Additional Information on
Nikon's AF (autofocus) Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D telephoto lens - Part III

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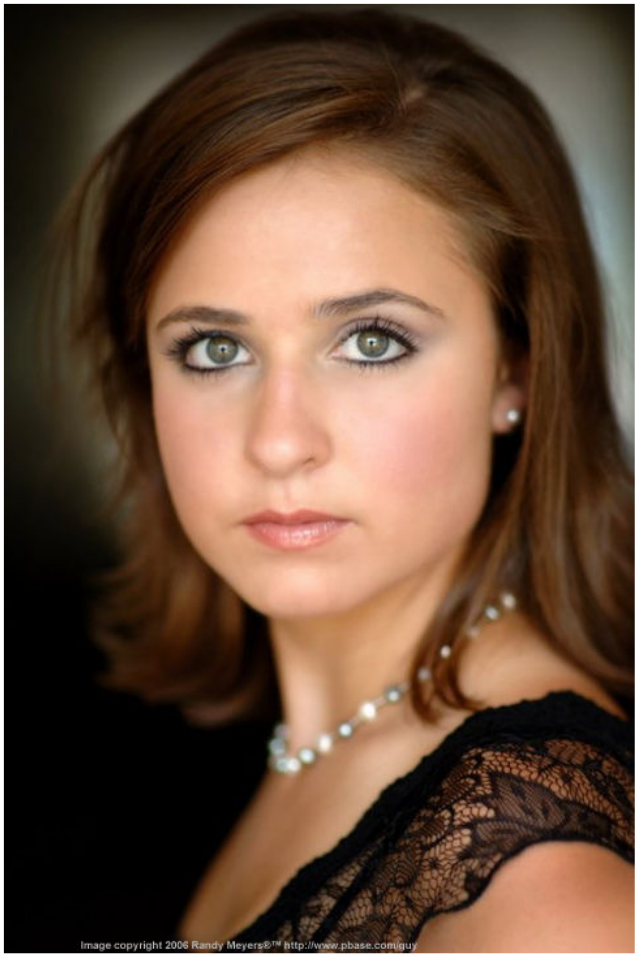

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Nikon AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D short telephoto lens
Marketed 1996; Discontinued: ~ current model as at 12.2006

One of the fastest Nikkor telephoto lens was introduced in 1980 and it has enhanced the Nikkor lens family with a wider lens selection. The ultra-fast telephoto lens is a tool for absolute low available light photography such as situations does not permit artificial illumination like the use of flash. In a way, addition of the 85mm f/1.4 has powered the Nikkor lens group with an equivalent optic to match others such as Contax Carl Zeiss Distagon T* 85mm f/1.4, Canon 85mm f/1.2L or other labels). Over the years, the **manual focus Nikkor 85mm f/1.4S** can be easily regarded as one of the favorite telephoto lens for Nikon photographers with its distinctive optical quality. I am still keeping a unit of that old classic too and I know what kind of optical performance it can deliver. So, when Nikon turned autofocus in 1986, it was just a matter of time for Nikon photographers in expecting an AF equivalent model to be surfaced. Further, the market place with rivaling Canon releasing their fabulous **Canon EF 85mm f/1.2L** for their EOS system, it has made the AF Nikkor lens group looked a little fragile in terms of lens selection and the need of a fast speed 85mm telephoto was essential to maintain competitiveness. Generally, most professional photographers in their early stage in deciding a system of choice would make comparison between the availability of lens types, varieties and options before committing themselves with. Thus, there was truly a need to patch the vacuum in the lack of a fast speed medium telephoto in the AF Nikkor lens family where the sole **AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.8S** was the only model available. Nikon had probably schemed the release of this AF rebirth timely in tandem with the introduction of the **second AF professional SLR model, Nikon F5** in 1996. To be exact, Nikon announced its availability in November, 1995 and the AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D was introduced genetically as another AF-D spec specific telephoto lens.

