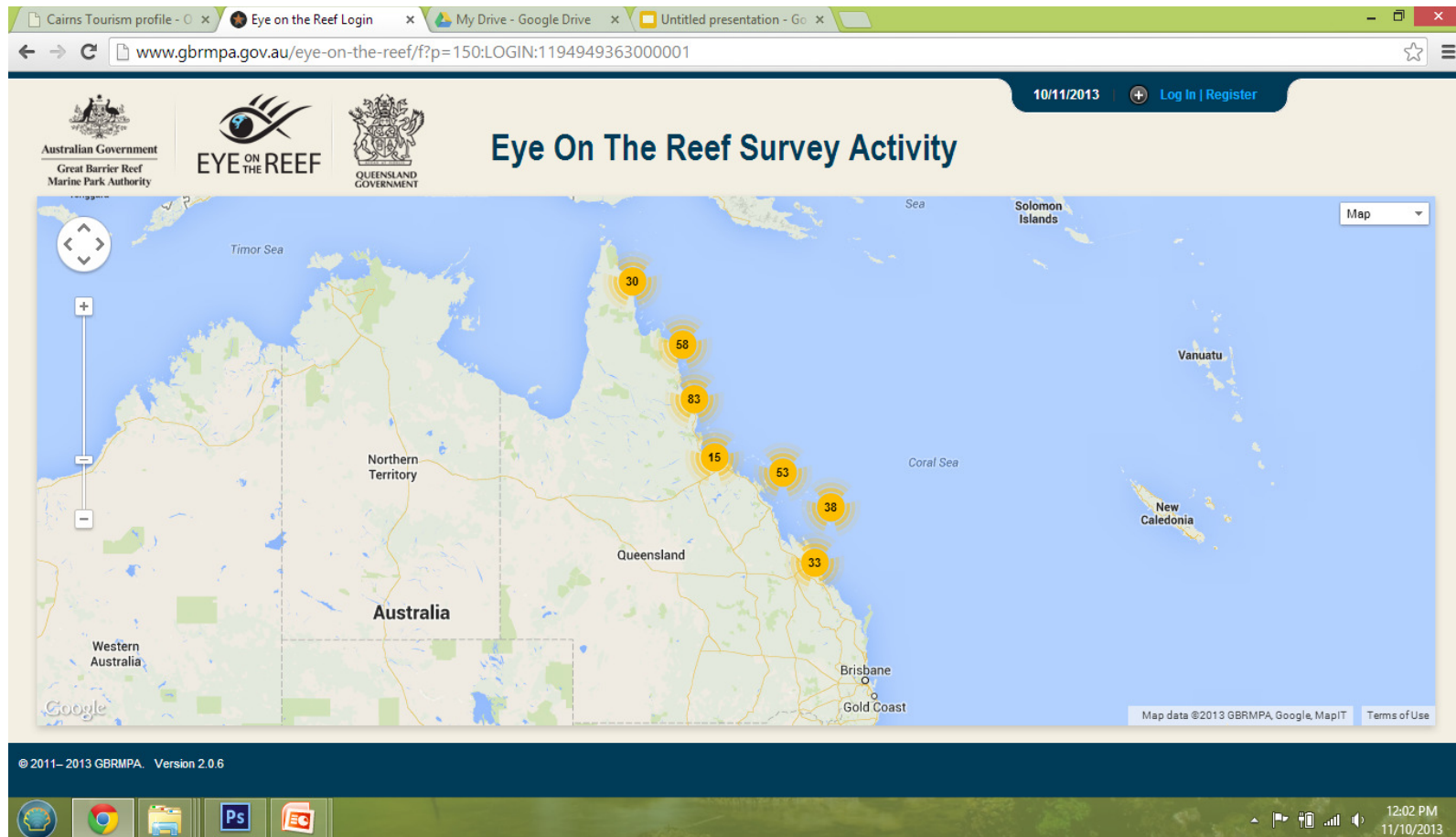
Reef Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Operator: \_\_\_\_\_ Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Report Dates (Mon. - Sun. - dd/mm/yy): \_\_\_\_\_ Main method used (Please tick): ☐ Snorkel ☐ Dive  
 Day's at site (please tick): ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

