RESCUE AT SEA

Tips for PADI Pros teaching the Digital Underwater Photographer Specialty course.

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SPECS CAMERA SeaLife DC1400 **STROBES** SeaLife Sea Dragon Flash **SETTINGS** *f*/7.9, 1/233 sec., ISO 100 **CONDITIONS** Surface currents

BEHIND THE SHOT

One afternoon, the support crew at Atmosphere Resorts in Dauin, Philippines, were unloading their dive boat when they discovered five sargassum fish – a type of frogfish – stranded on the beach. The fish had washed up at high tide in sargassum, a type of seaweed that is their main habitat. As the in-house marine biologist, I was asked to identify the fish, which they had placed in a container filled with seawater.

I grabbed my camera and the container and swam them a few hundred yards offshore, releasing them near sargassum where they would be taken by the current to deeper water. This was a very tough shot since it happened at the surface. My camera and the sargassum fish were constantly moving due to the surface conditions, so I kept shooting at different angles and with different strobe power until I drifted too far from the resort and had to swim back.

TO HELP YOUR DIVERS GET A CHALLENGING SHOT, GIVE THEM THESE FIVE TIPS:

1 Bracket your shot – Sometimes your camera's screen shows a slightly different picture underwater than on the surface. To eliminate this problem, take multiple shots of your subject from the same angle, except change the settings like exposure and shutter speed to give yourself different versions.

2 Shoot up – Try to get as low as possible when you take a shot, while practicing good buoyancy. By shooting up you can create a much more appealing photo and can isolate the subject. For example, by having the blue ocean as the background.

3 Tell a story – When taking a photo, you want viewers to be able to answer the question, "Why am I looking at this?" Try to compose a shot that conveys that.

4 Take practice shots – I've missed many shots because of wrong camera settings, so I practice in the beginning of a dive. Before looking for your subjects, take pictures of stationary objects from the distances and angles you might use, this way you know the settings you need.

5 Focus on the eye – Whether you are going for a blurry background or everything in focus, you must have the eye in focus. We are naturally drawn to the eye in a photo of an animal and, even if the rest of the photo is stunning, a blurry eye can ruin a photo.

▶ If you have an image and tips you'd like to share in Photo Corner in an upcoming issue, please email ashley.annin@bonniercorp.com