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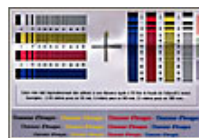
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AF Micro-Nikkor  
200mm 1:4 D

© Michael Weber



- + optical quality very good
- + outstanding build quality
- + excellent tripod collar
- + working distance of 260mm
- no AF-S/VR



If you are really fascinated by the world of insects and amphibians this wonderful AF Micro-Nikkor 200mm/4 D IF-ED could be the perfect match for you: due to its large working distance of 260mm it grants breathtaking images of butterflies, snakes and other creatures that wouldn't allow a closer approach of your equipment. A further advantage is the strong telephoto effect (although the effective focal distance decreases to roughly 140mm at 1:1) which isolates your main subject plastically from a magnificently blurred background.

Resolution and contrast peak at f/8-11 which is perfect for flowers and small creatures anyway. In order to transmit the high optical quality to the emulsion you will have to work extremely carefully: solid tripod, precise focus (no problem with the wide focus ring with its smooth actions), mirror lock-up and – a moment of lull in the wind! Particularly when I worked without flashlight little gusts of wind thwarted my photos more than once. Working with the F5 and MLU I also apply bracketing in order to profit as much as possible from those short instances of lull. Ask any Canon EOS-1V owner of his camera's possibility of combining bracketing and mirror lock-up...

Build quality of this lens is outstanding. Owing to its metal barrel it is utmost robust. The only problem I encountered after 4 years of heavy use was a broken (plastic) ring to switch from M to AF. This obviously indicates that – contrary to most users – I make extensive use of AF when shooting close-ups with this lens. Especially whenever I try to follow fidgety insects with my SB-29 macro flashlight mounted I rely on a fast and responding AF, neither of which applies to the AF Micro-Nikkor 200/4. Compared to Canon's EF 180/3.5L ultrasonic AF the Nikon AF is a complete failure. But who knows, may be Nikon will combine AF-S and VR technology for the first time in their new AF macro telephoto lens?

At last the lens hood has to be singled out for praise. Not for its screw-in mount (at least I can also use it on the outer thread of my AF Micro-Nikkor 105/2.8) and even less for its price (\$/€ 60) but surely for its solid full metal execution. I usually keep it mounted and apply a Ø 77mm lens cap for protection of the front element.

As a conclusion the AF Micro-Nikkor can be described as one of the most useful tools Nikon provides for absolute macro addicts.

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