
Underwater video techniques for observing coastal marine biodiversity: A review of sixty years of publications (1952–2012)

Delphine Mallet^{a, b, *}, Dominique Pelletier^a

^a IFREMER, Unité de Recherche Lagons, Ecosystèmes et Aquaculture Durable en Nouvelle Calédonie (LEAD-NC), Nouméa, New Caledonia

^b EA 4243 LIVE, Université de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, Nouméa, New Caledonia

*: Corresponding author : Delphine Mallet, email addresses : delphine.mallet@yahoo.fr ; Delphine.Mallet@ifremer.fr

Abstract:

Underwater video techniques are increasingly used in marine ecology studies. Technological progress regarding video cameras, sensors (such as sounders), battery life and information storage make these techniques now accessible to a majority of users. However, diver-based underwater visual censuses, and catch and effort data, remain the most commonly used for observing coastal biodiversity and species. In this paper, we review the underwater video techniques that have been developed since the 1950s to investigate and/or monitor coastal biodiversity. Techniques such as remote underwater video, whether baited or not, diver-operated video and towed video are described, along with corresponding applications in the field. We then analyse the complementarity of techniques, first from studies comparing video techniques with other observation techniques, whether video-based or not, and second by documenting their respective cost efficiencies. These findings are discussed with respect to current challenges in monitoring and investigating coastal biodiversity. Video should be more often considered and used, either in addition to or as an alternative to diver-based, fishing and acoustic techniques, as it may be particularly suited for monitoring coastal biodiversity in a variety of areas and on larger scales than hitherto and within an ecosystem-based approach to management and conservation.

Highlights

► Underwater video is increasingly used in marine ecology. ► Video is less used than catch and underwater visual census. ► Video techniques comprise baited, unbaited, towed and diver-operated techniques. ► Video is a cost-efficient complement or alternative to other observation techniques.

Keywords: Underwater video ; Monitoring ; Coastal biodiversity ; Fish ; Habitat

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1 **1. Introduction**

2 The conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and associated ecosystem services
3 through ecosystem-based management (Christensen et al., 1996) requires appraising a wide
4 array of biodiversity components on large spatial scales. Biodiversity here encompasses
5 mostly fish and macroinvertebrate species, whether or not exploited, and corresponding
6 assemblages and habitats. Biodiversity is rarely observed and assessed on such scales due
7 to observation costs. The main techniques used to study and monitor biodiversity are either
8 extractive (e.g. fishing, dredging), based on acoustics, or based on Underwater Visual
9 Censuses (UVC).

10 Extractive techniques have been used mostly for fish, macrobenthic organisms and
11 endogenous fauna, primarily for the assessment of fished populations. Fishing-based
12 surveys (see e.g. Petitgas et al., 2009) focus on catchable species, whether or not exploited.
13 The potential of catch-based surveys for an ecosystem approach to fisheries management
14 has been addressed by Trenkel and Cotter (2009) and Jouffre et al. (2010), among others.
15 Catch-based monitoring provides information about catchable species, but not on other
16 species, nor on habitat. Catchability may vary across species and as a function of weather
17 conditions (Trenkel and Cotter, 2009) and vessels (Pelletier, 1991). Sampling effort by
18 fisheries is considerable, but data interpretation may be tricky due to the uncontrolled
19 sampling design. Scientific catch surveys circumvent this problem, but provide small sample
20 sizes compared to fisheries catch (Trenkel and Cotter, 2009). In addition, extractive
21 techniques have an impact on biodiversity, which may not be desirable in the context of
22 monitoring conservation strategies. Rotenone sampling is similar to fishing, in that it is
23 extractive, focuses on fish species, and selects only part of the fish assemblage (Robertson
24 and Smith-Vaniz, 2008). It is thus used more for inventories and small-scale observations
25 than for monitoring. Underwater acoustics is currently effective for pelagic and semi-
26 demersal species, and for zooplankton (Trenkel et al., 2011). However, species present in
27 the acoustic data have to be identified through complementary techniques, and benthic

28 species are not well-observed. For instance, Jones et al. (2012) combined acoustics and
29 video to estimate rockfish biomass in untrawlable areas.

30

31 In shallow areas, UVC techniques have been used for over sixty years to monitor fish,
32 macrobenthic organisms and habitats (Brock, 1954). They are considered to be reliable and
33 cost effective (Thresher and Gunn, 1986). Advantages and disadvantages of UVC for
34 estimating fish abundance and diversity have been reported and discussed in several papers
35 (Chapman et al., 1974; Sale, 1980; Brock, 1982; Harmelin-Vivien et al., 1985; Watson et al.,
36 1995; Thompson and Mapstone, 1997; Willis, 2001; Kulbicki et al., 2010; Dickens et al.,
37 2011). The main limitation of UVC lies in the need for divers' presence underwater, which
38 influences the observation of vagile macrofauna, restricts the number of observations that
39 can be carried out, and constrains depth observation.

40 In recent years, underwater video techniques have been increasingly used for observing
41 macrofauna and habitat in marine ecosystems (see e.g. Sarradin et al., 2007 for a review
42 concerning deep ecosystems). Technological progress regarding video cameras, sensors
43 (such as sounders), battery life and information storage now make these techniques
44 accessible to the majority of users. The term "underwater video" encompasses an array of
45 techniques developed around the world, and used in a variety of contexts and for different
46 purposes. Murphy and Jenkins (2010) reviewed the observation methods used for spatial
47 monitoring of fish and associated habitats. They summarized the applications, advantages
48 and shortcomings of all methods used, including UVC, remote sensing, acoustics,
49 experimental catch and effort data, and underwater video. Because of this broad scope, the
50 paper did not document the various video techniques and their applications. To our
51 knowledge, there are no published papers describing underwater video techniques and their
52 applications, and discussing their respective relevance for observing shallow water marine
53 biodiversity. Yet many papers have been published using video techniques in this context,
54 and video-based techniques have considerably evolved over time. The present review
55 focuses on the video techniques developed and used for this purpose, from the first

56 published papers through to 2012. Section 2 describes the main techniques, along with
57 technological issues. Applications of each technique are summarized in section 3. In section
58 4, studies comparing video techniques with other observation techniques are listed, and their
59 conclusions are summarized. The last section discusses the potential of video techniques for
60 monitoring and investigating biodiversity issues in coastal environments, in order to provide
61 guidance in choosing among techniques.

62

63 **2. State of the art regarding underwater video techniques**

64 Literature searches were conducted using the ISIS Web of KnowledgeSM and Google
65 Scholar for relevant keywords, including “underwater video”, “underwater television”, “remote
66 underwater video”, “baited video”, “BRUV”, “towed video”, “video transect” and “stereo-
67 video”. In addition to database searches, we also hand-checked the reference lists of all
68 studies retrieved to identify all relevant primary research published in peer-reviewed journals,
69 books and proceedings of international conferences. Thus a substantial amount of grey
70 literature was not taken into account in this review.

71 We restricted the literature search to environments shallower than 100 m. At greater
72 depths, observations are more constrained by technological issues, scuba diving is not
73 routinely feasible, and artificial light is needed. Papers pertaining to freshwater ecosystems
74 were not included in the review either. Studies using photography, photogrammetry,
75 underwater video for evaluating fishing gear catchability or acoustic techniques, and video
76 tracking (Delcourt et al., 2012) fell outside the scope of the paper. The search resulted in a
77 list of 182 peer-reviewed papers, taking into account the majority of peer-reviewed papers
78 within the scope of the present review. As video systems are increasingly used around the
79 world, the number of published studies has greatly increased over the last decade (67% of
80 the papers were published from 2002 onwards). Papers were sorted according to four main
81 techniques: remote underwater video, baited remote underwater video, towed video and
82 diver-operated video. Note that the term “remote” is used here to designate a technique
83 which does not require human presence underwater, while the term “autonomous” indicates

84 a system that is not linked to a vessel or a platform. Baited Remote Underwater Video will be
85 denoted BRUV following most studies using this technique, while unbaited Remote
86 Underwater Video will be simply termed RUV for the sake of concision. RUV thus includes
87 here all remote video systems that are not baited, whether dropped from the boat or set by
88 divers. Note that trademarks on “BRUVS” and “RUVS” of the Australian Institute of Marine
89 Science were not used as they are too specific and do not encompass all the techniques
90 discussed in this review.

91

92 2.1. Remote Underwater Video (RUV)

93 The first published work reporting the use of underwater video systems in the coastal
94 environment dates back to the 1950s. The Scottish Marine Biological Association of Millport
95 developed an underwater video program in 1948, and tested it in the Aquarium of the
96 Zoological Society of London in 1949 (Barnes, 1952, 1953). In 1951, the Royal Navy
97 constructed a system which was successfully used to identify a Royal Navy submarine lost at
98 sea in 1951. It then served for other projects on bottom fauna (Barnes, 1955) as suspended
99 in a mid-water environment (Backus and Barnes, 1957) and for other Navy applications
100 (Barnes, 1963). RUV has been used more frequently in marine sciences since the 1960s (Table
101 1). It provided the first data on fish movement and behaviour in daytime and at night, which
102 had not been previously studied without human disturbance (Barnes, 1952; Kumpf and
103 Lowenstein, 1962; Booda, 1966; LaFond, 1968). RUV systems exhibit different designs and
104 technical features, including additional sensors, and can be distinguished in terms of their
105 autonomy (linked or autonomous).

106

107 *Linked systems*

108 The system developed by LaFond et al. (1961) filmed from the surface to the bottom (20
109 m depth) while moving up and down a vertical-rail track placed under a platform (Table 1). It
110 was used to study diurnal and nocturnal fish movements along with plankton dispersion (see
111 section 3). Over the same period of time, an experimental RUV equipped with hydrophones

112 and lights for night vision (AC-RUV, "AC" for acoustic) was developed by Kumpf and
113 Lowenstein (1962) and Kronengold et al. (1964). The system was permanently set on sea
114 bottom in the Bahamas (Steinberg and Koczy, 1964), in order to (i) identify the sounds
115 present in a supposedly silent environment; (ii) learn about wildlife behavioural response to
116 sound disturbance; (iii) describe the temporal patterns of sounds, and (iv) evaluate the
117 advantages and limitations of systems coupling video and acoustics. Initial problems
118 resulting from a large system size and from fouling on the camera housing led to an
119 improved smaller AC-RUV system (Holt, 1967; Stevenson, 1967; Table 1).

120 More recently, Stokesbury et al. (2004) developed a vertical RUV system (Table 1) to
121 study scallop distribution off the northeastern coast of the United States. Tyne et al. (2010)
122 used the same system to record benthic habitats in Western Australia. The camera filmed a
123 1 m² bottom quadrat area at depths ranging between 2 and 16 m. Recorded images were
124 automatically analysed by a computer, providing estimates of the percent seagrass cover,
125 and the type and abundance of sponges within the quadrat.

