

# Olympus 30mm macro

by Phil Rudin

The Olympus M.Zuiko Digital 30mm F/3.5 Macro lens was formerly announced at Photokina in September of 2016, along with the Olympus E-M1 MkII, 25mm F/1.2 Pro and the 12-100mm F/4 IS Pro lenses. The Olympus ZD 30mm is the second Olympus dedicated macro lens for the ever growing Micro43 camera segment. I did reviews for the Panasonic-Leica 45mm M43 lens in UWP #65 and the Olympus 60mm F/2.8 UWP #69 which can be found in the “Back Issues” section for this magazine.

The Budget (bottom tier) Olympus ED 30mm macro is less robust lens than Olympus ED 60mm F/2.8 macro which is dust and splash-proof (“weather-sealed”). At 57 mm V. 82 mm the 30mm macro is shorter than the 60mm and weights a mere 128g (4.52oz). The 30mm macro has a 40 degree angle of view, seven rounded blades and seven elements in six groups. The minimum focus distance is only 9.5 cm (3.74 inches) and maximum magnification is 1.25X or 1.25:1. This is 25% greater magnification than most macro lenses like the Olympus 60mm macro lens which maxes out at 1:1. At full

magnification the lens should fill the frame with a subject that is 13.92 mm X 10.4 mm smaller than a US Dime by about 4 mm. This is also about 2.5 times smaller than a full frame 35mm sensor at 1:1.

The Olympus 30mm macro is movie and still compatible (MSC) which means it has excellent auto focus and near silent operation. The 30mm macro does not have the focus limiting capability of the Olympus 60mm macro so it will focus through the entire focus range when shooting macro. The focus point scale (infinity to 1:1) found on the 60mm macro is also missing, this is a feature that is useless underwater because of the macro port blocks the scale. The 30mm F/3.5 macro provides very sharp results even wide open at the

*Lined Seahorse, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Olympus E-M1 MkII, Olympus 30mm F/3.5 macro lens, Nauticam NA-EMIII housing, Nauticam 45 macro port, Nauticam 45 degree optical viewfinder, Nauticam flash trigger, Two Inon Z-240 strobes, ISO-64, F/16, 1/250th sec.*



F/3.5 setting.

This lens is easy to use and offers a very wide range of subject sizes between 1.25:1 and around 60 cm (24 inches) which is the focus range I try to stay within. Because the AOV is twice as wide as the 60mm macro you can shoot subjects you would need to be twice as far from using the 60mm macro while still getting greater total magnification and wider depth of field. The downside is that you need to get very close to your macro subjects which at times is just not possible.

The other downside at this time is that many of the recommended ports for this lens are not custom designed for the lens. With several one size fits all macro ports the 30mm macro sits way to far back from the port glass to take advantage of the full range of the lens.

At the full 1.25:1 setting critical focus will be very near the port glass making it near impossible to use with skittish subjects or subjects that are not in a flat plane with the lens. At the retail price of \$299.00 US this lens is a bargain and it is now on sale



*Seaweed Blenny, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Olympus E-M1 MkII, Olympus 30mm F/3.5 macro lens, Nauticam NA-EM1III housing, Nauticam 45 macro port, Nauticam 45 degree optical viewfinder, Nauticam flash trigger, Two Inon Z-240 strobes, ISO-200, F/16, 1/250th sec.*

in the US for \$199.00 a deal I would not pass up if you are a dedicated Micro 43 shooter.

### Field testing the Olympus 30mm F/3.5 Macro

For my field tests I used the Olympus E-M1 MkII camera, Olympus 30mm Macro, Nauticam NA-EM1III housing, Nauticam 45 macro port, Nauticam 45 degree optical viewfinder, Nauticam

flash trigger and two Inon Z-240 strobes.

With the Nauticam 45 macro port the front of the port glass is about 5 mm from the macro lens glass. Keep in mind that Minimum focus distance is always measured from the sensor to the end of the lens. This lens has a minimum focus distance of 9.5 cm.

The distance from the sensor to the end of the lens



*Flying Gurnard, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Olympus E-M1 MkII, Olympus 30mm F/3.5 macro lens, Nauticam NA-EM1III housing, Nauticam 45 macro port, Nauticam 45 degree optical viewfinder, Nauticam flash trigger, Two Inon Z-240 strobes, ISO-200, F/5.6, 1/250th sec.*

is very close to 8 cm, the distance from the lens to the outside port glass is about 5 mm leaving about 10 mm between the port glass and the in focus part of the subject at 1.25:1. I have included a full frame photo of a Seaweed Blenny at the 1.25:1 taken about 10 mm from the subject.

