



A GUIDE TO PHOTOGRAPHING UNDERWATER HERITAGE ARTEFACTS

INTRODUCTION

These instructions are provided to assist persons who have possession, custody and control of a protected underwater cultural heritage artefact to receive a permit under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*.

Individuals in possession of protected artefacts need to submit a high resolution digital image/s in accordance with this guidance with their online notification of possession. No permit can be issued without the required image/s.

EQUIPMENT

There are three basic equipment options for producing digital images depending on the types of artefacts to be imaged:

1. Digital camera (produces the highest quality images);
2. Mobile phone (HDR – high dynamic range setting should be used if available); or
3. Desktop scanner (produces high quality images and useful for flat artefacts such as coins).

SCALE

It is important that all artefact images contain an appropriate sized scale so that the artefact size can be easily determined. Two A4 size pages are included with these instructions that contain three types of photographic scales:

1. 5cm right angle colour scale (for coins and other small artefacts);
 2. 28cm black and white scale (for medium sized artefacts, such as bottles); and
 3. 5cm straight colour scale (can be used in conjunction with 28cm scale or on its own).
- The A4 sheets can be printed and used as a white backdrop for small to medium sized artefacts. The scales can also be cut out and used separately. Note that you must set your print page sizing to 'Actual size' so that the scales will print accurately.
 - A builder's ruler, tape measure or scale bar can also be used to provide scale for very large artefacts, such as anchors.

TECHNIQUES

- It's important to include a label (Image 1) that identifies the artefact in the photograph, so the image can be easily identified and the image file named. This is especially important if you are photographing multiple or similar artefacts. For people not working in museums or keeping places, simply make up a unique image number for each object i.e. 26. You should use this number to label your image when saving it. A simple way of creating a label is to type the intended file name onto a piece of paper and then cut it out.

