

Kraken Hydra 8000 WRGBU

by Phil Rudin

Weefine underwater equipment is manufactured in China that distributes worldwide. Weefine produces underwater lighting, housings, lenses, cameras, accessories and more for the retail diving market. The test equipment I used for this review was provided by Kraken Sports a Canadian company based in N. London, Ontario, Canada. Kraken distributes Weefine and Kraken branded products throughout North America. Kraken has loaned me the Hydra 8000 WRGBU light for this review.

Kraken Hydra 8000 WRGBU

The Kraken Hydra family of lights includes the Hydra 1000 Focus Edition, Hydra 1500+ WSR, Hydra 4000 WRGBU, Hydra 6000 WRGBU, Hydra 8000 WRGBU being reviewed and Hydra 15000 WRGBU.

The 1000 Focus works as a focus light and a snoot can be added. The 1500+ WSR works as a spotting light with a wrist strap, as a macro focusing light mounted to the housing or an off camera light for side lighting and back lighting.

The WRGBU lights have wide beam flood with red, green, blue, UV

and a RGB adjustment that cycles through the colors like a kaleidoscope. The white light can also switch to a blinking distress signal. All of the light colors use step-less dimming of power levels by rotating the dial around the push button power on/off switch.

The Kraken Hydra 8000 is both powerful at 8000 lumens, compact and lightweight. In the burst mode which works like a flash using a fiber optic cable the power brightness is 10,000 lumens. The CRI or Color Rendering Index is a measurement of the quality of whiteness for the light which is being produced.

The Kraken LED module array provides a very natural white light at a daylight color temperature of 5000 Kelvin and a color rendering of 90 (CRI). The beam angle underwater is 100 degrees and 120 degrees above water with a depth rating of 100 meters.

The burn time at 100% power with a fully charged battery is around 58 minutes, with a recharging time of about 3.5 hours on a fully depleted battery. The 8000 uses a type-C charging cord which is provided along with a multi output USB C charging



block that allows several devices to be charged at one time.

The 8000 uses a Li-Ion 14.4v DC 5000mAh battery pack that can be installed from either end of the battery into the 8000 light and includes storage caps. The battery is installed by unthreading the light head from the battery compartment which is sealed by two black O-rings.

The light also has a white O-ring on the outside at the light head and on the ball mount. These white O-rings are decorative as well as functional. When using the colored lights they are far less intense than the white light and use much less power.

On the back of the light along with the power/dimming switch and a remote port for an optional remote





Ginnie Springs Ballroom, High Springs, Florida, Sony A-1, Tamron 17-28mm F/2.8 at 17mm, Nauticam NA-A1 housing, Nauticam WACP II, Kraken Hydra 8000 on Green, ONEUW, fill light, ISO 640, F/4.5, 1/60th sec.



Ginnie Springs Ballroom, High Springs, Florida, Sony A-1, Tamron 17-28mm F/2.8 at 17mm, Nauticam NA-A1 housing, Nauticam WACP II, Kraken Hydra 8000 on Blue, ONEUW, fill light, ISO 640, F/4.5, 1/60th sec.



Redtail Parrotfish, Blue Heron Bridge, Florida, Sony A-1, Sony 90mm F/2.8 macro, Marelux MX-A1 housing, Kraken Hydra 8000 on red as spotting and focus light on night dive, two Backscatter MF-1 flashes, ISO-200, F/16, 1/250th sec.

control is a small window which displays power level information and much more.

When the 8000 is turned on the white light appears at 100%, on the display screen you see a white dot with 100% below. After about ten seconds the 100% display is replaced with the remaining battery time in minutes. If you reduce power the amount of battery time increases on the display.

Push the on button once and the light changes to red at 100%, a red dot appears on the display and the battery life increases dramatically. Again when power is reduced battery life increases. Push again for green, blue, UV and RGB that creates a multi-color effect.

My review kit included the Hydra 8000 dome which Kraken says helps maintain a smooth, even wide light spread. The dome threads onto the front of the light but does not have an O-ring so don't be

alarmed if you see condensation form on the inside of the dome. The light is fully sealed without the dome.

Field testing the Hydra 8000

The Hydra 8000 is marketed as a high performance video light and would be very competitive for that use alone. While field testing the Hydra 8000 I was shooting stills and spent most of my time testing the different possibilities using the colorful lighting options.

I used the 8000 both attached to the housing and off camera on a tripod. I also used the light on mid to low power as a focusing light for night diving making 2.5 hour dives with less than 18 minutes of the total battery life being used.

Using the red light set in the mid range I was

able to get within inches of animals that would otherwise have disappeared into the night if they were approached with a white light from several meters away. I also found the colored lights on high power to be well suited for shooting outward from inside a cavern while being able to balance the bright blue shallow water above.

For the cavern I used the light off camera on a tripod to allow me to move around for better shooting angles and also to mix in additional white strobe lighting. I found the UV light appeared as light purple on the cavern walls. The red light takes the highest power level followed by blue then green to achieve the same intensity of color. The revolving colors between red, green and blue seem more well suited to a video with a central subject. It is a bit difficult to overcome the colors when shooting faces as the skin tones don't render well unless you have



used a white fill flash. I have not even begun to fully explore the possibilities of the Hydra 8000 as a stills light. As a video light I am sure most will be very happy with the results.

The Hydra 8000 WRGBU is sold as a kit in a padded case with a complete set of accessories ready to use. The kit includes the 8000 light, battery with protective caps on both ends, battery charger, a YS mount, a ball mount, Allen wrench to change mounts, spare O-rings and an instruction manual.

This kit retails for \$799.00 USD. My test unit also shipped with

the Hydra 8000 dome which threads directly to the front of the light. This option sells for \$89.99 USD and adds .1kg to the 920g dry weight of the 8000, underwater the 8000 weighs 425g both weights include the battery.

Other accessories include a snoot which threads to the front of the Hydra 8000/6000 and 4000 lights. It adds 0.1kg and allows the Hydra to become a highly efficient optical snoot. The included aperture card which slides into the snoot has several round openings to adjust the size of the beam coming from the snoot. This is a very useful tool for macro as it



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can be mounted on or off camera for a verity of lighting angles.

The Hydra 8000 with the snoot can also be fired by a fiber optic cord like a flash with variable light duration settings. The snoot retails for \$169.99 USD and a spare 8000 battery with caps is \$145.00 USD.

Thanks again to krakensports.ca for loaning uwpmag.com the Hydra 8000 for this review.

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