**REEF HEALTH INDICATORS** ONLY COMPLETE ONCE A WEEK

<input type="checkbox"/> Coral Bleaching	Coral type	Branching	Massive	Mushroom	Plate	Encrusting	Vase	Soft
	Amount Affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = < 5 colonies	2 = 6 - 20 colonies	3 = > 21 colonies			
<small>Please complete a BleachWatch form, visit <a href="http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au">www.gbrmpa.gov.au</a>, or call (07) 4750 0700</small>								
<input type="checkbox"/> COT Starfish Scars	Coral type	Branching	Massive	Mushroom	Plate	Encrusting	Vase	
	Amount Affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = < 5 colonies	2 = 6 - 20 colonies	3 = > 21 colonies			
	Number of COTS Seen:	<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile (size of hand) <input type="checkbox"/> Adult (larger than size of hand)						
	Size Number Seen?	<input type="checkbox"/> If you have questions about COTS report: <a href="mailto: sightings@gbrmpa.gov.au">sightings@gbrmpa.gov.au</a>						
<input type="checkbox"/> White Syndrome	Coral type	Branching	Massive	Mushroom	Plate	Encrusting	Vase	
	Amount Affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = < 5 colonies	2 = 6 - 20 colonies	3 = > 21 colonies			
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Band Disease	Coral type	Branching	Massive	Mushroom	Plate	Encrusting	Vase	
	Amount Affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = < 5 colonies	2 = 6 - 20 colonies	3 = > 21 colonies			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dropshell Scars	Coral type	Branching	Massive	Mushroom	Plate	Encrusting	Vase	
	Amount Affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = < 5 colonies	2 = 6 - 20 colonies	3 = > 21 colonies			
	Number of Dropshell Scars seen:	<input type="checkbox"/> If you have questions about Dropshell report: <a href="mailto:sightings@gbrmpa.gov.au">sightings@gbrmpa.gov.au</a>						
<input type="checkbox"/> Grazing Herbivores	Average size	Size of hand or smaller	Size of fingertip to elbow	Bigger				
	Total Number of fish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = 5-10	2 = 11-20	3 = 21-40	4 = > 41		
<input type="checkbox"/> Macro Algae	Algae type	Slime	Turfing	Leafy/fleshy	Mat like	Tree/bush like	(see 6 line)	
	Height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = 0-1cm	2 = 1-3cm	3 = 4-10cm	4 = 10-20cm	5 = > 20cm	
	Amount?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Insert Code Above:	N = none	B = 5-10 Patches	L = Large Patches	E = Encrusting			
<input type="checkbox"/> Recard Coral Breakage	Coral type	Branching	Massive	Mushroom	Plate	Encrusting	Vase	Soft
	Amount Affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Insert Code Above:	0 = none	1 = < 5 colonies	2 = 6 - 20 colonies	3 = > 21 colonies			
	Suspected Cause?	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary						
	Insert Code Above:	N = none	A = Anchor	D = Diver	S = Snorkellers	W = Washed Shore	V = Vessel	C = Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Clam Bleaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially bleached	number of clams partially bleached						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Totally bleached	number of clams totally bleached						







# Sustainability Initiatives

## Crown of Thorns Starfish Removal



## Sustainability Initiatives

The boat:

- Sails every day

  - max speed: 16 knots

  - save ~40 litres of fuel

  - per engine while sailing

While generator runs  
refrigeration, lights &  
instruments run on battery.



## Sustainability Initiatives

The boat:

- Hull is scrubbed bi-weekly—  
no anti-foul



## Sustainability Initiatives



Operation:

-Recycling:

- Boat recycles Cardboard, aluminium, glass, plastic bottles
- Food service containers reused as storage for dive gear & maintenance equipment
- This despite marina removing recycling receptacles





## Sustainability Initiatives



### Carbon Offset

- 2012 Full analysis of carbon footprint was undertaken. Records on fuel use, transport and operations were taken into account
- Results were calculated based on monthly averages.



## Sustainability Initiatives



### Carbon Offset

- Plan is in progress to offset remaining carbon footprint through tree planting in Daintree Rainforest
- Passengers invited to donate \$3 towards offset-to date raised \$800 towards sustainability of offset
- Plan started in 2012, set to be fully implemented 2014



# Reaction Management

## Passenger Interpretation

- Educating passengers is the key to helping our guests fully appreciate the natural-based experience of the GBR
- Our philosophy relies on the principle of reaction management.
- We use this philosophy in relation to the themes 'Natural Advantage' and 'Great Expectations'





## Reaction Management

### Reaction Management Principles:

- Everything we do is part of a process, never a result
- Every business process, step, or communication must create a positive customer reaction every time
- That reaction ***IS*** the product



## Reaction Management

Briefings throughout the day shape how we want our passengers to think about the reef.

We not only explain 'What they will see' but 'what it means.'

Combined with interactions throughout the day, we provide passengers with an authentic, personalised experience.





## Reaction Management

Quite often, a passenger will experience their first scuba dive, snorkel, trip to the ocean, or even first swim outside a pool

Our staff are key to introducing and fueling the concept of 'eco-tourism' and 'geo-tourism' on the Great Barrier Reef

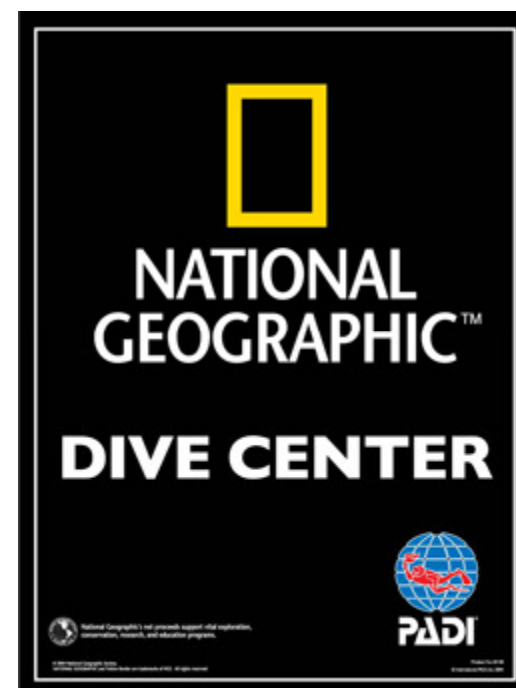


## Geotourism

These principles helped us earn the distinction as a 'National Geographic Dive Centre,' and proudly showcases our role in introducing clients to 'Eco-Tourism' and 'Geotourism'

The PADI National Geographic Dive Center Award is granted on an annual basis to progressive PADI Five Star Dive Centers that promote the benefits of environmental awareness and responsibility.

The National Geographic Society has also drawn up 13 principles in its 'Geotourism Charter' which we strive to uphold as they reflect our company's values.



Read the full charter at [http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/pdf/geotourism\\_charter\\_template.pdf](http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/pdf/geotourism_charter_template.pdf)



## Conclusion

Simply put, ***we are constantly telling our story.***



Questions?