It was very similar to many AF Nikkor introduced during this period, the delay in the introduction of this AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D had some side benefits in ensuring the lens matches in system compatibility as well as prevailing optical and camera technologies introduced on the Nikon SLR cameras. As an native "AF-D" lens, the AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D is fully compatible with virtually all the Nikon SLR camera models produced since 1977 with an Ai-spec. as it can be used as a manual focus lens. On the other hand, its built-in feature can enable use of latest camera features such as sophisticated 3D Matrix metering system (even the RGB Matrix Color Sensor in the Nikon F5 is fully enabled), advance exposure control modes, as well as TTL 3D Matrix flash control. Naturally, it delivers autofocusing with virtually all Nikon AF Nikons and with compatible more advance models, it offers super fast and dead accurate autofocusing too. In terms of backward compatibility, with older Nikon AF SLR camera models, it offers basic Matrix metering and TTL Balance fill flash; but when use it with any Ai-spec Manual Focus Nikon SLR camera models, it works and operates like a manual focus Nikkor lens.

The lens optical formula of the AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D has been revised. It comprised of an all new 9 elements 8 group design which reflecting Nikon seriousness by not taking an easy path by replicating the older manual focus predecessor directly into an AF lens. Although the lens's closest focusing still remains at 0.85m (2.8'), with a magnification ratio of approx. 1/8.8X but Nikon has designed the AF model with an IF

(Internal Focus) design, making the lens with no physical extension during AF and/or MF focus operation. Further, Nikon's exclusive CRC system (Close Range Correction) was employed to auto compensate image quality at its nearest focusing distances. This ensures its superlative optical quality be maintained even at its closest working range. The IF design, indirectly has supplemented the autofocusing system which helps the lens focuses quickly and smoothly. In view of one of its possible many application such as for portraiture, Nikon has also designed the lens with a 9-blades rounded diaphragm, which makes out of focus elements appear more naturally.

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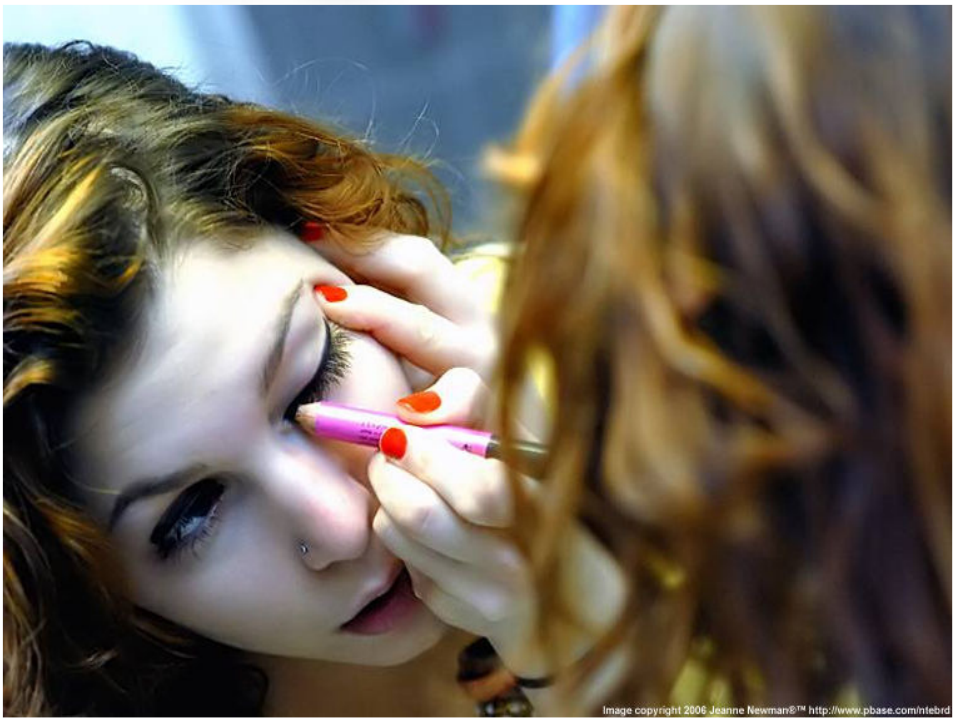

