

# Sekonic Marine Meter II

by Jack and Sue Drafa

Many years ago, when manual exposure meters were the norm for underwater photography, we were introduced to an invaluable photographic tool—the Sekonic Marine Meter. You would think that with all of today's fancy autoexposure camera system, a meter of this type would disappear. Well, for a time it almost did as it was temporarily discontinued in 1993. Fortunately, Sekonic and its distributor, Mamiya America, had the wisdom to see the advantage of this meter, and recently re-introduced the Sekonic Marine Meter II (L-164C).

Identical to its original, the Marine Meter II is pretty straightforward in operation. All exposure information is displayed inside of the front faceplate of the round housing. The back of the meter has battery compartment access, two control knobs, and the CdS cell. The battery compartment is o-ring sealed and holds one PX-13 or EPX-13 equivalent battery. Care must be taken to grease the o-ring and make sure it is clean before closing the battery compartment.

The On/Off control has three positions. The On and Off positions are obvious; the third is a battery check that is displayed on the front of the meter.

The second control has two functions that are displayed on the front of the meter. To set the correct film speed, you pull out this control gently, and turn the dial until the proper ISO value is displayed in the window. Push the dial back down, and then you can rotate it to select a shutter speed.

To put this useful tool to work, turn it on and aim it toward your subject.

Let's say that you have set your ISO and pre-selected a shutter speed of  $\frac{1}{60}$ . When you take a meter reading, the pointer indicates that the correct exposure would be  $\frac{1}{60}$  at f/4. If you desired a different shutter speed, just rotate the dial to  $\frac{1}{25}$  and the meter would automatically show that the f-stop would now be f/2.8. The display on the front uses large bold type so that these settings are easy to see even in poor lighting conditions.

If you want to average a scene, move the meter from the darkest area to the lightest and pick the f-stop in the middle. Many underwater

photographers who use the Sekonic Marine Meter II take a general reading of the area in front of them, and adjust their camera accordingly long before they plan on taking a picture. When a large manta ray or shark appears, they can quickly check the meter to see if the light level has changed.

The Sekonic Marine Meter II comes with a hard carrying case that protects the meter from impact during transport. The top of the carrying case has additional storage for a spare battery, and a special tool to open the battery compartment. A small accessory kit with the meter includes two types of straps, an extra o-ring, and a small container of o-ring grease.

There are several reasons that a hand-held manual meter has survived all the technical changes and is still in

demand. In the field of underwater photography there are still many cameras with a very simple exposure metering system or no meter at all. For those systems that do feature autoexposure, the exposure data is often hard to see in the camera finder. The addition of an accurate, easy-to-read underwater meter makes a tough photo job a bit easier.

This meter also works very well for mountaineering, rafting, surfing, and skiing where the environment can be downright dangerous to the average camera. The advantage in these situations is that you can keep your expensive land camera protected from the environment while you check out the light level with the Sekonic Marine Meter II. You can then pre-set your camera in a protected environment and bring it out quickly to capture the shot. The meter decreases the time that your expensive camera spends in a hostile environment. Sand, cold air, high humidity, saltwater, mud, rain, and snow all have little effect on this

meter, but can cause a quick death for an expensive electronic camera system.

Sekonic made a great meter back in 1969 and it is just as good today. Even if you have a fancy autoexposure

system, this meter will provide you a reliable backup to help make incorrect exposures a thing of the past.

For more information contact Mamiya America Corp., 8 Westchester Plaza, Elmsford, NY 10523; 914/347-3300. On the Internet at [www.sekonic.com](http://www.sekonic.com). ■