126 The latest linked systems are permanent observatories using cables for energy supply,
127 data transfer and instrument control (Aguzzi et al., 2012). In an area south of Taiwan, Jan et
128 al. (2007) placed a system linked to an internet video server, making the videos viewable in
129 real time on the World Wide Web. In the western Mediterranean, Aguzzi et al. (2011) set the
130 OBSEA system at 20 m depth to monitor fish assemblages (Table 1).

131

132 *Autonomous systems*

133 Fedra and Machan (1979) used the first autonomous RUV in the North Adriatic Sea
134 (Mediterranean) (Table 1). The system was set on the seabed by a diver and then left for a
135 week, in order to study the behaviour and distribution of benthic and demersal species, their
136 feeding activities and movement patterns, along with species interactions and the influence
137 of environmental conditions (see section 3). Chabanet et al. (2012) recently introduced a
138 similar system to investigate the temporal variability of undisturbed fish populations over a
139 twenty day time period. Dunbrack and Zielinski (2003) devised a system with a camera

140 mounted on a tripod. It was placed at the edge of the reef slope to film down the reef and
141 study the ecology, behaviour and population status of the bluntnose sixgill shark (*Hexanchus*
142 *griseus*) in the Georgia Strait, British Columbia (see also Dunbrack, 2006, 2008).

143 The rotating RUV system (ROT-RUV: "ROT" for rotation, termed "STAVIRO" by the
144 authors) of Pelletier et al. (2012) (Table 1) is fixed on a tripod, dropped from the boat onto
145 the seabed, and retrieved using buoys and rigging. It has been used in the New Caledonian
146 lagoon (South Pacific) since 2007 and in the Western Mediterranean since 2010 to study and
147 monitor the spatio-temporal distribution of marine macrofauna and habitat (Pelletier et al.,
148 2012; D. Mallet, M. Bouchouca, D. Pelletier, unpublished data). Unlike other RUV systems,
149 the 360° view afforded by rotation provides panoramic images and a much larger surveyed
150 area than fixed systems, while avoiding the image distortion characteristic of fisheye lenses.
151 Potential double counting is minimized by paying particular attention to the direction of fish
152 movement with respect to rotation, and by calculating the mean abundance over rotations, to
153 average out the variability between rotations (Pelletier et al., 2012).

154 Most of the above techniques were implemented with the help of divers, except for
155 Stokesbury et al. (2004), Tyne et al. (2010) and Pelletier et al. (2012). Only four RUV
156 techniques identified in this review did not use artificial light (Stevenson, 1967; Petrell et al.,
157 1997; Dunbrack and Zielinski, 2003; Pelletier et al., 2012).

158 Video systems remaining underwater for several days inevitably face the problem of
159 fouling, i.e. the accumulation of organisms, impairing the quality of images. Yet in the
160 literature examined, this problem was raised and addressed only by Stevenson (1967) and
161 Chabanet et al. (2012), who used automatic windshield wipers to clean the lens surface
162 regularly.

163

164 2.2. Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV)

165 A BRUV system uses either a single camera or two cameras (see subsection 2.5)
166 filming the area surrounding a bait used to attract fish. The bait bag is placed close to the
167 camera, at a distance ranging between 0.5 m and 1.5 m (Ellis and DeMartini, 1995; Willis

168 and Babcock, 2000; Heagney et al., 2007). The species attracted and the bait range of action
169 depend on the bait used (Harvey et al., 2007; Stobart et al., 2007; Wraith, 2007). Pilchards
170 (*Sardinops sp.*) are currently used in most studies (McLean et al., 2010, 2011; Watson et al.,
171 2010; Bassett and Montgomery, 2011; Göetze et al., 2011; Harvey et al., 2012a; Langlois et
172 al., 2012a, 2012b). BRUV systems are directly deployed from the boat (Watson et al., 2005,
173 Cappo et al., 2007a, Bassett and Montgomery, 2011). Willis and Babcock (2000) and
174 Watson et al. (2005) showed that a soak time of 25 to 40 minutes underwater was required
175 to obtain representative observations for the majority of fish species, but they recommended
176 a duration of 50 to 60 minutes for observing most target fish species in the census. The main
177 differences among BRUV systems concern the orientation of the system in relation to the sea
178 bottom (horizontal or vertical, Table 2), which result in distinct observed abundances and
179 species compositions (Langlois et al., 2006; Wraith, 2007). BRUV has also been used with
180 infrared light to study nocturnal fish; for example Bassett and Montgomery (2011) studied the
181 olfactory capabilities of nocturnal fish species and their influence on response to bait using
182 this system.

183

184 *Horizontally oriented BRUV*

185 Horizontal BRUV (H-BRUV) (Ellis and DeMartini, 1995) provides a wide viewing angle
186 for observing the area surrounding the bait. An array of species can be observed, in
187 particular those not approaching the bait bag because of fish behaviour or competition for the
188 bait (Cappo et al., 2004; Harvey et al., 2007). H-BRUV systems have been mainly used to
189 study spatio-temporal variations in reef fish assemblages, the influence of depth and location
190 upon fish and species distribution, and the effect of MPAs on biodiversity (Cappo et al.,
191 2007b and section 3). H-BRUVs are generally set on the seafloor, though Heagney et al.
192 (2007) used mid-water BRUV to study pelagic fish.

193

194 *Vertically oriented BRUV*

195 Vertical BRUV (V-BRUV) has been used for studying the size and abundance of
196 carnivorous fish (Babcock et al., 1999; Willis and Babcock, 2000) and the effect of protection
197 by MPAs (Willis et al., 2000, 2003; Denny and Babcock, 2004; Denny et al., 2004; Willis and
198 Millar, 2005). The restricted field of vision due to the camera pointing downwards ensures a
199 constant field of view and a constant focal length, particularly where water clarity or
200 topography varies between observations (T. Willis, personal communication). Langlois et al.
201 (2006) suggested that some species would rarely approach the system when the camera
202 was positioned above the bait. Other authors suggested that recent V-BRUV does not affect
203 blue cod and various other species (T. Willis, personal communication). Lightweight stands
204 have been shown to provide precise relative density estimates of carnivorous fishes (Willis et
205 al., 2000).

206

207 2.3. TOWed Video (TOWV)

208 Machan and Fedra (1975) introduced the first TOWed Video technique (TOWV) in
209 shallow waters. The system was towed by a vessel at low speed (0.1 to 1 m s^{-1}). TOWV films
210 along a transect of predefined size and trajectory (30 m to 20 km). The various systems
211 developed (Table 3) were linked to the vessel by a coaxial cable and a rope. The main
212 difference among them lies in the position at which the system operates in the water column,
213 i.e. seabed or mid-water.

214

215 *Seabed TOWV*

216 In the coastal domain, the first TOWV systems were towed on the seabed using a sledge
217 (seabed-TOWV, Table 3). These were used in the Mediterranean Sea (Machan and Fedra,
218 1975), in South-West England (Holme and Barrett, 1977) and in Alaska (Spencer et al.,
219 2005, and Rooper and Zimmermann, 2007). The video camera is slightly angled downwards
220 on the sledge, which carries additional equipment (Table 3). Seabed-TOWVs have been
221 used to study sea floor and epifaunal species (mostly crustaceans and flat fish) (see section

222 3). It should be noted that in shallow waters such as lagoon areas, vagile species were found
223 to be sensitive to the boat noise (D. Pelletier and G. Hervé, unpublished data).

224

225 *Mid-water-TOWV*

226 Mid-water-TOWV systems are more recent than seabed-TOWVs in shallow waters
227 (Norris et al., 1997). These systems are towed at a constant elevation in the water column,
228 thus providing a wider view of the seafloor compared to seabed-TOWVs. The system of
229 Riegl et al. (2001) is set on each side of the boat with vertical tubes that can be lowered or
230 raised between 0.5 and 3.5 m below the sea surface, so as to adjust to varying depth (Table
231 3). Most mid-water-TOWVs are equipped with a depth sounder (Hayashizaki and Ogawa,
232 2006; see also Schaner et al., 2009, for a freshwater application). They have mostly been
233 used to characterize, quantify and assess changes in benthic flora (seagrass, macro-algae
234 and coral) and fauna.

235

236 2.4. Diver-Operated Video (DOV)

237 The diver-operated video technique (DOV) consists of a diver holding a video system
238 and filming a defined area. Similarly to UVC, the observation area may vary in size (transects
239 from 2 to 500 m, Table 4) and shape (along a predefined line, inside a quadrat, or rotating
240 around a fixed point). The diver is sometimes towed (Carleton and Done, 1995; Vogt et al.,
241 1997; Kenyon et al., 2006), recalling the “Manta tow” technique, where a towed snorkeler
242 implements a transect (Fernandes, 1990). Towed DOV has been used to record benthic
243 habitat along long transects (up to 500 m long).

244 The DOV technique (Alevizon and Brooks, 1975) involves a diver filming vertically along
245 a transect line. DOV is generally conducted at a constant swimming speed over the entire
246 transect (0.1 to 3 m s⁻¹, Table 4). Elevation above the seafloor ranges from 0.15 to 0.5 m
247 (parameter documented in 16 papers out of 22). But in some cases, transects are conducted
248 at a larger elevation (1 to 3 m) to ensure a wider viewing angle (Table 4). A reference bar
249 attached to the camera housing is sometimes used to control the camera elevation (Leonard

250 and Clark, 1993; Vogt et al., 1997; Rogers and Miller, 2001; Lam et al., 2006; Cruz et al.,
251 2008).

252 Pelletier et al. (2011) presented the browsing video transect technique, where the diver
253 browses inside the strip transect area, at varying elevation, speed and angle, and zooming
254 when needed. This technique mimics the behaviour of UVC divers in strip transects. These
255 authors demonstrated that more individuals and species were recorded from browsing
256 transects than from straight ones conducted at a constant elevation.

257 Bortone et al. (1991, 1994) proposed a protocol where the diver simultaneously rotates
258 and records images, mimicking the UVC stationary point count technique (Bohnsack and
259 Bannerot, 1986). DOV was also used to study fish behaviour by Krohn and Boisclair (1994)
260 (energy expenditure of swimming fish) and Hall and Hanlon (2002) (observation of particular
261 individuals for up to 1.5 h).

262

263 2.5. Stereo-video technique

264 The stereo-video technique is not additional to those described above, but it involves a
265 particular recording that produces a 3-dimensional (3D) image. It was developed by Harvey
266 and Shortis (1995) to improve fish size estimation by divers. The technique simultaneously
267 uses two cameras to record the same scene. Left and right images are synchronized on the
268 computer based on a light-emitting diode (LED) placed at 2.5 m from the cameras and seen
269 on both images. Images are then cross-checked from ad hoc software to obtain a 3D image
270 allowing individual size measurement. A 1.4 m distance between the two cameras was found
271 to provide a trade-off between the precision afforded by a greater distance and diver's ability
272 to manoeuvre the system (Harvey and Shortis, 1995). This system recorded and measured
273 individuals in a distance range of 2 to 10 m, depending on underwater visibility. Length
274 measurements were found to be more accurate and repeatable when the orientation of the
275 subjects to the stereo-cameras was less than 50° (Harvey and Shortis, 1995, 1998). Stereo-
276 video has been shown to provide more accurate estimates of both fish length and distance
277 than visual estimation by divers (Harvey et al., 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2004) or single video

278 (Harvey et al., 2002b). As such, it also helps distinguishing individuals (Harvey et al., 2003,
279 2007).

