
LR-800 Dive Light

A bright, reliable underwater torch

For long, slow night dives, or for poking under ledges during the day, most dive lights seem underpowered and short-lived — or else too bulky for travel, especially with a slew of extra batteries. I've at last located a rechargeable light that delivers what I need, admittedly for a price, but if I amortize it over hundreds of dives, I've got a bargain.

Made by Intelligent Scuba Equipment (ISE), the LR-800 — a 10-watt, one-piece (“hand”) light — is a black, anodized-aluminum cylinder about the size of a beer can, including its folding pistol-grip handle.

Most ordinary C- and D-cell dive lights run in the 5-watt range. The Nicad-powered LR-800 has about twice the output; in fact, I've tested no other compact hand light that is as bright. For its size, it's a zonker. It cranked out brilliant white light for exactly 90 minutes (light from alkaline batteries

fades over their 4- to 8-hour life) and I eked out 10 minutes more by operating it intermittently during its dying phase.

It will fit in some BC pockets — maybe not those “tropical” BCs with slim, low-drag (i.e., useless) pockets — especially when its handle is removed.

Based upon a moderately abusive week of field testing, I found the LR-800 very well made. I dived it, dropped it hard many times, and ran its Nicads dead flat in a sink full of water (run it out of water for 30 minutes and the front end becomes hot enough to fuse nylon), risking permanent battery destruction.

I left it in the tropical sun until the black case was too hot to touch. I flipped the off/on switch back and forth constantly for two hours of hotel-enduring, pizza-eating, channel-surfing, back-to-

back, 30-minute sessions of CNN News. The light continued to work perfectly. I didn't test its 660-foot depth rating; *In Depth* doesn't pay me enough.

Underwater, the LR-800 has a fairly tight beam, about the size of a watermelon at three feet. According to Marc Largo at ISE, newer units will produce a tighter, more circular pattern. (For a light this well made, there should be a detent or safety on the switch to ensure against accidentally turning it on and running it down.)

The present 110-VAC, 60-Hz charger (which lacks a light to show that it's working) did fine in Curaçao (nominal 130 VAC, 50 Hz), but had I been in Australia, I'd have had to tote the 230-VAC model (which does have an LED display). ISE may produce a switching power supply charger to manage any voltage.

So the LR-800 is brilliant and reliable. Its finely machined case might just outlast the pyramids, though that claim is not put forth in the outstanding warranty that gives you a 30-day, money-back guarantee and 15-year coverage against defects.

The LR-800 retails for \$235. Of course, you don't have to buy batteries, so eventually it becomes cheaper than an alkaline drive light. It ships in a small, foam-lined Pelican case with an extra lamp, spare O-rings, lanyard, and battery charger. A 15-watt version will be available this summer that may effectively put it into the tech market as a primary caving light.

Contact ISE for your nearest distributor. If none is in your area, they will sell it direct: Intelligent Scuba Equipment, 42 Sherwood Terrace, Suite 9, Lake Bluff, IL 60044 (800-407-6201 or fax 847-735-9601).

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