

UWCameraStore Fiber Snoot Pro Dual

by Dan Bolt

Just after the last edition of UwP Mag came out I received one of the new dual-fibre snoots from UWCameraStore. I'm a big fan of snoots and have a few in my armoury – ranging from the Flip Snoot Pro from the same manufacturer all the way down to a 20cm length of old drain-pipe glued to a spare diffuser for my YS-D1. Don't laugh, it's surprisingly effective in the right situations!

So, enter with eager anticipation the "UWCameraStore Fiber Snoot Pro Dual". As the name succinctly suggests this is a dual snoot, which uses fibre cores fed through 2 flexible Loc-Line arms to channel the light precisely where the photographer wants it.

For us micro four-thirds shooters it can sometimes be hard to get the light where it's needed because m4/3rds lenses – and therefore ports – are so short there isn't physically much room to tuck strobe and snoot into the desired position. Take the Panasonic 45mm macro for example, the port for my Aquatica housing stands only 50mm proud of the

housing.

The snoot is designed to fit snugly over the front of the strobe and on the model for Sea & Sea flash-units, two plastic 'pins' are used to firmly hold it in place. The first couple of times you insert the pins (they slot into the grooves on the outside of the strobe for the diffusers) they can be really hard to get in and out but after a few dives it becomes much easier. (Please note that this snoot is available for the YS-D1 & YS-D2, DS160 & DS161, Z-330, Z-240 & D-2000 strobes).

On the inside of the snoot there are actually three 'pick-up' groups of fibres. Two directly in front of the flash bulb and the third is for channelling the on-board LED spotting light. Making use of the spotting-light is a great idea as it can help you see exactly where the light will land when you fire your strobe. This core makes up about 1/3rd of the total number of cores in both of the articulated arms. I found that the spotting light wasn't really powerful enough on my YS-D1 to make much difference on shallow





Inside the head of the snoot, showing the three pick-up cores

Hermit crab on Dead Mens Fingers. Olympus OM-D EM-1, Aquatica AE-M1, Sea & Sea YS-D1, Dual Fibre Snoot, Olympus 30mm macro, f/13, iso400, 1/320th



dives, but during deeper dives and at night this was surprisingly effective. In use it is also obvious that the third pickup core of fibres also transmits the strobe light so you end up with a nice even light across your subject.

At the end of each arm is an adjustable funnel, which allows for even finer control over the light beam and can also be removed completely to give a soft-edged beam if required.

As with all snoots the light actually transmitted to the subject is just a fraction of that created by the strobe itself. But being able to get the ends of the flexible arms so close to the subject meant I didn't have to dial up my YS-D1s as much as with my other snoots, saving battery and speeding recycle times.

The whole unit is designed to be mounted centrally over your housing's port so that you can

have one arm on each side. For open reef diving this is the perfect placement as it leads to a nicely balanced set-up, but if your chosen subject is under a ledge or over-hang then all that bulk above the housing can cause difficulties getting into the right position to shoot.

The adjustable arms are 35cm long and can be bent into an infinite number of positions. Back, side and front lighting are all a breeze to achieve,



Fan worm. Olympus OM-D EM-1, Aquatica AE-M1, Sea & Sea YS-D1, Dual Fibre Snoot, Olympus 12-50mm at 30mm, f/8, iso400, 1/160th

Olympus OM-D EM-1, Aquatica AE-M1, Sea & Sea YS-D1, Dual Fibre Snoot, Olympus 60mm macro, Nauticam CMC-1, f/16, iso200, 1/320th

and even with the super-short working distance of the Olympus 60mm macro + Nauticam CMC-1 combo I was easily able to get the light just where I wanted it.

The more I used the Fibre Snoot Pro Dual the more I liked it, and because you're only using one strobe & mount, you can still take another un-snooted strobe to cover all situations. The all-plastic body is well made and

very robust; I took the one I was lent for this review on a 1500 mile round-trip to the Highlands of Scotland and it performed flawlessly & came back as-new... though I have to confess that the cardboard box got a little soggy!

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