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<http://www.bestbinocularsreviews.com/Kite8x30LynxHD-127.htm>

Kite Optics, may not be one of the most instantly recognized brand in the optics world, but this small Belgian company has been producing high high quality binoculars and other optics equipment for 30 years now and their newest offerings are their series of Lynx HD binoculars. Currently Kite have two models available in this series, a 10x30 and 8x30 models.

In the past 30mm binoculars (those having 30mm objective lenses) were fairly uncommon, yet I have recently seen more and more come onto the market which is somewhat interesting.

I say this because this size of objective lenses means that whilst they are smaller than most mid sized binoculars that usually have objectives of about 32mm in diameter, they are larger than most compacts (usually under 28mm but most often around 26mm or under) and so they sit somewhere in no mans land.

So whilst something like the 8x30 Kite Lynx HD binoculars may not suit those looking for an ultra compact binocular, they will appeal to those who want something that is still easy to pack away and/or carry about wherever you go, yet does not sacrifice as much light gathering potential as a full compact and thus still has the potential to produce an image that compares with mid or even full sized bins.

That is the theory anyway, the difficult bit is to make a 30mm binocular that can still produce an image that compares well with larger ones. Swarovski optics nailed it in my opinion with their impressive Swarovski CL 8x30 binoculars and to see if Kite Optics have also managed this, I spent some time with the high end Kite Lynx HD 8x30 binoculars and below you can read my full review and findings:

Important Stats & Features

- Wide Field of View: 151m wide @ 1000m
- Near focus of only 1.3m(4.3ft)
- Eye Relief: 15mm
- Weight: 461g
- Width: 12cm (4.7in) open & 9.8cm (3.8in) closed
- Length: 11.9cm (4.7in) eyecups in & 12.7cm (5in) eyecups out
- PermaVision lens coatings are dirt & water repellent



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The Body

Like most modern bins, the Kite Lynx HD 8x30 binocular comes with a rubber armour exterior. Available in black, the rubber is a reasonably hard meaning that whilst it will still provides a little protection to the chassis and optics, it offers a little less grip than those with a softer rubber.

However this harder rubber also means that there is less chance of the coating being damaged or marked.

Kite Optics have also added a lightly textured area to most of the body which also improves the grip compared to the smooth sections on the body.

Underside of the Kite Lynx HD Binoculars However unlike many modern roof prism bins, these do not have thumb indents on the underside. This is just a very minor point, but in my opinion is a small detail that Kite Optics have missed as well positioned indents can make it quicker in guiding you to hold the optics in the right way and in the right place to get a perfect balance.

Shape

Kite Lynx HD binoculars sport a single, fairly thin, top hinge design which is becoming more and more popular, for a number for a number of reasons:

Made using less material, the thinner bridge weighs less than a single wide one and like the open hinge design that uses two thin bridges on each end, it leaves a large portion of the barrels free for you to grab hold of, for a better grip. Being able to wrap your whole hand around the barrel with one hand is also an advantage when walking about with your optics as this is nice and secure way to hold onto them and also leaves the other hand free to support yourself or clear a path in difficult terrain.

Chassis

Kite Optics do not give much information away when describing what materials they have used to make the Lynx HD in their marketing, but I have been able to find out from them that the main chassis is made of fiberglass reinforced polycarbonate.

This is not only very strong on the large parts, but it reduces weight compared to cheaper materials. Note: some manufacturers will use magnesium on their top end products.

Kite Optics also pointed out to me that some smaller and/or more fragile parts are made from metal to ensure best durability.

Water & Fogproofing?

The Lynx HD is dry nitrogen gas filled and sealed and so is fully water and fogproof.

Focussing wheel and Eye Cups on the 8x30 Kite Lynx HD The Eye Cups

Theses Kite Lynx HD binocular use twist-up eyecups made from metal, which is far better than the plastic ones used on many bins. You can really appreciate this as the mechanism is very smooth and works really well.

You also get a fairly generous 15mm of eye-relief that should be just enough room for manoeuvre for most eyeglass wearers.

The rubber coating is not the thickest or softest I have used, but combined with an external diameter of 39mm that is good for this size of bin, I thought the eyecups were nice and comfortable, even when pushing them firmly against my face and over longer observation periods.

Another important feature that I would like to highlight is the eyecups are self-removable (screw on and screw of) like that which are found on many Swarovski instruments. This allows you to change an eyecup should they get broken. Kite Optics pointed out to me that for all their customers, new eyecups are always available and delivered free of charge. This is impressive as many brands charge to have a broken eyecup replaced and broken eyecups are by far (40%) the most common form of damage that occurs on any (highest-end and lowest-end) binocular and for which it needs repair.



Focusing

At 31mm in diameter, the focus wheel is very large when compared to a compact and matches or beats most mid-sized bins.

This combined with a very smooth mechanism, that has just enough friction to stop unwanted movement and without any play made it nice and easy to reach and turn very accurately, even when I tested them using my large winter gloves.

To go from near to far focus takes just over one full rotation of the dial (approx 380°), this is reasonably aggressive, meaning that it takes less time to change the focus over larger distances, but you just need to take that bit of extra care when fine focusing.

Diopter Adjustment on the Kite Lynx HD Binoculars

The diopter adjustment, like on most binoculars is located on the right eyepiece. To adjust it you just turn the wheel and whilst it does not have a ratchet or a way of locking it, there was enough friction on the pair that I tested to make accidental movement unlikely.