"From birth to age 18 A girl needs good parents. From 18 to 35 she needs good looks. From 35 to 55 she needs a good personality. From 55 on, she needs good cash.." ~ Sophie Tucker ~

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Externally, one delightful improvement made as compared to many other early generation of AF Nikkor lenses is the comfortable four in-rolls of hard rubberized covered manual focusing ring which has an extra-wide grip for manual focus operation. The change probably has taking previous MF users in consideration where it provides an easy and positive lens handling even when shooting with a glove (and/or when using protective outfit under water with housing). The lens has a M (Manual) and A (Auto) focusing switch ring which placed oddly at the center of the lens tube. A slide switch is placed at the end of the aperture scale to lock the minimum aperture. The lens barrel has been treated with an extra hard layer of coating in crinkle finish, added this with the extra weight, making this AF Nikkor telephoto lens projecting a very rugged look and good feel while you hold. The crystal clear, but a little oversized front lens element as well as the rear element adds an additional layer of a professional grade optic. Overall, minus the thought it may affect mobility and traveling comfort with a hefty 550g and when mounted onto your Nikon, it weighs quite heavy as a whole but you can't deny the fact it was a beautifully designed tele-lens. Strangely, Nikon didn't managed to scale the filter attachment down to 72mm as with the manual focus predecessor, where it has a rather odd 77mm filter attachment size. This probably has made sharing common filter accessories less desirable but as some of the high performance AF Nikkor optic are offering 77mm, it may be easier if you are owning other groups of these luxurious class of Nikkor. Whatever it is, 72mm filter accessories are generally more accessible and affordable in comparison Next point is, the f/16 minimum aperture could has been better if it is designed stopping down to f/22 to extend the depth of filed usage but since it may bring other optical issue, that is fine with me too. However, by offering only f/16 and f/11 on the depth of field reading scales is not excusable where it would be much better if Nikon provides some other mid apertures settings such as f/8.0 and f/4.0 for quick visual DOF display as not every Nikon SLR body offers depth of field preview feature. But among the lens features, there is an infra index provided for those who may need to shoot infra photography. Anyway, as today most people can live with these minor flaws in a lens features list, so I would not like to relate them as a major issue. But sometimes it makes me wondering are lens designers good photographers too ? and why these are not be considered, huh ? ... Well, Nikon does produced a metal lens hood as a standard accessory to shield the lens from stray light and doubling as to protect the big piece of the exposed front lens element - that is a good and considerate move as owner doesn't have to cough out more to buy it as an optional accessory.

Recently, a few concerned friends mailed me with a few web reviews in relation to some reservation over analysis on its image resolution. They asked if these have some truth in them ? Frankly, I don't bother. This lens was essentially an essence from decades of lens development from the **Nikkor 85mm telephoto lens group**. Although in many ways, some of the

related gadgets found in the lens are more leaning towards system compatibility but solely from a consumer perspective, this is a very versatile and practical lens. It is true that NOT ALL NIKKOR ARE CLASSIC OPTIC; I know one way or another, before you decide on an investment, you usually do a research because you simply wanted an second opinion, media and reviews are usually are the medium to bridge your needs. Don't you agree many people are blindly followers. A good or a bad reviews may kill prematurely or popularized a product. I have seen many users turned defensive over some truly excellent lenses such as **AF Nikkor 18mm f/2.8D**, **AF Micro-Nikkor 200mm f/4.0 ED IF**, **Micro-Nikkor Zoom 70-180mm f/4.0~5.6 ED IF** and even the less popular DC series range of AF Nikkor telephotos. But to me, these are very very good lenses to satisfy my personal photography. Although I have great respect for everyone in taking all the time to prepare a review, but instead of blinding letting reviews affecting your confidence, why don't exercise your own wisdom at times? Well, it is also true that most people would not like to admit he/she did a bad judgment after an investment (I did a few times and disposed off if I don't like it); Anyway, I have invited some photographers to showcase their works of this fabulous Nikkor telephoto lens in this site, although some of the showcased images herein mirror more on creative usage of the lens, but it still takes a good optical tool to assist the mind. So, try not to be a slavery to online reviews, whether is it a good or a so-so grade optic requires some basic logical thinking with your results, that is all. Well, to me, I am very happy with this fabulous AF Nikkor telephoto but my only complaint is, Nikon has priced it too high as for an additional 2/3 f-stop as compared to the AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.8D which seemingly makes the latter offering a much better price over performance ratio in this respect.