280 The stereo system has been adapted to all underwater video techniques (RUV and
281 BRUV, TOWV, and DOV), but it has been mostly implemented on H-BRUV systems (Watson
282 et al., 2007, 2009; Chatfield et al., 2010; McLean et al., 2010, 2011; Göetze et al., 2011; Birt
283 et al., 2012; Dorman et al., 2012; Fitzpatrick et al., 2012; Harvey et al., 2012a, 2012b, 2012c;
284 Langlois et al., 2012a, 2012b). Several comparisons of underwater observation techniques
285 used stereo-video (Watson et al., 2005, 2010; Langlois et al., 2010). Shortis et al. (2009)
286 provide a detailed review of the status of underwater stereo-video measurement and marine
287 and ecology applications. With the same objective of measuring fish, Heppell et al. (2012)
288 used two lasers fixed on each side of a single camera, rather than stereo-video.

289

290 2.6. Technological progress

291 The first video systems used (Barnes, 1952, 1953, 1955; Backus and Barnes, 1957,
292 Myrberg et al., 1969, 1973) suffered from (i) difficulties in setting and retrieving systems; (ii)
293 malfunctioning of electronically driven systems; and (iii) the limitations of video sensors which
294 severely impaired image quality.

295 Various systems have been developed and used over time (Figure 1). The emergence
296 and evolution of such systems was primarily driven by technological progress, enabling
297 considerable improvements in performance, while making these tools more robust, smaller
298 and cheaper. The digital revolution led to increased sensor resolution, with a dramatically
299 improved image quality, in particular with the advent of High Definition (HD). Regarding
300 energy supply, batteries have become smaller and more powerful. Data storage devices now
301 make it possible to record and archive more images, since camera internal memory or
302 Secure Digital (SD) cards can now store up to 120 Gigabytes (GB), while the capacity of
303 standard external hard drives is 1 or 2 Terabyte (TB). The increasing volume of observation
304 files is therefore matched by a corresponding increase in information storage capacities.

305

306 **3. Underwater video: Where is it used and what is it used for?**

307 Video systems are increasingly used around the world, particularly over the last decade
308 (Figure 1). Nevertheless, there are not many teams using these techniques. Numerous
309 studies have been published in Australia (63 papers from 1995 to 2012), the USA (24 papers
310 from 1957 to 2012) and New Zealand (24 papers from 1995 to 2011), and in comparison,
311 relatively few papers from other countries (Figure 2 and Supplementary Material A). The first
312 publications on RUV systems originated in Europe (United Kingdom in 1952) and North
313 America (USA in 1957), and then extended to all continents (Oceania in 1995, Asia in 1997
314 and Africa in 2008). Twenty papers were published from the Bahamas AC-RUV between
315 1962 and 1973. BRUV has mainly been used in Australia since 2003 (32 of the 52 BRUV-
316 based papers), and in New Zealand since 1999 (11 papers). In Australia only H-BRUV has
317 been used, whereas in New Zealand V-BRUV has mostly been used (9 of the 11 BRUV-
318 based papers). Studies involving TOWV and DOV are both more widespread and less
319 numerous, with respectively 23 and 28 papers published since 1975. Note that the grey
320 literature and studies outside the scope of this review (deep environment and freshwater)
321 contain a large amount of work which has not been cited here (including some of the authors'
322 work).

323 The techniques described in the previous section have been used for a variety of
324 purposes in the context of coastal biodiversity. Applications were classified according to five
325 main subjects (Table 5) to provide an overview. Studies of animal behaviour and activity are
326 a major field of application (52 references published between 1952 and 2012). Six papers
327 used video to investigate the effect of human-induced disturbances upon species behaviour.
328 Forty-eight papers investigate spatial and temporal patterns of fish abundance, size and of
329 fish assemblage composition, in particular to appraise the effects of habitat, anthropogenic
330 pressures and MPAs. Thirty-two references dealt with habitat mapping and benthic cover
331 monitoring, but benthos monitoring at species level was addressed by only four references.
332 Not surprisingly, video techniques have been specialized, depending on these areas of
333 application. RUV has been preferably used for behaviour-related studies (45 references),

334 and only recently become of interest for assessing species response to environmental
335 conditions and habitat through spatially-replicated designs (8 references from 2008). In
336 contrast, BRUV has been extensively used for this latter purpose (25 references), with an
337 emphasis on size estimation through stereo-video, whereas it has been hardly used for
338 behavioural studies. TOWV has been almost exclusively used for habitat mapping and
339 monitoring purposes (15 references); studies mostly focused on benthic macrofauna (e.g.
340 coral cover and scallops) and macroflora (e.g. sea grass and algae), though some examined
341 demersal fish species. DOV has also been used for assessing fish abundance and
342 assemblages (13 references), habitat mapping and monitoring (15 references), and
343 investigating fish behaviour (2 references). It is important to note that each technique was
344 tested in both temperate and tropical ecosystems. It should also be underlined that Table 5
345 provides an average picture over the review period. Technological progress entails new
346 observation capacities, and therefore new fields of investigation, such as exemplified by
347 recent applications of RUV to fish and habitat monitoring. In addition to these applications,
348 the great potential of video for addressing specific biodiversity-related topics was also
349 illustrated by unusual applications, e.g. seals in underwater caves (Dendrinis et al., 2007).

350 Lastly, attention was paid to the kind of information collected by each technique. Fish
351 species are most often identified at the lowest possible taxonomic level, notwithstanding a
352 small fraction of individuals, in general small species, identified only at higher levels such as
353 genus or family (see e.g. Pelletier et al., 2011). This must be taken into account when
354 calculating metrics based on species counts. In some instances, metrics may only be
355 calculated at genus or family level. In general, epifauna and epiflora are identified according
356 to broad categories, e.g. sponges (Tyne et al., 2010), macroalgae (Bucas et al., 2007),
357 tunicates and ophiuroids (Carbines and Cole, 2009). Benthos and habitat are generally
358 characterized through percent covers of the sea bottom. In all cases, the species that can be
359 observed in a reliable way must be carefully listed. Cryptic species are poorly observed and
360 the limitations of visual counts due to underwater visibility are also valid for video techniques.
361 Small species may be more difficult to identify from video images than from visual counts,

362 whereas diver-avoiding species are more likely observed from diver-free video systems
363 (Mallet et al., 2014).

364 A large number of metrics can then be obtained from all the techniques (Table 6).
365 Species are counted over the observation duration to provide presence/absence,
366 occurrences and species richness. In the case of vagile species, abundance is estimated
367 over the whole video sequence or part of it for RUV, DOV and TOWV. In contrast, for BRUV
368 the metric used is the time of first appearance per species (Wraith, 2007), and most often
369 MaxN, the maximum abundance per species seen over the observation period (Ellis and
370 DeMartini, 1995). MaxN is a conservative estimate of abundance (Willis et al., 2000).
371 Bachelier et al. (2013) proposed using the mean number of fish observed in a series of
372 snapshots over a viewing interval (MeanCount). Schobernd et al. (2013) compared MaxN
373 and MeanCount from simulations, laboratory experiment and modelling. They found that
374 MeanCount was generally linearly related to true abundance with a variability similar to
375 MaxN. Fixed species and habitat are quantified either through abundance or percent cover.
376 Estimating the size of individuals is generally done using stereo-video. Counts may also be
377 assigned to size classes to avoid the issue of size estimation. Lastly, depending on the way
378 cameras are set, video may allow other metrics to be considered, such as the number of
379 bites from herbivores, the occurrence of activities, or parameters describing habitat (Table 6).

380

381 **4. Complementarity of techniques**

382 4.1. Comparative studies

383 From our literature search, we identified forty-two papers comparing two or more
384 observation techniques (Table 7). More than 65% (28 out of 42) of papers compared UVC
385 with a video technique: RUV (5 papers), TOWV (3), DOV (8), BRUV (9), and stereo-RUV (5).
386 As video is perceived as a relatively new observation technique, it was often compared to
387 UVC, which is commonly used for observing fish communities and habitats in shallow areas.
388 Other comparisons involved two or more video techniques for (i) testing the effect of using
389 two cameras compared to a mono-camera (stereo-RUV versus RUV); (ii) testing the effect of

390 baiting (BRUV versus RUV); and (iii) evaluating their respective relevance for studying reef
391 fish assemblages (BRUV versus TOWV, stereo-RUV versus stereo-DOV, stereo-BRUV and
392 stereo-DOV). Finally, several papers compared underwater video with, on the one hand,
393 experimental fishing (two papers dealing with RUV, five with BRUV, two with stereo-BRUV
394 and one with TOWV) and, on the other, acoustic techniques (one paper about BRUV).

395 Comparisons always used metrics based on species counts (species richness,
396 taxonomic diversity, and frequency of occurrence), and on abundance estimates (Table 8).
397 Note that each study presented a number of distinct results, which may vary across taxa and
398 across environmental settings. Hence, although some techniques may have been compared
399 using the same metric in several studies, conclusions might differ from one study to another.
400 For instance, in some studies greater fish diversity was recorded with BRUV than with DOV
401 (Langlois et al., 2010), TOWV and SRUV (Watson et al., 2005), and UVC (Willis and
402 Babcock, 2000), while others show that more fish species were detected with UVC than with
403 BRUV (Tessier et al., 2005; Langlois et al., 2006; Stobart et al., 2007; Colton and Swearer,
404 2010; Lowry et al., 2012) and DOV (Greene and Alevizon, 1989; Pelletier et al., 2011). In
405 general, differences in observed abundances between techniques also depend on taxa
406 (Watson et al., 2010; Pelletier et al., 2011), thereby determining distinct observed
407 assemblage structures (Table 8).

408 Directly comparing techniques in the field is rather difficult in that observations may be
409 influenced by many factors, either natural or linked to fine-scale system deployment. Paired
410 observations are needed to control for observation conditions, such as time of the day,
411 weather, and the precise observation location. But since implementation in the field may
412 depend on the technique, the number of observations that can be carried out within a given
413 time period, as well as the habitat and depth constraints, may also differ from one technique
414 to another. Thus, a paired comparison may only address the issue of comparing two
415 observations of the same seascape and species, and not the actual advantages and
416 shortcomings of each technique, and therefore not all facets of their complementarity.

