

# TEST FIRE

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## LED Lenser F1 Testfire

With a name like "F1" there is a high expectation of performance. LED Lenser's new fully waterproof super-torch pretty much delivers. LED Lenser has done a great job marketing its product into New Zealand. Many outdoor shops stock their stuff and its quality seems up there with the best that I've used in the past (such as Fenix, Surefire, Maglight and Zebra). This is worth noting because it's always comforting to know that sales support is locally available when, or if, you need it when spending reasonably large chunks of money on top end gear such as this.....sure beats burying your fancy gadget in a bowl of rice hoping it will miraculously attract smart Asians who will fix its electronics. The first surprise when opening the box is the diminutive size of the F1. To me, it looks more like a keyring accessory than a full blooded hunting torch. However, contrary to popular pornstar puffery, size isn't everything, and this little critter punches well above its weight.

### KEY FEATURES:

- Tiny - about 90mm in length
- Lightweight - only 70g
- Grunty - full power from its Cree XP-G2 LED delivers a whopping 400 lumens of light (at this rate it is specified to run for two hours)
- IPX8 waterproof (continuously submersible to 2.5 metres)
- Runs on a single CR123X lithium battery
- Type III hard anodizing and internal gold plated electronics which automatically regulate power, and a temperature sensor to prevent overheating
- Rear on/off switch sits slightly inside the rear alloy cap meaning it is less likely to bump on in your pack and you can stand the torch up vertically on a bench and use it like a candle

Like a growing number of the latest range of LED super-power torches, this one runs on the 3V CR123A battery. This is good and bad news right now because many hunters (me included) standardise on the venerable AA which, in terms of torch power sources, seems to be following the footsteps of our once all-conquering .303 calibre. Great in its time but being superseded by higher performing units that deliver better outcomes.

For example, LED Lenser's single AA equivalent torch (P5) is 18% heavier, 20% longer and pokes out only 95 lumens compared to the F1's 400!

For the kind of hunting I prefer, where I carry in all my gear, pack size and weight mean a lot. Combined with its waterproofness, this tiny torch is a winner for those looking to trim down, but not compromise on performance. I took the torch on a recent Tahr trip and it performed well. The beam spills out quite wide and it does not have any focus adjustment which means it's useful range is about 120 metres - still awesome for something so teeny weenie.

The F1 replaced my old 2 x AA LED torch, taking up less room and reducing my hunting bag weight at the same time....it all adds up, and helps when you spot an animal several hundred metres above you that can only be nailed by hard uphill, thigh crunching yakka.

Unlike some other LED Lenser units, this one does not have any programmable functionality, first click switches the unit on to its full 400 Lumen output, next click reduces output to 60 Lumens, third successive click switches on a 12hz strobing effect. The rear cap of the torch has hexagonal faces which prevent the unit rolling on a table and helps your grip when unscrewing. It also comes with a replaceable "tactical" bezel ring (capable of breaking glass in an emergency....) and a clip that can be used to fit the torch to the brim of your cap.

### SUMMARY

This revolutionary torch from LED Lenser is easy to like, and the fact that it switches immediately on full power is certainly handy if you are in any sudden spotlighting opportunity. It is a very small, well-built and tough LED torch that delivers a huge amount of light out of a single battery. The waterproof feature is excellent for our hunting conditions. The only negative would be that it's almost too small to adequately hold and locate in the jumble of junk

floating around in your hunting bag...hardly a problem really.

The F1's 400-lumen maximum output is very demanding for the single 123A battery, so LED Lenser uses an aggressive step-down to 10% after about 1½ minutes of continuous use on full power - therefore limiting this unit's use to bursts within this timeframe. With a partially depleted battery I found the F1 unable to fire up on full power.

A great option for a hunter, however given the huge demands of the single CR123A battery when on full power, be sure to carry spares!

RRP NZ\$150.00.

Distributed by [www.tightlines.co.nz](http://www.tightlines.co.nz)



I took the torch on a recent Tahr trip, and it performed well.



