

Scubalamp D-Pro Strobe

by Phil Rudin

Scubalamp Underwater Photography Equipment or SUPE headquarters and factory are located in Guangdong, China. SUPE also has offices in Singapore and Taiwan with distribution throughout most of Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas.

SUPE specializes in the design and manufacturing of underwater lighting equipment for video, stills, creative lighting, optical shaping devices, dive torches and more.

I first met the SUPE team at DEMA in 2018 and in UWP issue #108 I reviewed the SUPE MS20 four color snoot. SUPE's goal is to develop safe and user friendly professional products for underwater photographers around the world.

All of SUPE's lineup of products are extensively tested and all are depth rated up to 100 meters.

Since first meeting the SUPE team the line of products has expended greatly with a complete line of camera trays, arms, float arms, a verity of ball-heads, optical cords, flip adapters, video filters, battery packs and much more.

SUPE currently supplies six different dive torches and fifteen

different video lights all at a wide verity of price points to fit anyones budget.

D-Pro Strobe

The subject of this review is the newly released D-Pro strobe which replaces the dated and more expensive D-Max strobe. This is a very competitively priced strobe at \$758.00 USD and is a manual only strobe which does not include TTL or HSS but is well worth considering.

The D-Pro is a completely new design featuring a robust aluminum body and simple design for ease of use. The D-Pro is powered by a proprietary battery pack that holds three 18650 lithium batteries with an efficiency of 37.8wh.

SUPE rates the output from the circular flash tube at 160 watt seconds with a guide number of 30 at ISO100. I tested the power with two different flash meters against the Inon Z-330 and Ikelite DS-161 and they were all within a tenth of a stop +/- to each other. All three were measured in air at one meter at ISO-100. Ikelite specs also list 160 watts with the proprietary



battery, I could not find a WS listing for Inon probably because they use rechargeable AA batteries which can very greatly.

The D-Pro has the widest beam angle listed at 150 degrees, in my tests with the wide angle and macro diffusers (sold separately) the beam angle remained the same with only a softening of the light output.

The D-Pro has nine power level settings with listed recycle times of 0.1 to 1.1 seconds using a fully charged battery pack. SUPE also lists flash bursts up to ten flashes per second at power level one.

In my tests I was able to shoot at three and five FPS up to power level three. When I make these tests with equipment provided for testing by the manufacture I remain a bit



conservative because testing at too high a frame rate and power level can blow out the flash tube.

I recommend that these tests be done in the water as the flash tube will heat up much more quickly out of the water. If you need 10 FPS I recommend not going above the lowest #1 power setting. SUPE also states that a full battery pack will provide from 500 flashes at full power #9 to 3000 flashes at power level #1.

The D-Pro has support for fiber optic cords or the five pin Nikonos type cords. A cap to hold the fiber optic cord threads over the top of the optical sensor and when removed the strobe will fire as a slave sensing surround flash bursts.



Caribbean Spiny Lobster, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Sony A7R V, Sony 28-60mm F/4-F/5.6 at 36mm with Nauticam WACP-C, ISO100, F/16, 1/20th sec, two D-Pro strobes, Marelux MX-A7RV housing

I used fiber cords with my test strobes which flashed consistently at all power levels.

The rear of the strobe has a round battery compartment cap which is sealed by two O-rings and two large control switches. The first control switch has three settings, off, on and on with focusing/target light which is 500 lumens and does not adjust. The focus light is in the center of the chrome reflector for the ring flash.

The second control switch is for the nine power levels when the strobe

is turned on and you switch from power level eight to nine the strobe will test fire. Between the two control switches is a small LCD panel which displays the power level numbers from 1-9 and a battery power level which shows up to five white bars with a fully charged battery.

Directly under the power level control switch is a red LED which glow red when the strobe is ready to fire and blinks red after firing until it is ready to fire again.

At power level #1 the strobe will fire at 10 FPS. At power level 9 it takes

two or three quick red flashes before the strobe is ready to fire again. As the battery power drops the recycle times may be a bit longer than at full battery capacity. This is common for all strobes and the lithium batteries seem to outperform rechargeable AA type batteries for recycle times.

SUPE rates the circular flash tube at a color temperature of 4800K and they do not list a color temperature change for the wide angle and macro diffusers on the web site or in the manual.

The D-Pro is 170 X 90mm, has an on land weight of 1080g without battery and a U/W weight of 120g. D-Pro is depth rated to 100 meters and includes the battery, battery charger, a one inch ball mount and the user manual. The D-Pro is nicely packaged and is available in silver or black for \$758.00 USD.

Accessories include the W/A and macro diffusers for \$19.80 USD each. The D-Pro has a small groove near the front of the strobe which holds a thin red O-ring. The diffusers mount by pushing them over the O-ring and while I had no issues in the field the diffuser and O-ring did fall off in my pool during testing. I suggest using a bit of line to secure the diffuser or better yet tape it to the flash so it won't be lost.