417 For comparisons involving a diver-based technique, i.e. UVC or DOV vs TOWV, RUV or
418 BRUV, the main differences between techniques were due to the presence of divers. The
419 influence of divers' presence on UVC observations has been widely documented (Chapman
420 et al., 1974; Harmelin-Vivien et al., 1985; Kulbicki, 1998; Dearden et al., 2010). UVC also
421 raise a number of additional issues such as the need for species identification skills, the
422 variability of observations between divers, and the influence of swimming speed (Brock,
423 1982; Bell et al., 1985; Lincoln-Smith, 1988; Kulbicki et al., 2010; Dickens et al., 2011). In the
424 case of diver-free video observations, the factors inherent in each technique, that may affect
425 observations, have not been evaluated from specifically designed studies. These include, for
426 instance, the bait plume or noise, the use of artificial light, and more generally the behaviour
427 of animals with respect to the video system. In addition, the area actually surveyed by each
428 technique inevitably affects the number of species and individuals detected.

429 Hence, many factors can explain differences between observations obtained from
430 distinct techniques. Because not all these factors can be controlled, it is important to bear
431 them in mind when interpreting the outcomes of comparisons.

432 From the published studies, no single technique clearly appears to outperform the
433 others; although some are more appropriate for particular purposes. Thus RUV appeared as
434 an appropriate diver-free observation technique, as it can be left in place for a long time, at a
435 range of depths, and in low light conditions when using additional lights (see Supplementary
436 material B, C and D for detailed outcomes of the comparisons in Table 8). It can be used to
437 investigate areas, parameters and factors that cannot be observed from techniques relying
438 on divers, and it enables a high level of temporal and spatial replication. RUV was often
439 found appropriate for surveying common and conspicuous species. BRUV was found
440 particularly appropriate for sampling generalist carnivores, large predators and mobile
441 species. Because it relies on attracting species, it may be usefully deployed in areas when
442 fish are scarce, e.g. pelagic areas or sandy substrates in lagoon areas. The main advantage
443 of TOWV lies in its ability to sample a large area in a short period of time, thereby increasing
444 the spatial coverage of habitats, and the probability of observing species, including rare

445 species (although motile species may be sensitive to boat noise). DOV was deemed
446 adequate for studies at smaller scales, e.g. to study changes in corals, gorgonians and
447 macro-algae, and to provide representative observations of fish abundance and species
448 diversity. The various techniques should thus be seen as providing complementary
449 standpoints on shallow biodiversity and species.

450

451 4.2. Cost-efficiency considerations

452 In addition to the information provided by each kind of observation, investment and
453 operating costs are crucial parameters when considering an observation technique. Overall,
454 few papers documented implementation costs for the techniques used, whereas the time
455 required for image analysis is often seen as a shortcoming of underwater video techniques.
456 Francour et al. (1999) found that underwater video was more cost-efficient than UVC in
457 terms of total time spent in the field and in the laboratory. Based on a subset of papers,
458 Murphy and Jenkins (2010) found that relative costs were AUD\$1,000–5,000 for RUV and
459 AUD\$5,000–10,000 for BRUV. However, financial costs are difficult to evaluate for a given
460 technique, because of the various ways of manufacturing systems, and because of
461 differences in the characteristics of the camcorders and sensors used. It is thus more
462 relevant to compare required staff time rather than financial costs of equipment. Note also
463 that time spent at sea is always more expensive than laboratory time (Pelletier et al., 2011;
464 Bernard and Gotz, 2012). The cost-efficiency of several observation techniques were
465 compared by Leujak and Ormond (2007) (six techniques for surveying coral communities)
466 and by Langlois et al. (2010) (stereo-BRUV versus stereo-DOV transects for observing fish
467 assemblages) (Table 9). Pelletier et al. (2011, 2012) detailed observation costs (including
468 both field and image analysis) for DOV and ROT-RUV, with respect to UVC.

469 Cost-efficiency considerations must account for the fact that a technique which is better
470 at observing or detecting species, either because of attraction (BRUV) or because of a higher
471 image resolution, will inevitably require increased time for image analysis. For example,
472 Bernard and Götz (2012) found that a BRUV station required 7 hours of staff time versus 3.5

473 hours for RUV, but this was mostly due to the fact that BRUV detected more species and
474 individuals than RUV (Table 9). Consequently, a larger time for post-field analysis should not
475 be considered as a weakness if higher diagnostic power is the end result (Bernard and Gotz,
476 2012).

477

478 **5. Underwater video in the light of current monitoring challenges**

479 As mentioned in the introduction, conservation objectives and sustainable management
480 of coastal biodiversity and resources involve monitoring the status of several biodiversity
481 components in large areas. This is the case for MPA assessment and for regional or global
482 conservation agendas. Present global commitments to reduce biodiversity loss entail setting
483 up MPAs in most regions of the world. MPAs are not only more numerous, but also larger,
484 and how they achieve conservation objectives must be assessed. Consistently with MPA
485 conservation objectives (Pelletier, 2011), monitoring and assessment should include fish and
486 macroinvertebrate resources, but also fixed fauna, essential habitats, and protected or
487 emblematic species. Maintaining the diversity of taxa and the functioning of species
488 assemblage are additional conservation objectives. Yet, biodiversity is rarely observed and
489 assessed on large spatial scales due to observation costs.

490 Underwater video may help in making good some of these monitoring gaps. Three main
491 questions are generally raised by the use of video techniques for observing and monitoring
492 biodiversity, species and habitat in shallow waters: i) how much does it cost?; ii) is image
493 analysis (i.e. identifying and counting species) an issue?; and iii) what are the observation
494 area and the required duration of observations? Cost-efficiency questions were addressed in
495 subsection 4.2 when comparing video techniques. Issues ii) and iii) are addressed below in
496 subsections 5.1 and 5.2. We will then discuss the two main advantages of most underwater
497 video techniques: their non-obtrusive nature and the potential for high replication
498 (subsections 5.3 and 5.4). Finally, we will compare the advantages and shortcomings of
499 observation techniques in subsection 5.5.

500

501 5.1 Is image analysis an issue?

502 The issue of image analysis is often raised by the use of video, in particular the ability to
503 identify and count species, along with the time required to do this. Underwater visibility is a
504 limitation for all visual techniques, whether UVC, video or photo. However, divers conducting
505 UVC or DOV may compensate for reduced visibility by moving toward the observation target.
506 Moreover, the larger the observation surface area, the more critical the visibility. In this
507 respect, RUV may be more dependent upon visibility than BRUV which attracts species
508 closer to the camcorder. High Definition was not always used in recent studies, yet we
509 believe it substantially improves the quality of the resulting data at little extra cost. Being able
510 to take time to identify and count, including the possibility of consulting identification books or
511 experts is actually convenient. Because video footage is archived, it may be shared and
512 analysed independently, thereby enabling discussion about identifications and cross-
513 validation of image analyses. In addition, archiving footage ensures data traceability.
514 Identifying species and counting individuals from two-dimensional images may be initially
515 challenging to people trained in other techniques, but most people learn to do so within a
516 month or two.

517 The second issue concerns the time needed for image analysis. From our experience, the
518 post-treatment of images balances the time gained in the field through diver-based visual
519 techniques (Pelletier et al., 2011, 2012). This required time may vary depending on the kind
520 of information extracted, e.g. the list of taxa studied, and on the experience of the observer.
521 But it is mostly dependent upon the abundance and species richness in the observation area,
522 which should not be seen as a drawback (see end of section 4).

523

524 5.2. Observation area and duration

525 Video techniques exhibit large differences in terms of information provided. First,
526 observed surface areas are not all the same. Horizontal RUV enables observed surfaces and
527 distances to be estimated through horizontal vision, in a similar way to UVC. However, the
528 accuracy and precision of these estimates, whether from RUV or from UVC, should not be

529 neglected. Delineation of the observed surface area (e.g. from strip transects) or mark setting
530 to standardize surveyed areas is possible, but inevitably increases observation duration and
531 may influence observations, because it requires divers. Stereo-video makes it possible to
532 precisely estimate the observation distance and the size of observed individuals, which are
533 otherwise visually estimated either from post-field image analysis (RUV, TOWV, non stereo-
534 BRUV, DOV) or underwater (UVC). For such visual estimations, training from silhouettes has
535 proved useful (Thompson and Mapstone, 1997; N. Guilpart, D. Mallet, D. Pelletier,
536 unpublished data). For vertically-oriented systems (TOWV or RUV), the observed surface
537 may be estimated based on lens and zoom parameters, provided that the camera elevation
538 above the floor is controlled and known. In the particular case of BRUV, the unknown bait
539 plume prevents the evaluation of the actual surface concerned by the observation.

540 Regarding observation duration, BRUV is constrained by effective bait attraction, which
541 needs a minimum amount of time, from 25 to 40 minutes (Willis and Babcock, 2000; Watson
542 et al., 2007, Bernard and Gotz, 2012). TOWV allows continuous recording of images along
543 the vessel trajectory and footage is often subsampled for image analysis (see references in
544 Table 3). The duration of a single RUV observation varies from a few minutes to an hour (see
545 references in Table 5), depending on the study objective and the system characteristics.

546

547 5.3. Non-obtrusive observations of species assemblages?

548 Underwater video techniques provide direct observations of species in their natural
549 habitat, and they are not extractive. Diver-free video techniques are also less intrusive than
550 UVC (see section 1 for references). Among these, TOWV may disturb the ecosystem
551 through vessel noise, though this can be circumvented by using appropriate engines. BRUV
552 data rely on bait attraction within an unknown distance around the observation system. In this
553 respect, observations resemble fishing data, as they are selective, depending on both
554 species and bait. The effect of bait composition and size on catch was well studied (Salia et
555 al., 2002; Smith, 2002; Lowry et al., 2006; Alos et al., 2009; Dorman et al., 2012), as was the
556 behaviour of species near baited fishing gear (e.g. in deep environment: Craig et al., 2005) or

557 near fishery discards (Hill and Wassenberg, 2000). But the distance and range of attraction
558 of vagile fauna by the bait is difficult to test, and to our knowledge, no such study was
559 published at the time of the review. Regarding (unbaited) RUV, our own experience indicates
560 that while some fish already present nearby may be curious when a system is first set up,
561 they rapidly resume their normal behaviour, and the video system does not seem to attract
562 distant fish (D. Mallet and D. Pelletier, unpublished data).

563

564 5.4. Temporal and spatial replication

565 With the exception of DOV, for which the number of observations that can be carried out
566 per day is limited by diver's presence (although DOV is quicker than UVC in the field), a large
567 amount of data may be collected per day, making it possible to accomplish highly spatially
568 and temporally replicated designs. Most RUV techniques were indeed designed to be set for
569 a long time and to provide information on behaviour, diurnal rhythms and species activity
570 over long periods of undisturbed observation. This enables an array of questions to be
571 addressed that cannot be studied by other observation techniques. The ability of video
572 systems to produce a large number of observations can also be used in a spatial
573 perspective, for instance to investigate changes in macrofauna and population behaviour,
574 and to correlate communities with environmental variables or anthropogenic pressures.
575 Hence, the response of biodiversity to fishing, MPA protection and other impacts of coastal
576 uses may be addressed at relevant scales. Observation designs may be properly replicated
577 with respect to factors influencing the distribution of biodiversity, such as site and habitat on
578 several scales. A high level of replication then enables relationships between biodiversity
579 metrics and environmental variables to be investigated by increasing the statistical power of
580 analyses and diagnostics.

