Pacific Whale Foundation Research Team's

CAMERA SETTINGS GUIDE

Basic Camera Settings for Optimal Humpback Whale Photo-Identification

Before heading out on the water, charge your camera batteries and insert a memory card into your camera.

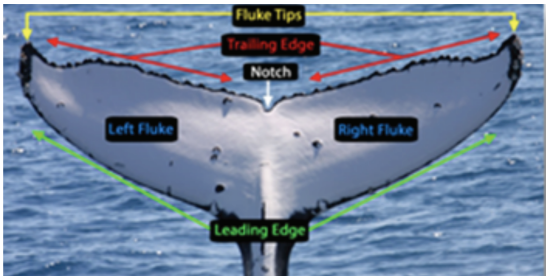
Set your camera to the correct date and local standard time, especially while traveling.

If your camera has GPS capabilities, turn those settings on.

On point-and-shoot Cameras set your camera to Sport Mode.

Tips from the Research Team

Line yourself up directly behind the whale to capture images of the underside of the fluke when the trailing edge is perpendicular to the water.



Zoom in around the whale's fluke as much as possible when taking your photograph.

Photograph any injuries, scars, or other unique identifying features that can help our researchers assess the health of individual animals.

Note the date, time, and general location of your sighting after collecting photo identification images.

	Sunny DSLR Camera Settings	Overcast DSLR Camera Settings
Shooting Mode	Shutter Priority "Tv" on Canon or "S" on Nikon and Sony	Shutter Priority "Tv" on Canon or "S" on Nikon and Sony
Shutter Speed	1/2500-1/3200	1/1250 – 1/2500
White Balance	Auto	Cloudy
Aperture	F/8 – F/3.5	F/8 minimum
Autofocus	Canon: AI Servo Nikon: AF-C	Canon: AI Servo Nikon: AF-C
Drive Mode/ Shooting Speed	High Speed Continuous or Low speed Continuous	High Speed Continuous or Low Speed Continuous
ISO	Auto	Auto

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Basic Camera Terminology

Shutter Speed
Refers to the amount of time a camera's shutter is open when taking a photograph. A very fast shutter speed is used to capture sharp images of subjects that are moving quickly. If photos are blurry, adjust the shutter speed to a faster setting. In low-light conditions, like dawn or dusk, a lower shutter speed is needed to allow more time for your camera to capture light.

White Balance
This setting corrects for colors in various types of lighting. The "Auto" setting allows your camera to automatically process the image and remove unwanted color casts. On overcast days, set your camera's white balance to "Cloudy" to add extra warmth to your photos.

Aperture
This setting adjusts the opening in a lens through which light passes to enter the camera. Aperture settings are displayed as fractions. The lower the f-number, the more light will come through the lens (smaller number = larger hole). The higher the f-number, the less light will come through the lens (larger number = smaller hole).

Autofocus
This setting adjusts the part of your photo that will be sharp and well defined. When your autofocus is set to AI Servo on Canons and AF-C for Nikon and Sony, the camera will focus on a moving object continuously and never lock. It tracks your subject and refocuses accordingly.

Drive Mode
This setting refers to the shooting speed of your camera. A High Speed Continuous mode allows you to take as many shots as quickly as possible as long as your finger is pressed down on the shutter release button. This is an ideal setting when the subject of your picture is moving quickly. A Low Speed Continuous mode captures frames at a slower rate and has more time to refocus the lens in between images in a sequence.

ISO
ISO is another camera setting that adjusts the lighting in photographs. An increase in the ISO number will make photographs progressively brighter. An Auto ISO setting allows the camera to change the exposure based on the changing light conditions. Other ways to control the lighting in your photos is by adjusting the shutter speed and aperture settings.

For more information on Pacific Whale Foundation's Photo Donation Program, visit our website at Pacificwhale.org/donatephotos