Getting the strobe lighting between the port and subject is a challenge which involves putting the strobes at

almost a ninety degree angle to the port glass and behind the port. I would estimate the Seaweed Blenny to be 8 mm from the front of the mouth to the back of the head with about 3 to 4 mm of negative space on each side.

I also included a Flying Gurnard image in full display, which is at least 30cm+ from fin tip to fin tip taken from around 60 cm (two feet). The animal fills the frame and





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***Sand Perch, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Olympus E-M1 MkII, Olympus 30mm F/3.5 macro lens, Nauticam NA-EM1II housing, Nauticam 45 macro port, Nauticam 45 degree optical viewfinder, Nauticam flash trigger, Two Inon Z-240 strobes, ISO-64, F/3.5, 1/250th sec.***

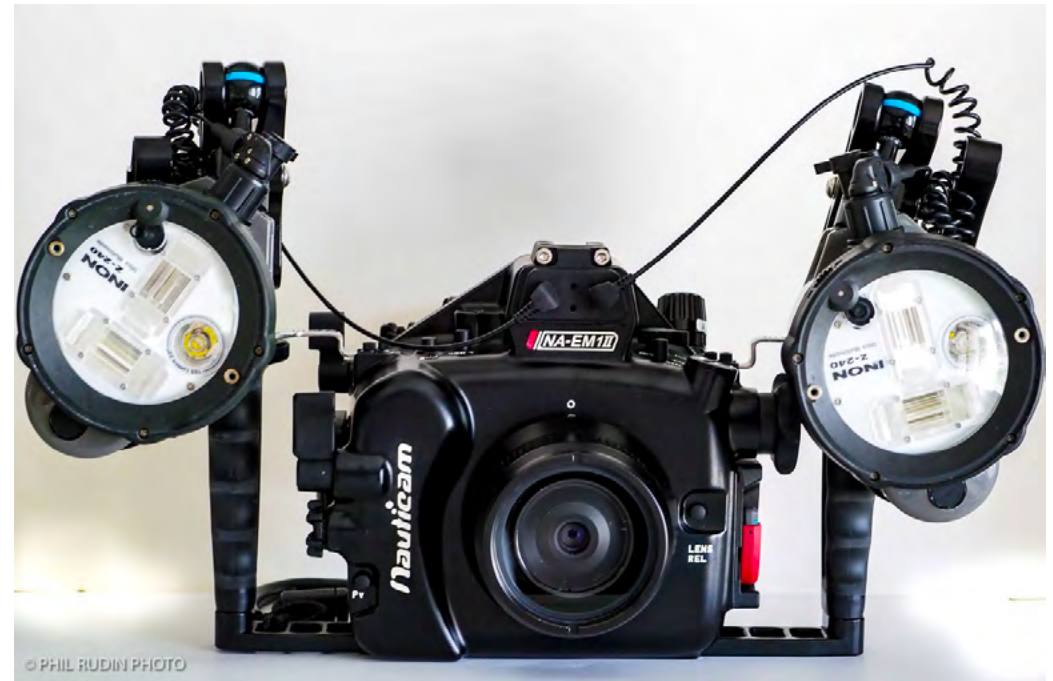
gives an idea versatility of this lens for very small to mid size subjects.

Because of the high 1.25:1 magnification for this lens and the 10 mm minimum focusing distance, attempting to add a closeup lens would be useless.

I have included a Sand Perch photo taken at the widest F/3.5 setting and you can see that the eye is quite sharp even wide open. Also notice that

at F/3.5 depth of field is very shallow. At F/3.5 I had to use the “low” ISO-64 setting and turn the strobe power way down to avoid overexposing the image.

I have also included a photo of one of my favorite configurations for the Nauticam NA-EM1 II housing and Inon Z-240 strobes. I use the Nauticam Standard Long clamps (Part #72503) and mount the strobes



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directly to the ball heads on the housing grips. The long clamps allow me to move the strobes above the macro port to help prevent blowing out the sand in the bottom of many macro frames. I can also turn the strobes inward for the very close work and tilt outward for wider shots. I have found this same configuration to work very well with the Olympus 8mm Fisheye and the Olympus 12mm F/2 using the Nauticam 140 mm and Zen Underwater 100 mm optical glass dome ports.

If you are looking for an inexpensive way to add a macro lens to your M43 kit or you want to expand your M43 macro lens collection

I recommend trying the budget Olympus 30mm macro. The results with this lens far exceed its price point.

**Phil Rudin**