581 Beyond the replication issue, the consistency between data collected in distinct areas by
582 different teams is reinforced by the use of identical systems. Within an ecosystem-based
583 approach to fisheries management, a better understanding of the temporal variations in
584 spatial patterns of biodiversity and resources is needed. In this respect, diver-free techniques

585 may at the same time enable small-scale studies with an increased resolution and enlarge
586 the spatial coverage of designs up to the ecosystem scale. For DOV, data consistency is
587 also increased, as there are no differences between videos filmed by distinct divers.
588 Moreover, additional sensors can be coupled to video systems and thus collect additional
589 information on biotic and abiotic variables, as recently advocated by Johnson et al. (2013).

590

591 5.5. Which technique for observing and monitoring coastal biodiversity?

592 The choice of a video technique first depends on the object of the study. Reviewed
593 applications of video techniques in shallow waters were listed in Section 3. These are only a
594 sample of the potential use of each technique, as in this area, technological progress is swift
595 (subsection 2.6) and there is room for innovation and alternative types of implementation.
596 General recommendations may thus be made regarding the scope of each technique (Table
597 10, last column), but these main features should be seen as indicative rather than
598 prescriptive. For instance, none of the references specifically dealt with the observation of
599 juvenile or larval fish. Yet this could be achieved by several existing RUV techniques, by
600 setting them in appropriate locations with adequate camera settings. Likewise, shy species
601 may be monitored using automated systems regularly recording species activity. Indeed a
602 wide spectrum of applications is feasible with the current technologies.

603 There are still advantages and shortcomings associated with each technique. These
604 were discussed in the previous subsections (5.1 to 5.4) and summarized in Table 10.
605 Choosing a technique must thus stem from both the general features of each technique and
606 their proven outcomes, but technical adaptations and fast technological changes should also
607 be taken into account. The techniques most often used for observing and monitoring coastal
608 biodiversity and resources remain UVC, fishing and, to a lesser extent, acoustics. This
609 situation prevails for both research studies and management-oriented monitoring. Although
610 not recent, the advent of video techniques has not altered this situation. Indeed, many video
611 systems developed in the past only served during a given research project, and were not
612 intended to be transferred to other contexts or users. This situation changed with the

613 development of BRUV, where the same technique is now repeatedly used in many different
614 contexts.

615 In the process of selecting a technique for a given study, investment and operating costs
616 are two crucial parameters, particularly when replicated designs involving a large number of
617 observations are envisaged. Although these costs were not often documented in the papers,
618 the review showed that compared to UVC, i) video techniques generally involved less time
619 spent on the field at the expense of more time spent in post-treatment, for image analysis;
620 and ii) a lower level of scientific expertise was required during field work. Other features may
621 vary from one technique to another (see Section 2 for description of techniques).

622

623 5.6. Future prospects for underwater video monitoring

624 The technological progress seen in the last decade (see subsection 2.6) will continue, so
625 that system autonomy, storage capacity, and sensor resolution will increase. Human-
626 operated systems will continue to be used, particularly for research and in the context of
627 participative management in coastal areas. But there is a wide scope for automated systems.
628 These can be permanent stations with multiple sensors, either cabled (see e.g. ESONET
629 project: <http://www.esonet-noe.org/About-ESONET> and Aguzzi et al., 2011, 2012) or mobile
630 systems transmitting information, e.g. programmed gliders (Moline and Schofield, 2009).
631 Such advances will considerably increase the amount of data collected by underwater video
632 systems (among other techniques). It will thus be essential to analyse and manage these
633 large data sets. Automated image analysis will be key for gaining time. Several projects have
634 been set up with this objective, see for instance the Fish4Knowledge project, which aims to
635 analyse undersea fish videos (www.Fish4Knowledge.eu, Phoenix et al., 2013). However,
636 species identification and counting not requiring human intervention still remains a challenge.
637 Properly managed data is the second issue, particularly in view of long-term monitoring.
638 Furthermore, data for biodiversity monitoring and assessment are often collected at the scale
639 of an entire ecosystem, and they are to be shared within collaborative projects. Developing

640 shared protocols and data management utilities for collecting and utilizing the wealth of data
641 that will be made available in the future should be a priority.

642 Global commitments to conservation also entail research issues at larger scales,
643 particularly regarding spatial patterns of biodiversity and ecosystem approaches to
644 management and conservation (Christensen et al., 1996). Hence, for both research and
645 monitoring purposes, observations with improved spatial coverage and resolution should be
646 carried out in all habitats; they should document exploited and non-exploited species, as well
647 as benthic coverage, including sensitive taxa such as sea grass and coral. These
648 considerable information needs cannot be achieved solely through the techniques used so
649 far, and complementary observation techniques are needed, among which video techniques,
650 either on stand-alone basis or preferably combined with other techniques, are definitely a
651 good candidate.

652

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Accepted Version

Table 1. Technical specifications of unbaited RUV systems. Horizontal (H) and vertical (V) in the second column refer to the direction of image recording.

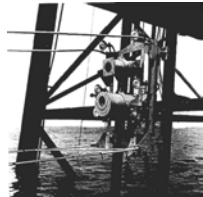





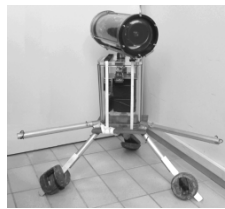
Source	Type	Technical details	Illustration
LaFond et al. (1961)	H-RUV	Mounted on a vertical rail Linked to mobile platform Additional equipment: six floodlights	
Kumpf and Lowenstein (1962); Kronengold et al. (1964)	AC-H-RUV	Linked to laboratory control panel by a multi-conductor cable. Observation duration: 24 h Lens view angle: wide 2 spotlights, hydrophones, sound projector	
Stevenson (1967); Holt (1967)	AC-HV-RUV	Linked to laboratory control panel Energy supplied through a submarine cable Observation duration: 24 h Pan tilt mechanism (360° horizontally and 50° vertically), lens view angle: wide Remotely controlled windshield-wiper, releasing a toxic material, hydrophones, sound projector	
Fedra and Machan (1979)	H-RUV	Autonomous Observation duration: 1 week Lens view angle: wide Side flash reflectors (12 V battery in separate housing), Electronic timer (6V batteries)	
Dunbrack and Zielinski (2003)	V-RUV	Autonomous Observation duration: 240h (20 days) Black & white camera, electronic timer Additional time-lapse video recorder	NA
Stokesbury et al. (2004) and Tyne et al. (2010)	V-RUV	Downward-oriented video camera, attached to the apex of a stainless steel pyramid Linked to boat Black & white camera linked to a laptop computer Additional infrared illumination	
Jan et al. (2007)	H-RUV	Linked to laboratory, internet video streaming Continuous recording: Colour camera Additional illumination for night time	
Aguzzi et al. (2011); Condal et al. (2012)	H-RUV	Linked to laboratory, transmission of audio and video for internet streaming Pan tilt mechanism (360° horizontally and ° 210° vertically)	NA
Pelletier et al. (2012)	ROT-H-RUV	2 waterproof housings connected by an axis. Engine lower housing sets in motion the upper housing Programmed rotations of 60° every 30 seconds Autonomous Observation duration: 9 min (i.e. 3 rotations) Colour HD camera, Lens view angle: 60°	

Table 2. Technical specifications of Baited RUV systems. Horizontal (H) and vertical (V) in the second column refer to the direction of image recording.

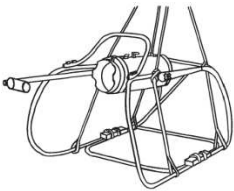
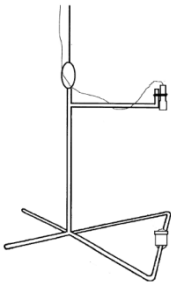
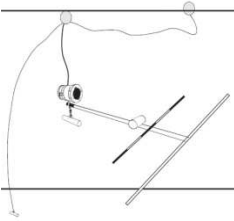
Source	Type	Technical details	illustration
Ellis and DeMartini (1995)	H-BRUV	Autonomous Set on bottom Observation duration: 10 to 60 min Colour camera (red filter for underwater vision) Lens view angle: wide No additional sensors	
Willis and Babcock (2000)	V-BRUV	Linked to boat Observation duration: 30 or 60 min Colour camera	
Heagney <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Mid-water H-BRUV	Autonomous Mid-water device Observation duration: 45 min Lens view angle: wide Depth sounder	

Table 3. Technical specifications of Towed video systems (TOWV). Camera orientation is reported in the third column.


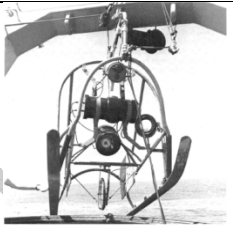
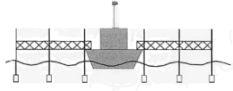

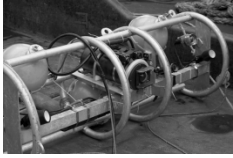
Source	Type	Technical details	Illustration
Machan and Fedra (1975)	Seabed TOWV	Angled down (30°) Linked to boat Boat speed: max 1 m.s ⁻¹ Observation distance: 20 km in 1 day Still camera, spotlight, flash	
Holme and Barrett (1977)	Seabed TOWV	Angled down (45°) Linked to boat Boat speed: ½ - 1 knot (0.257-0.514 m.s ⁻¹) Transect length: around 3.5 km Observation duration: 2.5 h (max 3h) Still camera, light	
Norris et al. (1997)	Mid-Water TOWV	Angled down Linked to boat Boat speed: max 1 m.s ⁻¹ Transect length: 174 m Observation duration: 183 s Colour camera Additional light	NA
Riegl et al. (2001)	Mid-Water TOWV	Vertical The video cameras were individually linked to six onboard recorders Transect length: 50 m Colour camera Lens view angle: wide	
Spencer et al. (2005)	Seabed TOWV	Vertical Linked to boat Boat speed: 0.6 m.s ⁻¹ Transect length: 30, 100, and 200 m Observation duration: 2 h Black & white camera Lens view angle: field of view = 5 m ² Temperature sensor	
Hayashizaki and Ogawa (2006)	Mid-Water TOWV	Vertical Linked to boat Transect length: 50 m GPS, depth sounder	NA
Rooper and Zimmermann (2007)	Seabed TOWV	Angled down (35°) Linked to boat Boat speed: 1.8-2.7 km.h ⁻¹ Observation duration: 45 to 55 min Colour camera Three lasers, lights	

Table 4. Referenced studies involving DOV, with main protocol features, and study focus. For comparison, Bortone et al. (1991, 1994) presented the stationary rotating point count technique for counting fish, with an observation radius of 5.64 m (see text for details). ST: straight transect; TC: time census; TT: towed transect; BT: browsed transect.

