

**REVIEW: OSPREY SYNCRO 15 HYDRATION PACK IS COMFORTABLE, COOL AND ROOMY****BikeRumor.com**

June 3, 2015

Review

Featuring: Syncro 15

Monthly Traffic: 857,550

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/qzb3xx4>

Call me old school but despite the fact that water bottles are reappearing on all-mountain bikes, I'm not about to give up wearing my hydration pack. Most riders (like myself) wouldn't hit the trails without some basic tools, and having an extra layer on board is never a bad idea. After Bikerumor previewed some of [Osprey's 2015 hydration packs](#) earlier this spring I had the opportunity for a full review on the Syncro 15, the closest comparison to my previous hydration pack made by 'a leading competitor' in the industry. I've found the pack offers excellent storage space, a comfortable fit and its minimalist construction makes for a lightweight bag with extremely good ventilation. My old pack has been collecting dust since I got my hands on the Syncro 15.

The pack's hip belt seems very minimal at first glance, as the wings were kept small and light. It feels more like hands on your hips than a bear hug, but the belt and chest strap kept the bag from bouncing around on all but the biggest step-downs and landings.

The Syncro 15 has an impressive amount of storage, even though the size small actually has a 13L capacity. I was happy to find my DSLR camera fits inside the main pouch, so rest assured it'll swallow up gloves and extra layers easily. When the bag isn't stuffed, adjustable side straps keep it looking mean and lean. The full-length middle pocket includes handy tool holders that keep small items like allen keys up top, and the front outer pocket is the perfect size for a smartphone.

One thing the Syncro 15 doesn't have is an outer stuff pocket. With the cavernous main compartment I didn't miss the extra storage, but open-topped stuff pouches do offer quick access to gloves or layers whereas everything is behind a zipper in the Osprey pack.

The reservoir comes right out of the pack to fill, which makes it easy to work with versus awkwardly dangling my old pack beside the sink while filling its bladder. I could see how people might be concerned about the coupling that comes apart each time you remove the bladder, but mine hasn't leaked a drop in almost two months of use. Osprey's reservoir sits in a pouch inside the main storage compartment, and while bladders are pretty solid these days, if it ever leaked or blew up anything in that pocket would be getting wet for sure.

In terms of ventilation, I give the Syncro 15 a resounding A-plus. The aluminum-framed floating mesh back panel works extremely well, and I regularly notice the pleasant feeling of cool air blowing across my back. The straps are well ventilated with lots of cut outs in the padding and lower halves made almost entirely from mesh webbing, and the hip belt's wings are nothin' but net. All that mesh also makes for a very lightweight pack, which Osprey says is 30% lighter than the outgoing model.



The Osprey pack uses a magnet to hold the straw in place, and fresh out of the box it didn't hold the straw well. However, by the end of my first ride the straw had found its new shape and the magnet was sitting flush and secure. Since then I don't think it's come off once, and half the time I don't even have to look down to snap the mouthpiece back on the magnet, so thumbs up.

The Syncro 15 also includes a rain cover, and since I'm a wuss about actually riding in the rain I left it outside in a storm for an hour and a half. It came back inside wearing big beads of water with no sign of any soaking through. Just to say I did, I also tried the helmet carrier with my XC lid. It was easy to use, and held my lid on tightly.

All in all, I've been very impressed with the Osprey Syncro 15. The hyper-ventilated back panel is cool and comfortable, and the bag has more storage space inside than it appears. Assuming the coupling at the reservoir holds up long term, I expect I'll be wearing and enjoying this pack for quite a while. The Syncro 15 comes in blue, green or grey and retails for \$120 USD.

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