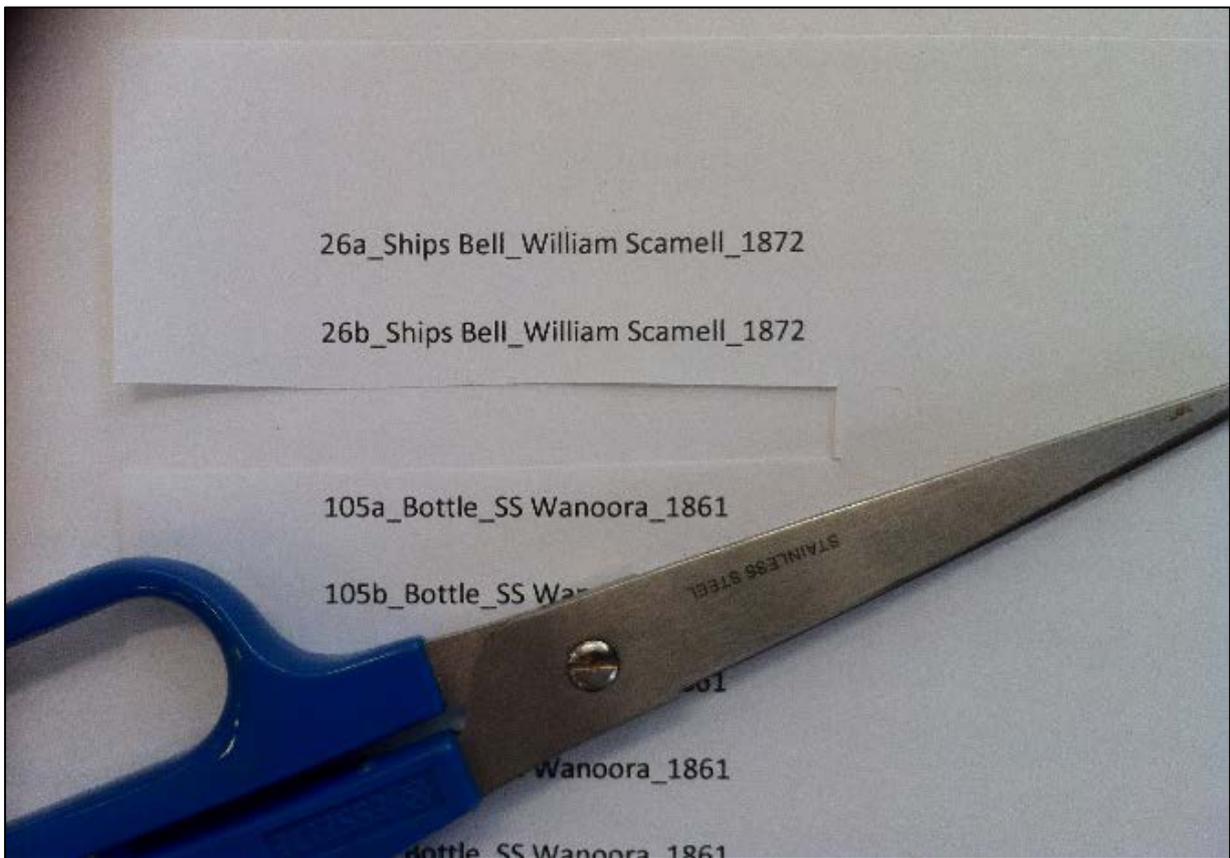


Image 1: Labels printed out to assist individual object identification.

- Small to medium artefacts can be placed directly on the A4 printed pages and as close as possible to the edge of the scale bar (Image 2).



Image 2: Small object photography. Note the object is not placed on the scale but near to it.

- Larger artefacts can be photographed using a white or black backdrop, depending on the colour of the artefact (Image 3). Light coloured or translucent artefacts show up better on a darker background while darker objects are better highlighted on a light background.



Image 3: Note the variation in scales used and positioning of object identification labels. Some scales incorporate a colour chart as with the downloadable version for small objects. All scales for artefact photography must use appropriately sized scales in centimetres.

- For medium to large artefacts, the scale should be placed at roughly the same distance from the camera/phone as the artefact e.g. in-line with the front of the artefact but not obstructing the view (Images 4 and 5). Materials such as cut pieces of white polystyrene packing foam can be useful for positioning scales.



Image 4: This is an example of poor photo scale placement as it obstructs part of the artefact.



Image 4: This is an example of good horizontal and vertical scale placement.

- Very large artefacts that are located outdoors or incorporated into monuments e.g. anchors, can be photographed insitu with a ruler or tape measure located in the foreground to provide scale (Image 5).



Image 5: For large objects a surveyor's range pole is very effective. Similar scales can be made cheaply by alternately wrapping orange and white tape around a thin tube of plastic. The pole in this image has 20cm alternating bands.

- Photographs provided of coins, tokens and medallions must include separate images of both front and reverse faces. If a permit is issued and an artefact is found not to correspond to its images, the item may be subject to seizure (Figure 6).



Image 6: Note that your images must enable identification of the artefact in your possession. If the images are deemed not suitable, no permit will be issued and you will be asked to submit better images.

- 3 dimensional artefacts should be photographed from the front, back, sides and ends if possible (Image 7).



Image 7: This is an excellent example of how to photo document medium-sized three dimensional objects. Scale, label and object are all easily visible within the frame of the photo.

- A fixed lighting source should be used instead of camera or phone flash as the use of flash can create shadows. A simple desk or bedside lamp can provide adequate light for artefact photography (Image 8).



Image 8: Simple lighting setup with a sheet of white cardboard as a backdrop. However, to remove shadows cast by a single light source, light sources from more than one direction will assist.

SAVING AND NAMING IMAGES

- Images should be saved as in JPEG format and the preferred size is between 1 and 2.5 megabytes at a minimum of 300 DPI (dots per inch).
- For the purposes of sorting your images and associating each image with other data, your image file name should include:
 - a unique image number;
 - a concise functional description of the artefact;
 - the name of the shipwreck or sunken aircraft that the artefact came from or 'Unidentified site'; and
 - Year that shipwreck or sunken aircraft was lost.

Example: 26a_Ships Bell_William Scamell_1872

- Multiple images of the same artefact should be numbered consecutively e.g. 26a, 26b, 26c
- If you're a museum or organisation that has many artefacts to report and already have existing images with a unique naming/numbering system, then it's not necessary to rename the files, as long as the image file names are clearly identified against their corresponding artefact entries in the artefact data spreadsheet provided (see: ANSDB Artefacts work sheet 2019).