



New company recommendation



Occasionally I come across a product which helps me immensely in my wildlife photography and when I do I am keen to share it on the basis that you might also find it useful. I am currently working on a number of specific wildlife photography projects for which I need to consider some sort of supplementary lighting. I hope to bring you more details of these projects in the future but in the meantime want to share with you a new approach to lighting I have discovered and the excellent company who supplies it.

For a long time now I have used camera flash units such as the Canon Speedlight and ring light system as well as studio strobes from Bowen when in a more static studio setting. A while ago I discovered the excellent battery powered LED lighting units being sold principally for video and many of you will have seen me using these on workshops. These are great but didn't quite give me the intensity I needed for a particular project I am working on with small mammals. The obvious solution was strobes but these tended to scare the animals either by the flash or the pop the head made so I was on the lookout for something else. Sometime ago I looked at the new continuous lighting kits that were appearing on the market and dismissed them as being either too flimsy or not effective enough. However whilst recently working on a project with the West Country Wildlife Photography Centre following on from the popular BBC1 'The Burrowers' series I was introduced to a company who imported a totally new continuous lighting system that was both very well constructed and very effective indeed.

The company is PIXAPRO based in Oldbury in the West Midlands - www.essentialphoto.co.uk – who supply an extensive range of quality studio equipment for both video and still photography. Their full range includes studio lighting, light modifiers, stands, cases, product photography, accessories, brackets and more innovative products including the new continuous lighting kits I bought. They supply on line through their website but have small "shop front" at their offices in Oldbury. I paid them a visit recently and found them extremely helpful and very well informed something I am afraid you seldom seem to find with online suppliers these days. I have had cause to contact them a number of times since and they have been just splendid, always helpful and always prepared to give me all the time, advice and support I needed.

The continuous lighting kit I bought and am extremely impressed with is their PIXAPRO 4200 Daylite 4. It has 2 heads that fit on conventional lighting stands (supplied) just like my Bowens strobes although they are quite a bit bigger. Each head is very well made and holds 4 supplied CFL bulbs which come at various wattages and are daylight balanced with a colour temperature of 5500K and flicker free. Mine are each 105 Watts making 420 Watts in total per head but being CFL bulbs of course these are equivalent to a great deal more in brightness. The stated figure is 2100 Watts per head and as the 4200 kit comes with 2 heads that's 4200 Watts equivalent. Whilst I have no way of testing this I can assure you that this is very bright indeed. Equally being CFL lights they produce a lot less than 2400 Watts of heat something that's very important when using them to photograph animals.



Each PIXAPRO head will take a conventional umbrella through an 8mm central hole and come supplied with a well-made rectangular softbox. This kit also comes with an excellent rigid wheeled carry case. What also makes these lighting heads unique, in my experience anyway, is that PIXAPRO also supply large parabolic reflectors (48cm) to fit the heads which work extremely well indeed.

There are clearly many ways these can be used and whilst I understand that there is still a need for conventional strobes in certain studio situations they solve many problems for me extremely well and I will certainly be using them for many of my future projects.