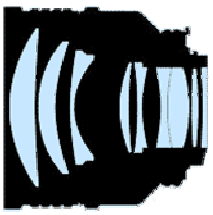
My best advice for those who has not making up a decision yet is, do you actually require a such a lens type (telephoto with a fast, large maximum aperture) for you personal photography **FREQUENTLY**. As its tele-focal length is simply well covered and included by a high performance zoom lens. "High performance" here means usually it has a constant f/2.8 aperture across its entire zoom range where the difference of an f/1.4 found in this Nikkor prime telephoto can be quite obvious when compares with such a tele-zoom but unfortunately, high-spec telephoto zoom lenses also directly relate to high entry cost, which makes the differences less distinguishable between the two.

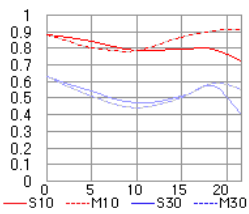
The biggest attraction of this 85mm f/1.4D Nikkor tele-lens is with its large maximum aperture as well as a slightly tighter picture angle with a moderate perspective compression it provides. It can be an incredibly useful lens for indoor studio or on location portraiture, stage fashion, indoor sports, journalism, news/reportage and even as a traveling companion. I have used the lens with my **Nikon FM3A** on a recent cave exploring, it doesn't balance particularly well but that is not the issue because you will get speed compensation all the way. I guess most people would think its size and weight factor is an issue but probably it depends on individual how to decide prior planning a trip. If there is a need, you will think its features are simply useful, if you don't, all the tiny things you can pick on will becomes a big issue, right ? So, I guess whether if you need this lens is to ask yourself does lens speed is a priority factor for your photography. However, this lens does has other areas which may affect your decision. until a full format digital SLR is readily made available (and affordable too); this lens multiples the primary focal length to approx. 127mm on any of the DX format Nikon digital SLR. The benefits of f/1.4 also offers an extra bright finder image for sheer comfort during focusing/picture composing in dim lit surrounding and an equivalent zoom lens may not be as bright; but the maximum aperture of f/1.4 will truly help to dicks into its reserves to aid you to virtually handle any shooting situation that doesn't permit flash or simply you just wish to retain natural ambient atmosphere in your picture. It is a NOT CHEAP telephoto lens by any standard. But ALL it can compensate you in return is its extraordinary, consistent delivery in top class image resolution, where crisp sharp, high contrast pictures is available throughout. Further, the beautifully rendered blur for out of focus background generates with its largest apertures is simply incomparable to any of the Nikkor tele-zoom lenses. For me, I am still using the old Nikkor 85mm f/1.4 - the AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D IF presents many inviting elements to let me reconsider to give a treat for my AF Nikon...For real life usage, with f/1.4 - the lens simply stealth itself to SERVE to STABILIZE a picture via use of higher speed speeds when it matters most.