Source	Census type	Length (m)	Distance above the bottom (cm)	Speed (m.s ⁻¹)	Study Fish / Habitat
Alevizon and Brooks (1975)	ST	50	NA	NA	Fish
Davis and Anderson (1989)	ST	200	100	0.33	Fish
Greene and Alevizon (1989)	ST	NA	NA	constant	Fish
Leonard and Clark (1993)	ST	2	50	0.07	Habitat
Aronson et al. (1994)	ST	25	NA	slowly	Fish & Habitat
Parker et al. (1994)	TC (15 min)	NA	100	with prevailing current	Fish
Carleton and Done (1995)	TT	200	100 – 150	1 - 1.23	Habitat
	ST	200	100 – 150	0.63 - 0.78	Habitat
Vogt et al. (1997)	TT	500	50 – 70	0.11 - 0.25	Habitat
Ninio et al. (2000)	ST	50	25 - 30	NA	Habitat
Rogers and Miller (2001)	ST	20 and 100	40	0.03	Habitat
Ninio et al. (2003)	ST	50	25 to 30	NA	Fish & Habitat
Tessier (2005); Tessier et al. (2005)	ST	24	300	0.3	Fish
Watson et al. (2005)	ST	25	NA	NA	Fish & Habitat
Houk and Van Woesik (2006)	ST	15, 35 and 50	NA	0.15	Habitat
Kenyon et al. (2006)	TT	19.2 to 38.6	100	0.69 – 0.97	Habitat
Lam et al. (2006)	ST	50	40	0.10	Habitat
Leujak and Ormond (2007)	ST	50	30 – 35	0.12	Habitat
Cruz et al. (2008)	ST	20	40	0.05	Habitat
Langlois et al. (2010)	ST	25	30	3	Fish & Habitat
Watson et al. (2010)	ST	50 and 100	30	0.34	Fish & Habitat
Pelletier et al. (2011)	ST	50	150	0.2 - 0.3	Fish
	BT	50 x 4	varying elevation	speed	Fish

Table 5. Applications of underwater video techniques according to five main topics. NR indicates that No reference was found in the literature search.

	RUV	BRUV	TOWV	DOV
Natural behaviour and activity patterns (e.g. circadian)	<p>Kumpf (1964); Steinberg and Koczy (1964); Steinberg et al. (1965); Cummings et al. (1966); Stevenson and Myrberg (1966); Stevenson (1967); LaFond (1968); Richard (1968); Myrberg et al. (1969); Colin (1971,1972,1973); Myrberg (1972a, 1972b); Myrberg and Spires (1972); Smith and Tyler (1973); Fedra and Machan (1979); Dunlap and Pawlik (1996); Barans et al. (2002, 2005); Bellwood et al. (2003) ; Dunbrack and Zielinski (2003); Jenkins et al. (2004); Bellwood et al. (2006); Dendrinis et al. (2007); Enstipp et al. (2007); Fischer et al. (2007); Fox and Bellwood (2007); Mantyka and Bellwood (2007a, 2007b); Bellwood and Fulton (2008); Fox and Bellwood (2008a); Meynecke et al. (2008); Cvitanovic and Bellwood (2009); Hoey and Bellwood (2009); Hoey (2010); Hoey and Bellwood (2010, 2011); Bennett and Bellwood (2011); Burkepille and Hay (2011); Lefèvre and Bellwood (2011); Burge et al. (2012); Hannah and Jones (2012); Masuda et al. (2012); Vergés et al. (2012)</p> <p>(45 references)</p>	<p>Burrows et al. (1999); Bond et al. (2012); Burge et al. (2012)</p>	<p>Bräger et al. (1999) ; Grabowski et al. (2012)</p>	<p>Krohn and Boisclair (1994); Hall and Hanlon (2002)</p>
Effect of human-induced disturbance on species behaviour (diver, bait, acoustics)	<p>Dearden et al. (2010); Watson and Harvey (2007); Picciulin et al. (2010)</p>	<p>Watson and Harvey (2007); Dorman et al. (2012); Langlois et al. (2012b); Young and Bellwood (2012)</p>	<p>NR</p>	<p>NR</p>

<p>Spatial and temporal patterns of abundance, size and fish assemblage composition (including effects of habitat, anthropogenic pressures and protection)</p>	<p>Dunbrack (2008) ; Becker et al. (2010); Aguzzi et al. (2011); Bloomfield et al. (2012); Burge et al. (2012); Chabanet et al. (2012); Condal et al. (2012); Pelletier et al. (2012) (8 references)</p>	<p>Willis and Babcock (2000); Willis et al. (2000, 2003); Denny and Babcock (2004); Denny et al. (2004); Cappelletti et al. (2007a); Malcolm et al. (2007); Stobart et al. (2007); Wraith (2007); Stoner et al. (2008); Gomelyuk (2009); Watson et al. (2009); Chatfield et al. (2010); McLean et al. (2010, 2011); Cappelletti et al. (2011); Göetze et al. (2011); Lowry et al. (2011) ;Martinez et al. (2011) ; Birt et al. (2012); Fitzpatrick et al. (2012) ; Gladstone et al. (2012) ; Harvey et al. (2012a,b); Schultz et al. (2012) (25 references)</p>	<p>Shucksmith et al. (2006); Carbines and Cole (2009)</p>	<p>Alevizon and Brooks (1975); Davis and Anderson (1989); Greene and Alevizon (1989); Aronson et al. (1994); Bortone et al. (1991, 1994); Parker et al. (1994); Ninio et al. (2000); Tessier et al. (2005) ; Watson et al. (2005, 2010); Langlois et al. (2010); Pelletier et al. (2011) (13 references)</p>
<p>Benthos abundance and size monitoring</p>	<p>Handley et al. (2003); Dunbrack (2006)</p>	<p>NR</p>	<p>Holme and Barrett (1977); Spencer et al. (2005)</p>	<p>NR</p>
<p>Habitat mapping, Benthic cover monitoring and impact of fishing gears on habitat</p>	<p>Tyne et al. (2010) ; Pelletier et al. (2012)</p>	<p>NR</p>	<p>Machan and Fedra (1975); Holme and Barrett (1977); Norris et al. (1997); Riegl et al. (2001); Rosenkranz and Byersdorfer (2004); Spencer et al. (2005); Hayashizaki and Ogawa (2006); McDonald et al. (2006); Bucas et al. (2007); Rooper and Zimmermann (2007); Smith et al. (2007); Grizzle et al. (2008); Carbines and Cole (2009); Bulh-Mortensen et al. (2012); Grabowski et al. (2012) (15 references)</p>	<p>Leonard and Clark (1993); Aronson et al. (1994); Carleton and Done (1995); Vogt et al. (1997); Ninio et al. (2000); Rogers and Miller (2001); Watson et al. (2005, 2010); Houk and Van Woesik (2006); Kenyon et al. (2006); Lam et al. (2006); Leujak and Ormond (2007); Cruz et al. (2008); Tilot et al. (2008); Langlois et al. (2010) (15 references)</p>

Table 6. Metrics computed from the main video techniques. The list of metrics may depend on the particular implementation of the technique.

Technique	Fish and Macrofauna-related metrics	Benthos- and Habitat-related metrics
RUV and DOV	Frequency of occurrence, presence/absence per species Species richness Abundance or abundance density per species or per size class of the species : maximum abundance seen during the observation period, or mean abundance over viewing intervals during the observation period Number of bites by herbivores Distance from fish to the camcorder Occurrences of activities per individual	Percent cover of abiotic substrate Habitat topography and complexity Percent cover of epifauna and epiflora
BRUV	Number of species within the field of view during the observation period Maximum fish abundance seen during the observation period Maximum number of individuals per species simultaneously observed during the observation (MaxN) Time to first appearance per species	
TOWV	Abundance and percent cover of some macro-invertebrate species	Abundance of epibenthic species Percent cover of epifauna and epiflora Percent cover of biotic and abiotic substrate and habitat Habitat topography and complexity

Table 7. Studies comparing techniques. NR indicates that No reference was found in the literature search.

Only studies with a protocol aimed at comparing data from distinct techniques were quoted.

	RUV	Stereo RUV	BRUV	Stereo BRUV	TOWV	DOV
RUV	NR	Harvey et al. (2002b)	Harvey et al. (2007); Bernard and Götz (2012)	NR	NR	NR
Stereo BRUV	NR	Watson et al. (2005)	NR	NR	NR	NR
TOWV	NR	NR	Morrison and Carbines (2006); Monk et al. (2012)	NR	NR	NR
Stereo DOV	NR	Watson et al. (2005)	NR	Watson et al. (2005); Langlois et al. (2010); Watson et al. (2010)	NR	NR
UVC	Francour et al. (1999); Cooke and Schreer (2002); Fox and Bellwood (2008); Burge et al. (2012); Longo and Floeter (2012); McCauley et al. (2012)	Harvey et al. (2001 a,b, 2002a, 2004); Cappo et al. (2003)	Willis and Babcock (2000); Willis et al. (2000); Westera et al. (2003); Langlois et al. (2006); Morrison and Carbines (2006); Stobart et al. (2007); Colton and Swearer (2010); Burge et al. (2012); Lowry et al. (2012)	NR	Morrison and Carbines (2006); Assis et al. (2007); Leujak and Ormond (2007)	Greene and Alevizon (1989); Michalopoulos et al. (1992); Leonard and Clarck (1993); Rogers and Miller (2001); Tessier et al. (2005); Lam et al. (2006); Pelletier et al. (2011)
Fishing	Cooke and Schreer (2002); Wells et al. (2008)	NR	Ellis and DeMartini (1995); Willis et al. (2000); Cappo et al. (2004); Morrison and Carbines (2006); Bloomfield et al. (2012)	Harvey et al. (2012c); Langlois et al. (2012a)	Morrison and Carbines (2006)	NR
Acoustic	NR	NR	Gledhill et al. (1996)	NR	NR	NR

Table 8. Main outcomes of comparative studies involving video techniques (see references and Supplementary material B, C and D for details). For each topic of interest, symbols “>”, “≥”, “≠”, “≈” compare the number of items or the assemblage structure detected by the two techniques, which may represent a qualitative summary over several results.

