Soliton-plasma nonlinear dynamics in mid-IR gas-filled hollow-core fibers

We investigate numerically soliton-plasma interaction in a noble-gas-filled silica hollow-core anti-resonant fiber pumped in the mid-IR at 3.0 μm. We observe multiple soliton self-compression stages due to distinct stages where either the self-focusing or the self-defocusing nonlinearity dominates. Specifically, the parameters may be tuned so the competing plasma self-defocusing nonlinearity only dominates over the Kerr self-focusing nonlinearity around the soliton self-compression stage, where the increasing peak intensity on the leading pulse edge initiates a competing self-defocusing plasma nonlinearity acting nonlocally on the trailing edge, effectively preventing soliton formation there. As the plasma switches off after the self-compression stage, self-focusing dominates again, initiating another soliton self-compression stage in the trailing edge. This process is accompanied by supercontinuum generation spanning 1-4 μm. We find that the spectral coherence drops as the secondary compression stage is initiated. (C) 2017 Optical Society of America