Technical Specification for AF Nikkor 85mm f/1.4D short telephoto lens:-

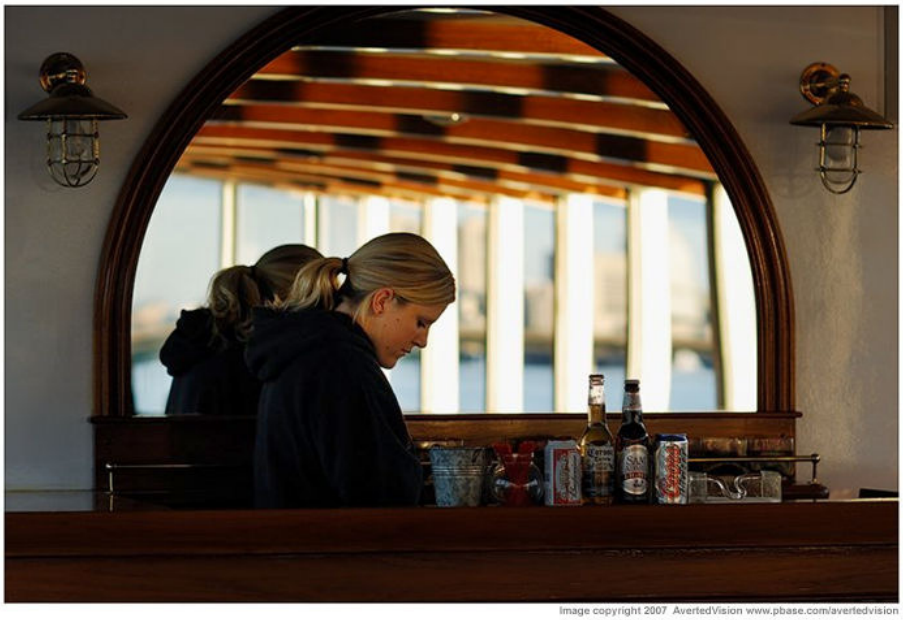
Type of lense: Autofocus/Manual focus Nikkor fixed focal lens with built-in CPU and Nikon bayonet mount
Focal length: 35mm; **Maximum aperture**: f/1.4 **Minimum Aperture**: f/16
Lens construction: 9 elements in 8 groups
Picture angle: 28° 30' (35mm); 18° 50' Nikon DX digital SLR format cameras (approx. 127mm on DX format Nikon DSLRs)
Diaphragm: Fully automatic,
Distance scale: Graduated in meters and feet/inches from 0.85m (2.8') to infinity (OO)
Distance information: Output into camera body with CPU interface system, 3D Matrix Metering fully enabled.
Aperture scale: f/1.4 to f/16 on both standard and aperture-direct-readout scales
Metering Coupling Prong: -none
Depth of Field Scales: provided for f/11, f/16 only
Reproduction ratio: 1:8.8X maximum

Minimum aperture lock: Provided, slide switch and lock type
Lens Coating: SIC (Nikon's Super integrated Coating)
Exposure measurement: Via full-aperture method for Ai cameras or cameras with CPU interface system; Distance info relaying system
Filter Rotation: NO; **Infra Index:** Provided;





No. of diaphragm: 9 blades, rounded
Mount: Nikon bayonet mount with CPU contacts; **Rear Mount**: Metal;
Attachment size: 77mm (P=0.75mm)
Dimensions: Approx. 80mm (3.1") x 72.5mm (2.9")
Weight: Approx. 550g (approx. 19.8 oz); 560g possibly for earlier versions (before 2006).



Candid, SMS inside a bar

Supplied accessories: Snap on HN-31 metal lens hood, front lens cap (77mm), rear lens cap LF-1. **Optional** accessories: Lens case CL-44, No. 62
Other info: Circular polarizing filter: Usable; Circular polarizing filter II: Usable (also with dedicated Lens Hood HN-31); AF-3: Usable. (2); AF-4 Usable. (4): Indicates maximum number of usable hoods (HN-36 for AF-3/HN-37 for AF-4): Usable teleconverters: **TC-201S**, **TC-14AS** (Nikon reminds it may exhibit occational vignetting with aperture smaller than f/11 or may even present uneven exposure).

Other secondary information:- Serial numbers 200001 < 203376 - 228679 > ; 2006 onwards 300001 < 301768 > > *Reference*: Roland Vink's lens data sheet.