

Sea & Sea YS-120 Duo

A Compact, Versatile Strobe with Plenty of Power

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

Over the last few years the underwater photography line offered by Sea & Sea has exploded into a vast system of housings, flashes, cameras and related underwater photo accessories. The Sea & Sea strobe systems have become more powerful yet smaller and, in the case of the YS-120 Duo, more flexible. This amazing strobe works with such Sea & Sea products as the Motor Marine II-EX and SX-1000 as well as the Nikonos V and RS and a housed Nikon N50. This is possible because of a unique type of electronic circuitry that adapts for TTL photography with either four or five pin connectors. The YS-120 is the first and only submersible strobe with this circuitry.

Considered a mid-sized underwater strobe, the YS-120 Duo has a color temperature of 5000°K, which will give your photos natural flesh tones and warm hues. At full power, the underwater guide number is 45 with ISO 100 film. This translates to an exposure of f/11 at three feet. Just as important is the 105 degree beam angle, which covers most wide angle lenses on the market. If you want to soften the flash and spread the beam angle even more, you can use the diffuser that comes with the flash. A small ring on the flash housing allows you to attach a cord from the diffuser to the flash so it

The YS-120 Duo can be used on manual or TTL and with several cameras. It covers the picture area of most wide angle lenses and can also function as a slave.

cannot be lost underwater.

There are two controls on the back of the strobe that allow easy access to all its functions. The left switch gives the unit power, allows you to select slave function or test fire the strobe. The right switch has positions for full power manual, one-half power manual and TTL automatic.

Unlike any strobe on the market today, the YS-120 Duo features identical indicator lights on each side of the strobe head. No matter which side of the camera the

strobe is mounted on, the indicator lights are visible. This practical innovation is sure to be a hit with dual strobe photographers. A red light signals the flash is fully powered and ready to perform. A second light turns green and beeps when a correct exposure is achieved using TTL. This green light stays on long enough for you to move your eyes from the camera viewfinder to the strobe to check the exposure.

Because the internal flash circuitry for Canon cameras is very different from Nikon's, there is a second version of this strobe, the YS-120-C TTL, designed just for use with housed Canon cameras.

The YS-120 Duo is powered by eight AA batteries and recycles at full power in two to three seconds with nickel-cadmiums, three to four seconds with alkaline. (Continued on Page 59)



Top: The back of the YS-120 showing the battery compartment door and switches. Above: The YS-120 Duo can use alkaline, lithium or rechargeable batteries.

COMPARISON OF SEA & SEA STROBES

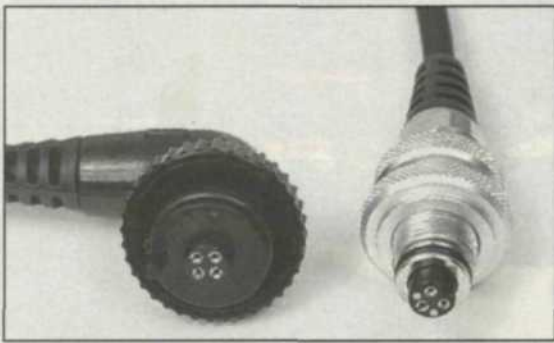
Model	U/W Guide # (ISO 100)	Picture Angle	Color Temp.	Recycle Time (seconds)	Weight In Air	Retail Price
YS-300TTL	49	100°	5500°K	4 (A)	4.4 lbs.	\$999.95
YS-120 DUO	45	105°	5000°K	4 (A) 3 (Ni) 4 (L)	2.9 lbs.	\$782.95
YS-50TTL	40	90°	5400°K	5.5-6.5 (A) 4-5 (Ni)	1.6 lbs.	\$426.95
YS-20S	23	85°	5400°K	6 (A)	12.6 oz.	\$316.95

A = alkalines, N = nickel-cadmiums, L = lithium

SEA & SEA YS-120 DUO

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lines and five seconds with lithium batteries. At full power you should be able to make three dives with rechargeables, six dives with alkalines and more than a dozen dives with lithiums. Using TTL can increase the strobe's battery life to two or three times that of full manual. If you are a macro shooter, you may have to change



Above: Connectors are available for a variety of cameras. Below: The battery compartment door is O-ring sealed.



batteries only once during a dive trip. A Sea & Sea charger and eight nickel-cadmium batteries can be purchased as an accessory (for 120/240 volt currents).

SEA & SEA YS-120 DUO COMPONENTS

YS-120 Duo Strobe	
with sync cord	\$782.95
Extra sync cord.....	\$101.00
Eight nickel-cadmium batteries and charger	\$152.00

The YS-120 batteries are in an O-ring sealed compartment. The markings confirming battery orientation are very clear. Sea & Sea's unique battery locking door ensures a very positive seal.

The YS-120 Duo's high impact thermopolymer construction provides a 200 foot depth rating yet the strobe weighs less than 26 ounces. Sea & Sea's II, III, IV and new Sea Arm V flash arms can be connected to the base of the YS-120, providing a variety of extensions. If you want to use two strobes, Sea & Sea also offers a dual flash connector for Nikonos,

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SEA & SEA YS-120 DUO

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Motor Marine and Sea & Sea housings.

To avoid corrosion, the YS-120 Duo uses very few metal parts in the housing. Most of the parts are high impact plastic, joined with metal. The only exception is in the flash arm control where stainless steel screws into stainless steel. Even this metal to metal contact is protected with a special plastic washer. The sync cord for the Motor Marine is plastic at both ends, while the cord for the Nikonos and housings has plastic at the flash end and a metal similar to that of the camera at the other end. This similar metal reduces electrolysis.

The Sea & Sea YS-120 Duo strobe is an excellent piece of modern engineering. The folks at Sea & Sea have carefully analyzed what underwater photographers need and ultimately demand. The YS-120 Duo's compact size and weight give it versatility, which makes it an excellent addition to your underwater photo system. If you're in the market for a strobe, no matter what type of camera system you own, Sea & Sea's YS-120 Duo will do the job. Give it a flash!


For more information or the name of your nearest Sea & Sea dealer, contact the company at 2105 Camino Vida Roble, Suite L, Carlsbad, CA 92009; (619) 929-1909, (619) 929-0098 (fax).

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