FISH	
Species richness	
UVC > H-BRUV > V-BRUV	Langlois et al. (2006)
UVC > BRUV	Colton and Swearer (2010)
UVC > RUV	Francour et al. (1999)
RUV > UVC & Experimental fishing	Cooke and Schreer (2002)
UVC ≥ DOV	Pelletier et al. (2011)
UVC > DOV	Green and Alevizon (1989)
TOWV > UVC	Assis et al. (2007)
BRUV > RUV & DOV	Watson et al. (2005) ; Bernard and Götz (2012)
RUV > BRUV	Harvey et al. (2007)
BRUV > DOV	Langlois et al. (2010); Watson et al. (2010)
BRUV > Exp. Fishing / Traps	Ellis and DeMartini (1995); Harvey et al. (2012b)
Assemblage structure	
UVC ≠ BRUV	Colton and Swearer (2010)
BRUV ≈ UVC	Westera et al. (2003)
BRUV ≠ RUV ≠ DOV	Watson et al. 2005)
BRUV ≠ DOV	Langlois et al. (2010); Watson et al. (2010)
BRUV ≠ TRAWL	Cappo et al. (2004)
BRUV > Traps	Harvey et al. (2012b)
Abundance	
UVC > BRUV	Langlois et al. (2006); Colton and Swearer (2010)
UVC ≥ DOV	Pelletier et al. (2011)
TOWV > UVC	Assis et al. (2007)
RUV > UVC & Exp. Fishing	Cooke and Schreer (2002)
BRUV > RUV	Harvey et al. (2007) ; Bernard and Götz (2012)
BRUV ≠ DOV (depends on family)	Watson et al. (2010)
UVC ≠ DOV (depends on family)	Pelletier et al. (2011)
BRUV > Traps	Harvey et al. (2012b)
Occurrences	
BRUV > Experimental fishing	Ellis and DeMartini (1995); Harvey et al. (2012b)
HABITAT – BENTHOS	
UVC > DOV: Diversity of coralline algae observed	Leonard and Clark (1993)
DOV ≈ UVC: Live coral cover	Rogers and Miller (2001)
DOV > UVC:	
% Coral cover	Lam et al. (2006)
Occurrence of Gorgonians & Macroalgae, % Bleached coral	Rogers and Miller (2001)
TOWV > UVC: % Benthic cover	Leujak and Ormond (2007)

Table 9. Cost-related information per technique.

	Reference	Staff time per station (hrs)
RUV	Bernard and Götz (2012)	3.5
	Pelletier et al. (2012) (ROT-RUV)	0.5-1.6
BRUV	Langlois et al. (2010) (stereo-BRUV)	1.75-3
	Bernard and Götz (2012)	7.0
	Gladstone et al. (2012)	1.5 (soaktime only)
DOV	Leujak and Ormond (2007)	
	Langlois et al. (2010) (stereo-DOV)	0.75-1.8
	Pelletier et al. (2011)	0.4-2.5
TOWV	See Table 3	depends on tow length
UVC	<i>Pelletier et al. (2011) (strip transect)</i>	0.75-1.5
	<i>Bohnsack and Bannerot (1986) (stationary point count)</i>	0.2
	<i>Leujak and Ormond (2007) (Line Intercept Transect)</i>	1.25

Accepted Version

Table 10. Comparison of the main advantages and shortcomings of each observation technique and recommendations for future use. UVC, fishing and acoustics are reported for comparison.

Methods	Advantages	Shortcomings	Recommendations
RUV	<p>Non extractive Least invasive method Constant observation duration Does not require diver Possible observation at large depth Fast implementation Possible participation of non-scientific staff</p>	<p>Duration of image analysis Management of large data sets</p>	<p>Diurnal and seasonal patterns of behaviour, species activity and abundance over long periods/at high frequencies Highly spatially-replicated designs Monitoring of conspicuous and target species</p>
BRUV	<p>Non extractive Increased observed fish abundance through baiting Constant observation duration Does not require diver Opportunity to work in deep water Possible participation of non-scientific staff</p>	<p>Unknown effect of bait plume Relatively long observation duration Duration of image analysis Management of large data sets</p>	<p>Monitoring populations of fishes, and particularly carnivorous species Monitoring in areas where diversity and abundance are low</p>
TOWV	<p>Non extractive Does not require diver Opportunity to work in deep water Fast implementation Large spatial coverage Possible participation of non-scientific staff</p>	<p>May disturb the ecosystem due to vessel noise Management of large data sets Duration of image analysis</p>	<p>Monitoring habitat and fixed benthic species over large areas</p>
DOV	<p>Non extractive Does not require scientific diver</p>	<p>All effects associated with the presence of a diver underwater (see below) Duration of image analysis</p>	<p>Study benthic cover and macrofauna</p>
UVC	<p><i>Non extractive Widely used Possible participation of volunteers for simplified protocols</i></p>	<p><i>Observer effect Diver effect Depth limitation Requires diver trained to species identification and counting Observation duration</i></p>	<p><i>Studies at species level Inventories and species counts Small species</i></p>
Fishing	<p><i>Extractive Does not require diver Possible observation at large depth Possible participation of fishers</i></p>	<p><i>Unknown observation volume and species catchability</i></p>	<p><i>Monitoring of resources</i></p>
Acoustics	<p><i>Non extractive Spatial coverage Possible observation at large depth</i></p>	<p><i>High-tech analysis of data No species identification</i></p>	<p><i>Monitoring of resources coupled with another technique, e.g. fishing More suitable for pelagic species</i></p>

Figures

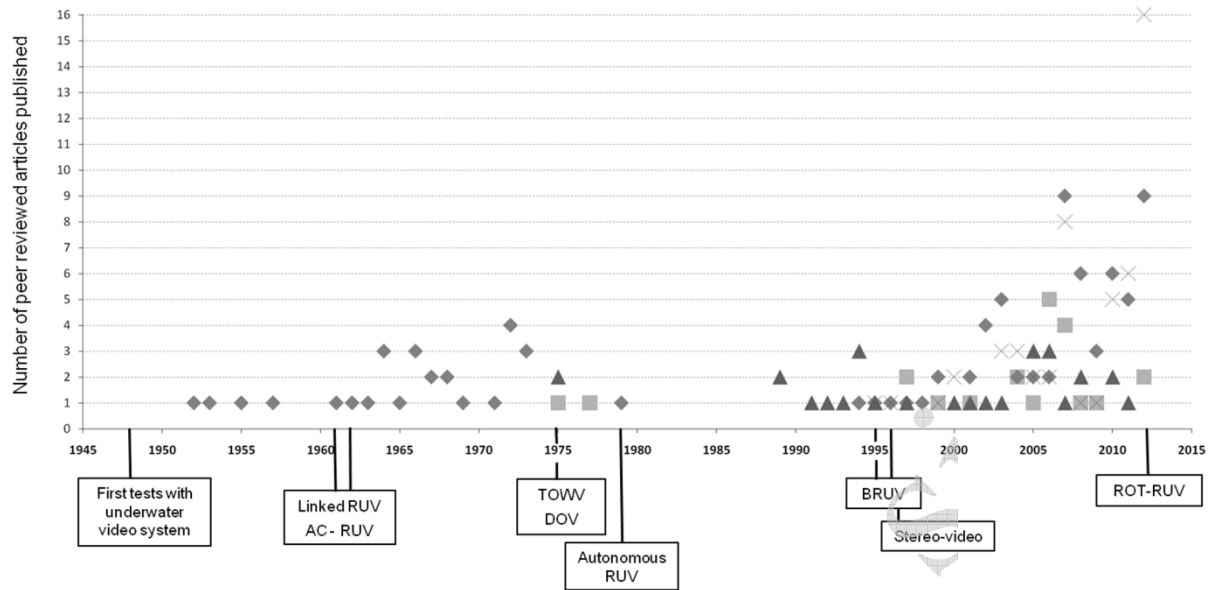


Figure 1. Historical perspective on the development of underwater video systems, with associated papers (◆ RUV; ■ TOWV; ▲ DOV; X BRUV).

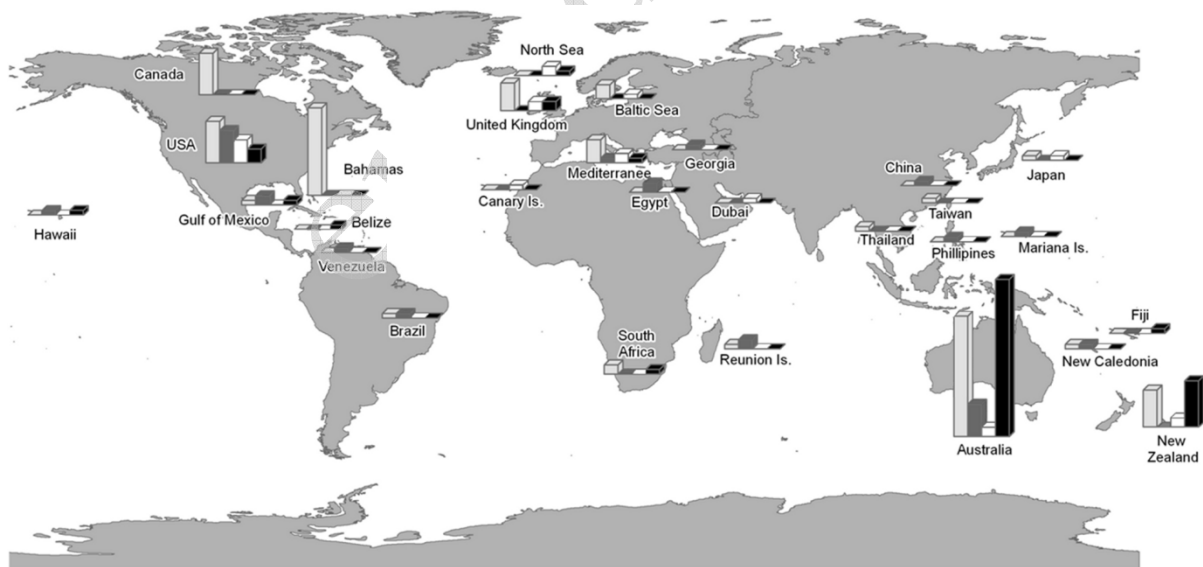


Figure 2. Geographical distribution of published studies. Each bar is proportional to the number of papers published for each technique: ■ RUV; ■ DOV; □ TOWV and ■ BRUV. The number of papers published by year and country per technique are given in Supplementary Material A.

Supplementary material A. Geographical distribution of reviewed studies. Numbers after each region correspond to references available at the end of this document. They are classified from the oldest to the most recent reference for each region.