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Reviewed by Martin Askes

## The U-Way VH200B - Black Flash Trail Camera

Without a doubt trail-cameras are getting better all the time as technology improves. This is the latest offering from U-Way, a company with a good reputation for producing some innovative, high quality trail cameras.

### FEATURES AND BENEFITS

The VH simply stands for Vigilant Hunter and the B stands for Black flash, which is a current trend for security these days as the black LED's don't have the visible red night-time glow. Even with the black flash the night time range is claimed to be an impressive 20 metres which is a long way out. You can switch the night-time flash off with this unit if you don't want night shots or you are using an external U-Way flash extension.

This is a reasonably compact unit with a solid case. The front is camouflage printed that matches New Zealand bush well.

The VH200B is an 8MP camera so you should expect very good quality images. It runs off 6 or 12 AA's and prefers Lithium but will also run on Alkaline or NI-MH. It will also run on an external 6V or 9V battery. If you use a solar panel it must have its own batteries as it won't charge the ones inside. This is a smart unit as when the batteries get low it will automatically shorten the video or photo bursts down to extend the camera's running time. There is a battery level indicator, which is a small icon on the bottom left of the viewing screen. This screen also has a live preview mode so you can see what the camera sees. But of course with the door swinging open once the camera is attached to your tree it won't be viewing straight ahead. The viewing screen is a good size and useful if you want a quick look at what you have captured.

Trigger time is claimed to be a fast one second and the PIR sensor is a multi-zone unit; with several detection zones these are generally more reliable.

Quiet time settings between the one-three

photo bursts can be set as low as five seconds so you'll get plenty of shots at this setting.

Sensitivity can be set to low/normal/high with the normal setting being most commonly used.

There is a solid back fitting for a Python-type lock and there is the option to set a password in the menu as well.

The small rubber grommet on the base for the external power might get chewed off by possums or kea so it pays to silicon this up.

### IN THE FIELD

When setting the camera up there is a secure (green) webbing strap and a Python loop above it which gives plenty of adjustment to change the direction angle. The flash range of this U-Way camera is indeed very good with clear shots out to 20 metres or slightly more which I was impressed with. I have also noticed very few deer will stare at this unit when it's taking pictures. U-Way has designed this with the night/day IR filter so it only flips over the lens twice in any 24 hour period. This makes the camera super quiet but it can flip over to the black and white night mode a bit early some nights if the day is very cloudy.

There is an excellent setting in the menu called "Camera Information" that gives you the number of photos taken (and video) and the space used on the SD card. The U-Way has HD video mode (10-60 secs) with sound and is one of the camera's better qualities. That's because the sound quality is very good without the distortion found on most other trail cameras that record sound.

You can use the viewing screen to view, rewind and play-back videos but this does chew into the batteries of course. The unit appears to be super efficient on batteries and from what I have seen may well run for a year on a full set of batteries, with 5,000 photos, no problem at all.



The Uway VH200B is compact and well camouflaged.

### CONCLUSION

Trail cameras are just so much fun to use, a modern way to catch animals going about their natural business. The silent U-Way has such a low impact that you will get very natural behaviour recorded. I have noticed some different exposures on occasions between the first and subsequent photos. This is because the first photo is very fast (about 1.5 seconds at night from rest) and the camera continues to take light readings as it goes, thus it's always trying to improve the picture quality. The advantage with this top-market unit might be the video with sound, or if you are looking for a very long running camera for security reasons the black flash makes the unit so much harder to see at night. All things weighed up the U-way VH200B is a very nice unit. (Don't forget to format any new SD card in the camera first.)

Warranty 12 months

RRP\$699

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### WHAT I LIKED

- Long Flash Range
- Hi-res 8MP pictures
- Good quality sound with video
- Secure locking
- Very long run time
- Good colour camo

### WHAT COULD BE BETTER

- On/Off button is hard to see (for me anyway)
- Live preview is on a swinging door

You can use 6 or 12 AA's that load into the back.



The Uway VH200B has a nice sized viewing screen.