Both diffusers have a handy fiber optic cord mount so that you can



trigger other strobes from a single D-Pro strobe.

Protective neoprene covers for the body of the flash and the front glass are also optional for \$19.80 and \$16.80 respectively. A spare battery pack is \$118.00 USD.

OSD-Snoot

SUPE also offers the OSD-Optical Shaping Device for \$268.00 USD. The OSD is a snoot with adjustable aperture that has eight different settings from wide to a small circle of light.

The OSD uses the 500 lumen focus light on the D-Pro strobe to assist with aiming and the best working distance is between 150mm to 200mm (5.9 to 7.89 inches). The

OSD is 114mm X 117mm total and weights 522g.

SUPE sells the OSD with docks for Scubalamp D-Max, D-Pro, Seacam 150D, Ikelite DS-161/160, Sea&Sea YS-D2/YS-D3, Retra and Inon Z330/Z240.

The OSD dock for the D-Pro slips over the front of the strobe after the O-ring is removed and uses the O-ring groove to ground the dock. A clamp is then tightened around the plastic dock to secure it in place.

Once the dock is mounted to the D-Pro the OSD can be bayonet mounted onto the dock and is held in place by a spring lock which makes it easy to remove and reinstall underwater. SUPE does not sell a color filter kit for the OSD at this time but it would be easy to cut color gels to fit between the OSD and the D-Pro if you want to add colors to back lighting or side lighting with off camera flash.

Field Testing the D-Pro Strobe and OSD

For my field tests I used the following equipment, Sony A7RV, Marelux MX-A7RV housing, Sony 90mm F/2.8 macro and IRIX 150mm F/2.8 Dragonfly macro lens (for Sony), Marelux MV-15 closeup lens, Four 200mm double ball arms, for buoyancy I used two 800ml flexibuoy's and two of the Black D-Pro flashes plus the OSD snoot in some cases.

I normally use two smaller strobes for macro work which are a bit lighter than the D-Pros but once in the water the weight and size did not interfere with my workflow.

The Flexibuoy's offset the slight extra weight and I found no difference in my ability to use the system with one hand.

When using the Sony A7RV I have an assigned control on the right side of the housing that allows



Seaweed Blenny, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Sony A7R V, IRIX 150mm F/2.8 macro with Marelux MX-15 C/U lens, ISO100, F/16, 1/250th sec, two D-Pro strobes, OSD snoot at #2 setting, Marelux MX-A7RV housing

me to toggle between full frame (61mp) and APS-C (26mp) this is very useful for putting an additional bit of distance between the subject and lens. With the 90mm macro it acts like a 135mm and the 150mm it is like a 225mm. I am well aware that this can also be done by cropping images in post



Hogfish, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Sony A7R V, Sony 28-60mm F/4-F/5.6 at 36mm with Nauticam WACP-C, ISO100, F/11, 1/60th sec, two D-Pro strobes, Marelux MX-A7RV housing

but I prefer to see how they will look in APS-C with greater DOF.

With the 90mm I shoot in the F/14 to F/22 range at ISO100 if I can and with the IRIX I use F/16 to F/32 at ISO100. With the strobes properly placed the D-Pro strobes had no problem with proper



exposures at power levels from #4 to #7. If I was getting over exposures I lowered the ISO to 50 and with under exposures I went to power level #8/9.

The IRIX 150mm macro is a manual focus lens and most useful in the 1:1 to 1:4 range. The lens is also able to record metadata to the images which showed up in my Lightroom program. I am still working on getting a custom focus gear and for this review I set the lens at 1:1 and left it there using focus peaking to for control sharpness. Getting sharp images at 1:1 even with the +15 closeup lens was easier than you might think.

I found the results using the Scubalamp D-Pro strobes to be well

worth the price and then some. With the Macro diffusers installed I had more than ample power for all of my macro needs. The images are well illuminated with no hot areas and the color is very accurate when photographing warm colors.

I tested the strobes in my pool with lenses as wide as 130 degrees and the coverage was the same at over one meter with total coverage into the corners and well controlled from any hot spots with both W/A and macro diffusers. The cooler blues on the pool walls and tile were also well rendered and required no adjustments in post.

If you can live without TTL and/or HSS the D-Pro strobes preform



Speed boat, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Sony A7R V, Sony 28-60mm F/4-F/5.6 at 28mm with Nauticam WACP-C, ISO100, F/5.6, 1/100th sec, two D-Pro strobes, Marelux MX-A7RV housing

exceptionally well for the price and I would recommend them for both macro and wide angle use. Well done Scubalamp.

I would once again like to thank the great staff at Scubalamp for loaning me the strobes for this review I am not eager to return them. For further support and distribution in your area of the world go to the scubalamp.com web page.

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Instagram