Technique	Region	Published years	Technique	Region	Published years
RUV	United Kingdom ^{9, 10, 11, 31, 7}	1952 - 2002	DOV	Venezuela ²	1975
	USA ^{6, 108, 23, 136, 59, 8, 30, 78, 126}	1957 - 2012		USA ^{2, 50, 74, 131, 115, 3, 149}	1975 - 2001
	Bahamas ^{106, 12, 104, 105, 157, 158, 48, 160, 98, 159, 107, 147, 138, 41, 42, 134, 135, 43, 154}	1962 - 1973		Gulf of Mexico ^{24, 25}	1991 - 1994
	Mediterranean sea ^{62, 46, 52, 146, 1, 45}	1979 - 2012		Georgia ¹⁴²	1994
	Canada ^{103, 145, 58, 56, 61, 57}	1994 - 2008		Australia ^{38, 139, 76, 140, 171, 112, 174}	1995 - 2010
	New Zealand ^{79, 80, 68, 81, 82, 83, 84, 77, 85, 87}	1995 - 2007		Philippines ¹⁶⁹	1997
	Australia ^{16, 35, 89, 171, 17, 65, 122, 123, 172, 15, 66, 67, 130, 49, 94, 93, 95, 167, 18, 96, 114, 168}	2003 - 2012		Reunion Is. ^{164, 165}	2005
	Ireland ^{101, 72}	2004 - 2009		China ¹⁰⁹	2006
	Baltic sea ⁶³	2007		Hawai ¹⁰²	2006
	Taiwan ¹⁰⁰	2007		Mariana Is. ⁹⁹	2006
	Gulf of Mexico ¹⁷⁵	2008		Egypt ^{116, 166}	2007 - 2008
	Thailand ⁵¹	2010		Brazil ⁴⁷	2008
	South Africa ^{14, 19}	2010 - 2012		New Caledonia ¹⁴³	2011
	Brazil ¹¹⁷	2012			
	Japan ¹²⁵	2012			
	New Caledonia ¹⁴⁴	2012			
Reunion Is. ³⁹	2012				
TOWV	Mediterranean sea ^{120, 155}	1975 - 2007	BRUV	Hawai ⁶⁰	1995
	United Kingdom ^{97, 153}	1977 - 2006		Gulf of Mexico ⁷⁰	1996
	Philippines ¹⁶⁹	1997		New Zealand ^{5, 177, 179, 180, 53, 54, 178, 111, 133, 87, 13}	1999 - 2011
	USA ^{141, 151, 162, 156, 150, 75}	1997 - 2008		Australia ^{35, 176, 32, 171, 33, 34, 92, 121, 170, 181, 173, 112, 174, 40, 44, 129, 36, 118, 128, 20, 55, 64, 69, 86, 88, 90, 110, 113, 119, 132, 152, 182}	2003 - 2012
	New Zealand ^{26, 133, 37}	1999 - 2009		Mediterranean sea ¹⁶¹	2007
	Dubai ¹⁴⁸	2001		USA ^{163, 29}	2008 - 2012
	Australia ^{127, 132}	2006 - 2012		Fiji ⁷¹	2011
	Hawai ¹⁰²	2006		North sea ¹²⁴	2011
	Japan ⁹¹	2006		Belize ²²	2012
	Baltic sea ²⁷	2007		United Kingdom ²¹	2012
	Canary Is. ⁴	2007			
Iceland ⁷³	2012				
Norway ²⁸	2012				

Supplementary material B. Main outcomes of the studies comparing a video technique with UVC (62% of comparative studies, Table 7). H-BRUV=Horizontal Remote Underwater Video, RUV=Remote Underwater Video, SRUV=stereo remote underwater video, DOV= Diver-Operated Video, TOWV= towed video, UVC=underwater visual census, V-BRUV=Vertical Remote Underwater Video.

Main outcomes	
RUV UVC	<p>Highlight known taxa-specific attraction or repulsion effects with respect to diver⁶⁸. Divers could make observations that were not possible from RUV (underwater perception & mobility)⁶⁸. Density estimates of the five most abundant fish species were always greater from UVC than from RUV⁶⁸. RUV permitted the detection of the most species and the largest number of individuals⁴⁶. RUV was more cost-effective than UVC⁶⁸. Variable visibility was the main limitation of the video technique⁴⁶.</p>
SRUV UVC	<p>Highlight diver effect (difference in estimates made by beginners vs. experienced scientific divers)^{81, 82, 83}. Low variability around true lengths estimates made by SRUV^{81, 83}. The coefficient of variation of fish length estimate was significantly lower for SRUV than for UVC^{81, 82}. The power to detect changes in mean length was higher with SRUV^{81, 82}. Diver-based estimates were more accurate (mean error 0.87 cm) than UVC but less precise (SD 5.29 cm)⁸³ and precision depended on the distance⁸⁴. The error in the estimates increased as the individual moved away from the diver⁸⁴. Diver-based estimates were less accurate than the stereo-video technique⁸³. Distance was underestimated by divers⁸⁴.</p>
BRUV UVC	<p>BRUV recorded a larger number of species^{110, 172, 176}, more mobile predators⁴⁸ and a larger abundance of <i>Lethrinidae</i>¹⁷⁵ than UVC UVC recorded larger species richness and abundance (in terms of all species, herbivores, cryptic species, and most territorial species), higher richness, and higher biodiversity^{44, 111, 165}. Data from BRUV could not be converted into density estimates per unit area¹³³. BRUV was not suitable for the estimation of small snapper densities in an area of very high juvenile densities¹³³.</p>
V-BRUV UVC	<p>Density and average size was significantly larger for V-BRUV than for UVC^{176, 178}. UVC recorded a larger abundance and diversity of fish¹¹⁰. Relative fish density was similar for both methods¹⁷⁸. V-BRUV was an effective (and sometimes superior) alternative to UVC methods for estimating relative densities of predatory reef fish¹⁷⁶. Lethrinidae and Serranidae did not approach the video system when the camera was above them¹¹⁰.</p>
TOWV UVC	<p>Species richness, abundance, overall sampling effort and total surveyed area (121.968 ha vs. 0.310 ha) were higher when using TOWV⁴. TOWV estimates provided the most accurate coverage of major categories of benthic substrate¹¹⁶. TOWV only partially detected the very small fish but was more appropriate for larger individuals¹³³. TOWV was more effective in term of observed size range, abundance estimates and cost¹³³.</p>
DOV UVC	<p>UVC recorded more red algae taxa than DOV, and DOV tended to overestimate the percent cover of rock and articulated coralline algae¹¹⁵. DOV detected more individuals but UVC identified more species⁷⁴. UVC was more accurate, better detected trends over time¹⁰⁹, recorded larger abundance and species richness¹⁴³, and was more cost-effective¹¹⁵. DOV provided representative observations of fish abundance and species diversity, although fewer species and individuals were detected¹⁴³. Coral cover estimates were similar, but DOV-based cover estimates were higher for coral bleaching, gorgonians and macroalgae¹⁴⁹. UVC overestimated the percent coral cover in coral-rich areas¹⁰⁹. DOV and UVC yielded similar values for coral cover¹⁴⁹. Browsing DOV detected more individuals and species than straight DOV, conducting DOV before or after UVC did not affect DOV observations¹⁴³. The proportion of fish that were not identified up to the species level was 3.3% in High Definition video observations vs 1.7% in UVC¹⁴³.</p>

Supplementary material C. Main outcomes of comparisons between video techniques (19% of all comparative studies, Table 7)

Techniques	Main outcomes
stereo-RUV RUV	Estimates were significantly more accurate and precise with the stereo-RUV than with the monovideo ⁸⁴ .
stereo-RUV stereo-BRUV	Species richness based on stereo-RUV was larger in diversified habitat and lesser in lower reef relief, while species richness based on stereo-BRUV was similar in the 2 habitats, and the relative abundance of rare and large predators and species richness were larger ¹⁷² . None of the techniques sampled small cryptic species (s.a. Gobiidae and Blenniidae) ¹⁷² .
Stereo-RUV Stereo-DOV	Stereo-DOV recorded more species (42 vs. 23) and sampled more smaller or cryptic species than other methods (divers looked for them) ¹⁷² . Labridae richness was higher from stereo-RUV ¹⁷² . Both techniques detected a larger number of species in diversified habitat and a lesser number in lower reef relief ¹⁷² . None of the techniques identified small cryptic species (s.a. Gobiidae and Blenniidae) ¹⁷² .
RUV BRUV	BRUV recorded difference in fish assemblages between habitats (in both temperate and tropical regions) ⁸⁷ . The bait attracted a larger number of carnivores and scavengers without decreasing the representativeness of other trophic groups such as herbivores or omnivores ⁸⁷ .
H-BRUV V-BRUV	H-BRUV detected more fish individuals than V-BRUV ¹¹¹ . (which was found to work well in New Zealand ^{176, 178}) H-BRUV recorded 14 species versus 3 species from V-BRUV ¹¹¹ .
stereo-BRUV DOV	DOV detected a larger number of species in diversified habitat and lesser in lower reef relief ¹⁷² . DOV detected a larger abundance of small Pomacentridae, Labridae and Scaridae ¹⁷¹ . Species richness based on stereo-BRUV was similar in the 2 habitats, and the relative abundance of rare and large predators and species richness were larger ¹⁷² . Stereo-BRUV observed larger species richness, larger relative biomasses of generalist carnivores. Spatial and temporal changes in fish assemblage were better detected from stereo-BRUV ¹¹⁰ . Stereo-BRUV was cost-effective for monitoring fish assemblages ¹¹⁰ . Observed species richness was 40% higher with stereo-BRUV compared to DOV. The number and abundance of large target species were larger, as well as many non target species ¹⁷¹ . None of the techniques detected small cryptic species (s.a. Gobiidae and Blenniidae) ¹⁷² . No difference in the biomass of herbivores observed by the 2 techniques ¹¹⁰ .
V-BRUV TOWV	Data from BRUV could not be converted into density estimates per unit area ¹³³ . BRUV were not suitable for the estimation of small snapper densities in an area of very high juvenile densities ¹³³ . TOWV only partially detected the very small fish but was more appropriate for larger individuals ¹³³ . TOWV was more effective in term of observed size range, abundance estimates and cost ¹³³ .

Supplementary material D. Main outcomes of comparisons between a video technique and fishing or acoustics (14% of all comparative studies about fishing techniques and 5% about acoustics, Table 7)

Techniques	Main outcomes
RUV Fishing	RUV detected more species and individuals ⁴⁶ . Variable visibility was the main limitation of the video technique ⁴⁶ .
BRUV Fishing	BRUV recorded more species and individuals than fishing ⁴⁶ . Trawling recorded mostly sedentary, cryptic and demersal species, but also more nocturnal species ³² . BRUV recorded larger and more mobile species ³² .
V-BRUV Fishing	Observed size structures were consistent between the two techniques ¹⁷⁸ . Relative densities were similar for both techniques ¹⁷⁸ . Fishing recorded the largest species number ¹³³ . Data from V-BRUV could not be converted into density estimates per unit area ¹³³ . V-BRUV was not suitable for the estimation of small snapper densities in an area of very high juvenile densities ¹³³ .
TOWV Fishing	Fishing recorded the largest species number ¹³³ . TOWV only partially detected the very small fish but was more appropriate for larger individuals ¹³³ . TOWV was more effective in term of observed size range, abundance estimates and cost ¹³³ .
BRUV Acoustic	Acoustics coupled with a video camera produced complementary estimates of reef fish abundance ⁷⁰ . Video data provided species identifications and abundance estimates that may vary with water clarity ⁷⁰ . Acoustic data were not dependent on visibility ⁷⁰ .

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