



TESTED

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LIGHTS OF PREY

THE NEW NIGHT HAWK LEDS ARE SURE TO SPOT YOUR TARGET

I've been fortunate to have had at least 40 to 50 pairs of driving lights fitted to my 4X4 in recent years – all in the name of testing. Some have been bright, some not-so, with some being (literally) brilliant.

The new Night Hawks sit firmly in the latter category; not just with their ability to cast a superbly bright light, but also with the selection of two beam patterns, intelligent design features and all round ingenuity.

Right from the get-go, I'd not suggest these lights are the overall brightest I've ever seen, as in how far down the track they can shine. Nup, there are others that can lay their sabre-like sword of light well beyond the Bushrangers, for what that is worth! I, for one, don't really see the value of a narrow beam shining brightly over one kilometre in front of a 4X4. Sure, it may look good on paper to have a light reading of 1 lux beyond any reasonable useable distance, but I'd rather my lights show more light at half that distance to allow me to read the road, and spot wildlife both on and to the wide-spread parts of a road. Doing that with a non-vibrating light body, that can be easily mounted and adjusted, can simply and effectively alter its beam pattern and can fit into my bull bar is of more importance to me.

As for the VLI (variable intensity lighting), my thoughts on that feature are neutral at this stage. This system allows the driving lights to be dimmed as needed (via a seven-position dash-mounted dial), similar to some existing camping LED lights. Initially, I thought "the brighter, the better" and no lessening of light output would ever be of use. But, there are times that this system could well prove useful; perhaps dimming slightly on major highways with those huge reflective signs that glare back at you, knocking off a little brightness may allow for more constant use of your driving lights when the whole gamut may not be needed. For trundling into camp instead of torching other campers, a 'half-light' position on the dial could help, or, maybe even in rain or fog a dimmer light could help overall visibility, but I've not tried any of these situations as yet. My use to date has been scooting around our local country backroads and dirt tracks, so time will tell as I get the chance to test the dimming settings thoroughly.

As for the body of these lights, the ten-sided shape is unique, as is the flow-through ventilation ducts to aid in body cooling. That lower overall size derived from the shape should allow the relatively large lights to fit smaller-sized bull bars, for which there are plenty of options for fitment to your bar. Dual Allen key headed bolts allow for easy vertical adjustment and horizontal adjustment rather than the current trend of overly-complex skeletal frames.

During stationary testing, the Night Hawks get noticeably warm to the touch during the short run times; not hot, just warm. Given its 175 wattage (I measured a 14.3-amp current draw), that's understandable and far from a problem, just something I've noticed compared to some other lower wattage units. Normal driving, plus having air flow through the clever ducting, will no doubt keep operating temps low enough to avoid damage – again, I'll test temperatures over time.

The spot beam is indeed very bright and useable with its far-reaching concentrated beam combined with an excellent short to mid-distance wide spread and illumination devoid of shadows. Clipping the spread beam cover onto the main body transforms the light output by providing an incredible wide rectangular range that is more akin to a long light bar.

The long-distance penetration of the spot beam is, however, reduced (which is to be expected), but the wide spread of useable light is incredible. I'll be putting up a heap of backroad keys trialling one of each light beam (spot and spread) plus two spots and even two spreads to see which is the better option for a variety of driving situations – high-speed open roads, tight and twisty bush tracks, low-range low-speed driving, and even some beach driving, which really tests a light ability with few objects to shine on.

To date, with just a few short trips completed, the Bushranger Night Hawk VLI LED lights certainly seem to tick all the boxes. Combined with the pricing and a five-year warranty, these Bushrangers Night Hawks will be a hard act to beat; once I've nailed the above testing, I'll get back to you with my findings, good, bad or otherwise. **4X4**

PRICE: RRP \$447.50 each // **AVAILABLE FROM:** bushranger.com.au



1. Count the sides; 10 all up plus flow-through ventilation around the edges to help keep the body cool.
2. 4-pin Deutch connector plugs into the lower section of the light body and incorporates the VLI technology with the added part of the wiring loom.
3. Four Allen head bolts per light secure the vertical adjustment.