

Where's Wally



Comments from Dr Roger Grace:

Well, its got to be better than sticking a spear through it! Most people don't complain at fishermen for tormenting and killing fish, or spears for whacking spears through them. But now you cannot feed fish, or touch them if they come right up to you, without getting ridiculed. There should be somewhere between total no-touch and slaughter, but there seems to be no middle ground.

In marine reserves in New Zealand it is definitely 'not on' to feed the fish, and rightly so, yet just outside the reserve you can burley them up and murder them. There should be some non-marine reserve dive sites and some jetties where you can feed the fish for the spectacle it creates. You would have to ban fishing, but it would not be a marine reserve either. There are examples eg Lord Howe Island, Eupi Island, and historically a bay in Picton, where regular fish feeding was a tourist spectacle. Sure it buggers up their normal patterns and they become dependent on the regular feed, (compare feeding ducks in the domain or sparrows on the lawn), but it is still better than killing them and it provides a thrilling experience for the punters.

- Roger Grace.



Have you an opinion?
Let's hear it ...

Remember Waldo (Wally)? You spot him hidden in sketches amongst hundreds of people. The tropics have Wallys in the form of Maori or Napoleon Wrasse found less discreetly mingling amongst hundreds of divers/snorkellers. There are 100s of these Wallys displaying similar behaviour but always hungry and so sociable you can't help but give them a hug or tickle under the chin.

Bothersome to some who 'bash a pulpit' that no contact should be made (and don't feed them!) it's shouted down by the sheer exhilaration of those in the

water with these gentle giants. The thrill of a child's face or a grandma visiting the Great Barrier Reef to be snuggled up to by a beautiful big fish. When working in the Maldives there was a weekly BBQ with the main trophy being one of these beautiful creatures. It was a heartbreaker that our dive operation put a stop to.

Feeding and touching these animals may not arguably be best, but killing them is a truly awful waste of life and denies the pleasure both animal and humans get from this intimate contact. Hug a Wally!
- Keith Cardwell

Southern right whale and calf visiting New Zealand's Northland

Considered the 'right' whale to hunt; slow swimming, lots of blubber and floated when killed and hunted to the brink of extinction they have not recovered in New Zealand waters. Estimates from 2003 research put the total mainland NZ population at 23, 14 of those thought to be breeding females. Even with full protection the whales are loved to distraction - with the calf showing evidence of having been hit by a boat. You should never approach closer than 200m and when within 300m never cut in front of any whales or dolphins; nor drive your boat faster than 5 knots (or no-wake speed). - Ingrid Visser (PhD)



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