

Onderwaterhuis Flip Snoot Pro

by Dan Bolt

Snoots are nothing new to the underwater photography scene, indeed it was back in 2010 that Keri Wilk won so many plaudits for his stunning array of accurately snooted images in the Our World Underwater competition [http://www.underwatercompetition.com/Competitions/Our-World-Underwater-2010].

And so for many of us a snoot has been a useful tool to keep in our camera bags for quite some time, so I was quite intrigued to be asked to review the new Onderwaterhuis.NL Flip Snoot Pro; especially as I already own one of their existing non 'Pro' models.

What attracted me to the old Flip Snoot was exactly as the name suggests; its ability to flip away from the strobe allowing a great deal of versatility in your lighting options on a dive. My kind of diving rarely allows me to pre-plan shots or to know 100% what I will find down there so the ability to simply flip the snoot into, or out of position is a marvellous thing.

Like its older sibling, the new Pro version is build around a modular design which allows greater control

over the coverage of the light emitted by the snoot than many other models on the market. There are actually 3 different 'modes' (or 4 if you count flipping the snoot out of the way) which for ease of reference we shall call Mode 1, 2 and 3 (clever isn't it?).

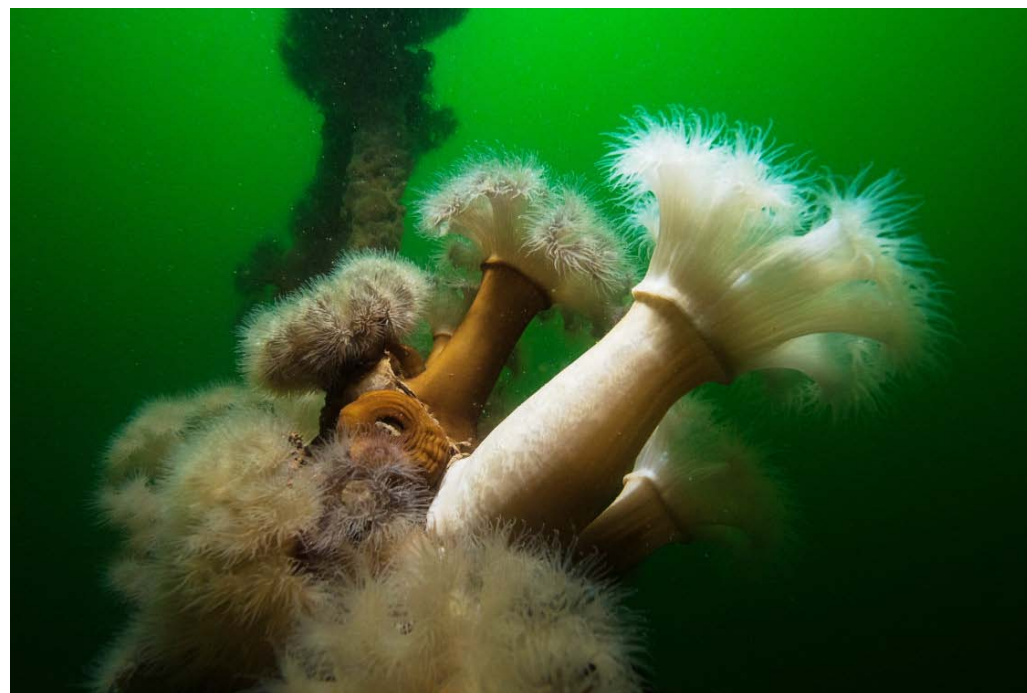
Mode 1 gives a fairly broad beam with its 67mm aperture, whereas Mode 2 steps right down to a 24mm aperture and also incorporates a diffuser to soften the light. Finally, Mode 3 uses a tiny, 10mm aperture. To have this variety of light outputs available during a dive is a fantastic tool, one which I have certainly been glad of on a few recent, low visibility dives.

The Flip Snoot Pro's modular design is based around a 3D printed base that clamps to your strobe but also incorporates components from other sources. The main body of the snoot (which gives us Mode 1) is in reality a rubber lens hood which has been firmly glued to the base. This is actually a clever move as it keeps the

Top-lit Plumose Anemones. Olympus E-PL5, 9-18mm @9mm, ISO640, f/6.3, 1/80th. Snoot Mode 1



The three parts of the Flip Snoot Pro (l-r) Mode 3, Mode 2, Mode 1





Mode 1 mounted on YS-D1



Mode 2



Mode 3



weight of the snoot down to a minimum as well as meaning that even quite a strong knock to the snoot will not cause any damage.

This rubber section has a 67mm thread at the base, into which a standard aluminium stepping ring is screwed. This stepping ring incorporates more 3D printed parts that give us Mode 2, and into which a standard Inon LE torch diffuser has been inserted. If you don't see the need for the diffuser you can easily remove it, and if you have an Inon LE torch of your own, you will probably have the red filter



too so you could actually have red snooted light. Finally, an even smaller 3D printed part can be firmly pushed onto the end of Mode 2 which simply acts to further narrow the beam of light and gives us Mode 3.

Having used the Flip Snoot Pro in both the pool and in the sea, I can honestly say it is a very versatile tool to keep mounted onto your strobe.

Close up Mode 3. Olympus E-PL5 14-42mm kit lens @ 42mm, ISO200, f/14, 1/250th, Subsee +10





Front-lit octopus. Olympus E-PL5 14-42mm kit lens @ 14mm, ISO800, f/3.5, 1/50th. Snoot in Mode 2



Back-lit octopus. Olympus E-PL5 14-42mm kit lens @ 14mm, ISO320, f/4, 1/250th. Snoot in Mode 2



Back-lit Plumose Anemones. Olympus E-PL5, 9-18mm @9mm, ISO320, f/8, 1/160th. Snoot Mode 1

In fact you could leave it in place all the time (but at the cost of not being able to use the wide-angle diffusers supplied with the YS-D1) and have a very flexible lighting tool to hand for all photographic occasions.

Looking at the new and old models side by side, you can see that the new Pro snoot is 4cm shorter with a less-gently tapering body. Obviously this has no effect on the light emitted but if, like me, you have a relatively

large housing (Olympus PT-EP10) compared to your macro port (45mm Panasonic macro) then the shorter snoot might make it more difficult to get the body of the strobe into the required position. I certainly found the old, longer model was easier to use with my setup.

The final observation about the Pro snoot regards the flexible (also touted as 'collapsible' by the manufacturers as pushed in it shortens

the unit by 3cm) rubber body while using your strobe on your housing (rather than mounted on a tripod). In the old model, the rigid design allowed for very small adjustments in the position of the light by gently tweaking the end of the snoot by a few millimetres. Unfortunately the new rubber body in the Pro snoot means that you can no longer do this, and instead have to move your strobe itself to achieve the desired position

of the light – and when we're talking about macro/super macro photography this can be frustratingly fiddly to achieve.

Despite my two (quite personal) minor issues, I very much enjoyed using the Flip Snoot Pro and it is a welcome addition to my kit collection; it's versatility underwater is a highly desirable feature for my kind of photography.

The Onderwaterhuis.NL Flip Snoot Pro is now available at www.Onderwaterhuis.NL for €129 and is available for Sea & Sea YS-D1, INON Z-240 and the Ikelite DS-161. DS51, S-2000, and other models will also be available soon.

Dan Bolt

www.underwaterpics.co.uk

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Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter
Manual WB



Magic Filter
Manual WB

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards. These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter, using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

www.magic-filters.com