

As a seasoned underwater photographer with over a decade of experience—from small day boats to week-long liveaboards—I’ve come to appreciate the absolute necessity of accurate, timely dive log notes. Amid the excitement of a dive, it’s easy to overlook vital environmental and gear-related details that can greatly impact both your photography quality and camera housing longevity.



Over the years, I’ve learned that diving is as much about capturing those perfect images as it is about protecting your underwater camera housing, maintaining equipment integrity, and ensuring reliable backups of your media. Forgetting to jot down the [divephotoguide](#) right information immediately can cost you time, money, and peace of mind.

Why Immediate Logging Is Crucial

After a dive, the adrenaline is high, the excitement to review shots intense, and social interactions flowing. But these are precisely the moments when skipping detail logging leads to mistakes that haunt your future dives and post-processing.

Whether it's **visibility and current**, **water temperature**, or **max depth and bottom time**, failing to capture these details immediately means you'll be relying on fuzzy memories later. Worse still, neglecting gear maintenance protocols—like rinsing your underwater camera housing carefully—can result in corrosion or worst, flooding.

Key Dive Log Details I Never Forget to Record

The dive log is your historical record but also a planning tool for future outings and a troubleshooting resource when something goes wrong. These are the details I always write down without fail, ideally while on the boat or immediately after surfacing:

- **Visibility & Current:** How clear was the water? Was there surface or underwater current affecting composition or ease?
- **Water Temperature:** Vital for adjusting camera settings, assessing suit choice, and anticipating environmental corrosiveness.
- **Max Depth & Time:** Critical for dive computer checks, nitrogen loading awareness, and understanding lighting conditions at depth.
- **Gear Behavior Observed:** Any button stiffness, dial issues, hinge resistance, or electrical connection charging anomalies.
- **Any Maintenance Done Post-Dive:** Especially saltwater removal procedures from housing external parts and electronics.

Saltwater Removal from Your Underwater Camera Housing

Saltwater is the enemy of your underwater housing's seals and mechanical parts. Before opening your housing, it's essential to rinse off all salt residues meticulously.

The Right Way to Rinse

1. **Use fresh water rinse tanks:** Use dedicated tanks—never just a bucket or the ocean—to avoid cross contamination.
2. **Avoid letting housings bang together:** I get seriously annoyed when I see housings left to clank in shared rinse tanks; always ensure they have their own space or partitions.
3. **Focus on buttons, dials, and hinges:** These are often neglected areas where salt crystals hide and cause corrosion or stiffness.
4. **Use a handheld tiny flashlight:** Inspect all o-rings and electrical connections for trapped salt or debris.

Why You Must Wait Before Opening

Opening a housing without complete saltwater removal invites moisture and corrosion inside, especially around delicate electrical connections. Always rinse, soak if needed, and dry before cracking it open.

Safe Handling in Shared Rinse Tanks

Sharing rinse tanks on boats or liveboards is common, but proper housing handling can prevent damage:

- Never let housings bang or rub against each other.
- Use labeled masking tape on your housing to identify your setup quickly and avoid mix-ups.
- Ensure housings are properly seated or suspended so buttons and ports don't scrape the tank bottom or walls.

Being diligent here avoids scratched lenses, chipped buttons, or stressed hinges, which can lead to leaks.

Dry Workspace Habits to Avoid Corrosion

You'd think after rinsing in freshwater tanks, your housing is safe. But improper drying can bring on corrosion faster than you imagine.

My Dry Workspace Setup

- **Use anti-static microfiber cloths:** Pat dry external parts without introducing fibers or abrasives.
- **Keep a clean, dry workspace:** Avoid salty towels, wet surfaces, or humid locations when disassembling housing.
- **Label chargers and cables with masking tape:** Helps avoid mix-ups in a busy boat environment.
- **Use a tiny flashlight again:** Inspect all buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connectors for any trapped moisture before closing.
- **Apply recommended grease sparingly:** Contrary to common misconception, grease itself doesn't create the seal; proper o-ring inspection and positioning do.

Backup Strategy: Two-Device Backups & Verification

One lesson I learned the hard way during year two of my underwater photo journey was the value of immediate backups and verification. Never wait hours—or worse, days—to backup your memory cards. Card failures happen. Housing flooding can happen.

My Backup Workflow

1. **Copy cards immediately upon dry-down.**
2. **Create two separate backups on different devices:** A laptop and a portable hard drive or SSD.
3. **Verify backups:** Always check that files open and playback correctly before erasing cards.
4. **Label all cards and backup devices with masking tape:** Don't lose track during multi-day trips.

One thing that annoys me is when photographers spend hours editing before even making their second backup. Editing is indeed creative fun, but file loss is creatively frustrating.

Summary Table: Dive Log Details vs. Gear Maintenance Notes

Category	Details to Record	Reason	Timing	Environmental	Visibility & Current	Planning	shots & understanding
	Immediately post-dive	Environmental	Water Temperature	Adjust camera settings	and suits	Immediately post-dive	
	Environmental	Max Depth & Time	Dive safety and lighting	conditions	Immediately post-dive	Gear	
	Button, Dial, Hinge	Performance	Detect early maintenance needs	Post-rinse, pre-storage	Gear	Electrical	
	Connection Integrity	Prevent flooding and corrosion	Post-rinse, pre-storage	Maintenance	Saltwater Removal		
	Process Documentation	for consistent routine	Immediately post-dive	Data Backup	Verification	Safeguard media	
	files	Immediately post-card	offload				

Final Thoughts

Diving and shooting underwater is a wonderful yet exacting hobby that relies heavily on observance, maintenance discipline, and reliable record keeping. The details of environmental conditions—visibility, current, water temperature, max depth, and timing—combined with diligent handling of your underwater camera housing and electronic backups, can elevate your photography and preserve your gear's life.

Make it a habit to write down these details immediately. Use small tricks like labeling cables or carrying a pocket flashlight for o-ring inspections. Avoid common pitfalls like leaving housings banging in rinse tanks or calling grease the primary sealant. Trust me, your future self and your equipment will thank you for it.