

Cold water accessories

by Adam Hanlon

For us divers in the North Northern Hemisphere, water temperatures are dropping, air temperatures plummeting, and visibility is improving! This conundrum has forced me to make some modifications to my Subal ND2, using some excellent products that have become available. The key issue is that cold water demands thick gloves and the majority of housing and strobe manufacturers use control knobs that you simply can't get hold of whilst wearing them! I tend to use dry gloves over the winter months, and whilst these are (arguably) more dextrous than wet mitts, the stock housing and strobe controls become very difficult or impossible to operate.

I bought a pair of excellent Inon Z220 strobes in the summer of 2008, and as the water cooled, pretty rapidly discovered that, as TTL is not possible with my set up, I couldn't control my strobes output with my gloves on! I put a post onto the wetpixel forum, and found that I wasn't alone! In particular, Jonas Odell contacted me with pictures of a "cold water" extender he produces. This easily retro fits onto the Inons existing knobs, and gives plenty of grip even when wearing dry gloves. Jonas is from Sweden, so I guess cold water is a normal challenge!

I duly ordered a pair, and in very quick time, the extenders appeared. They fit simply over the existing knobs, and are held in place with a grub



screws that mesh into the tension pin holding the strobes control knob. They only take a few minutes to fit, and can be easily removed.

These make a massive difference. Wearing thick dry gloves and after over an hour in very cold water, I can still easily adjust my strobes output! As the pictures show, the extender protrudes above the height of the sync cable and battery compartment, so you can actually get your fingers and, more importantly, gloves, in to adjust settings. For anyone planning to use Inon strobes in cold water, these should be a standard modification.

At much the same time, I heard of a company called XIT404 which produces great accessories for Subal, Sea & Sea, and Aquatica housings. One of their products is a zoom/focus knob "extender" which fits over the existing zoom control and gives a lot more purchase than the stock item. It was originally designed to give more fingertip control for macro focusing (particularly in conjunction with one of their focus gears) but it also gives a lot more grip when wearing big gloves!

The knob attaches to the zoom knob with a friction fit. It works best with a wrap of electrical



tape (supplied) to take up any slight differences in size caused by temperature etc.

In practice, I mostly use the zoom control with my Tokina 10-17. When going from scenic wide angle to close focus fish portraits, it is critical to be able to use one finger on the control. With the extender and my big gloves on, I find I can rapidly and accurately control the lens, almost as if I wasn't wearing the gloves at all!

Adam Hanlon

Inon extenders - Jonas Odell's e mail
jonas.odell@bredband.net

Details of XIT404 products are at
www.xit404.com

www.uwpmag.com

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DS161 **Movie Substrobe**

Specifications

Battery Pack..... NiMH module
Weight..... 1.3 kg (2.75 lb)
Size..... 9.6 cm dia x 17.9 cm
3.75" dia x 7"
Depth Rating..... 90m - 300 feet

Strobe

Energy Rating..... 160 watt-sec
Recycle Time..... 1.5 sec
Angle of Coverage..... 90 degrees
100 degrees with diffuser
Guide # (ISO 100) feet..... 76 surface - 38 underwater
Guide # meters..... 24 surface - 12 underwater
Color Temperature..... 4800 degrees Kelvin
Full Power Flashes..... 225 flashes per full charge
Firing Modes..... TTL, Full, 9 fractional powers

Movie

Movie Light..... 15-watt LED
Angle of Coverage..... 45 degrees
Brightness..... 500 lumens
Color Temperature..... 5000-5500K
Burn Time..... 5 hours at max intensity
Power Settings..... Full, 9 fractional powers, SOS

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