This adjustment is made when you first set up the optics to your own particular eyesight and in theory really needs to be done once. For more read this article on how to focus and calibrate binoculars.

Body Construction Quality Score: 7/10

Dimensions

Kite Optics advertise these as having a width that goes from 9.6cm wide with the central hinge closed, to 11.4cm wide with it opened. My measurements were slightly different as I recorded it as being 9.8cm (3.8in) wide when closed and 12cm (4.7in) with the central hinge open. Either way, this dimensions is smaller just about every mid-sized bino that I have tested.

What is also good is their inter-pupillary (IPD) range is still good and has a minimum of 5.5cm with the hinge closed and 7.4cm wide when open. This means that most people, even those with fairly wide set or those with narrow eyes (including older children), should be able to adjust these to ensure the ocular lenses line up perfectly with their eyes.

The advertised length is 12cm, which is very near to the measurement that I got (11.9cm (4.7in) when I measured them with the eye-cups fully twisted in and the lens caps removed. Fully extending the eye-cups, this length extends to 12.7cm (5in).

Their height goes from 4.7cm (1.9in) with the hinge open and increases to 6.4cm (2.5in) with the body folded.

These dimensions make the Lynx 8x30 HD a fair bit smaller than most other mid-sized bins and is where the smaller 30mm objective lenses have an advantage to others in this category. However compared to most "true" compacts with objectives around 26mm, or smaller these are still quite a lot larger.

That's the figures, but in my hands that I would describe as being average in size for a man, the Kite 8x30 Lynx HD felt really comfortable. They were well balanced and the large centrally located focussing wheel was easy to locate and turn with one finger.

Unlike some compacts that can be a little cumbersome, especially if you are wearing thick gloves, these were still very easy to use. This also means that I think that they will still be fine for those with large hands and those with small hands like older children and some women will really benefit from the slightly smaller proportions.

What I really liked however is these, like the excellent Swarovski 8x30 CL Companion's, are just small enough when folded to fit into most coat pockets. For me this can be a real bonus as there are many times where I would rather slip my bins into a pocket than have them dangling around my neck:

Hiking / Walking Safaris - If you are like me where you like to carry a camera as well as your binoculars, then having the freedom to store the binocular in your pocket when not in use so that it does not get in the way of your photography is important and is why I have often in the past opted to use a full compact.

Travelling - There are many occasions whilst traveling that you want to take your gear with you, but at the same time don't want to show it off to everyone.

Weight

These Kite binoculars tip the scales at just 16.3oz (462g), which is very light compared to other mid sized binoculars and even weighs less than the 8x30 Swarovski CL Companion:

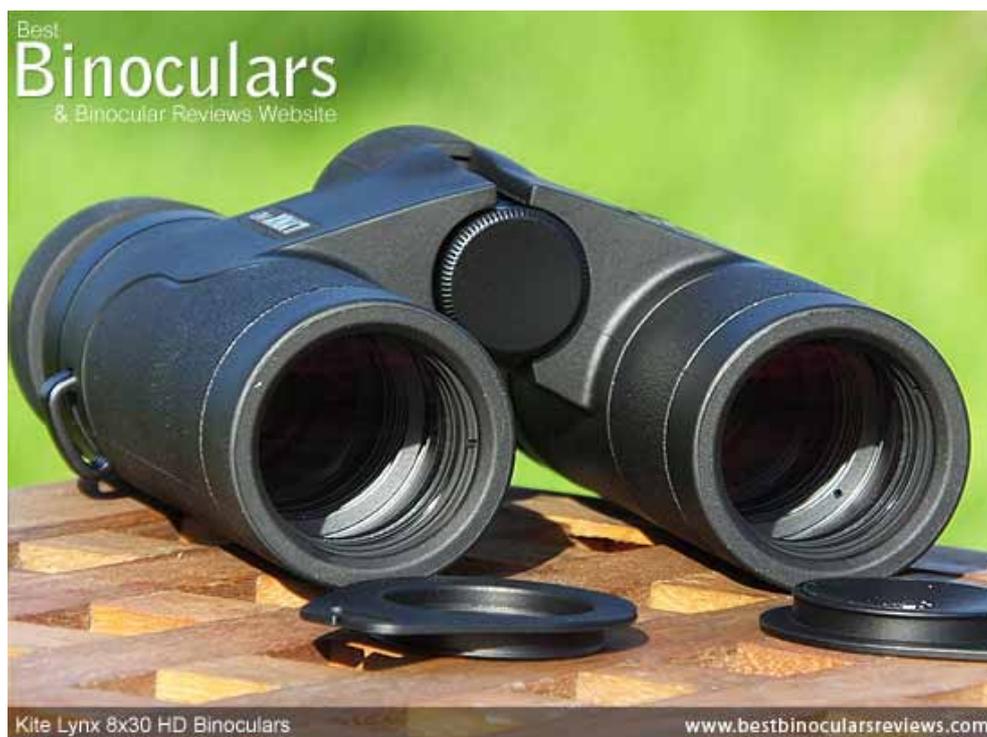
Kite 8x30 Lynx HD: 462g (16.3oz)
Swarovski 8x30 CL Companion: 500g (17.6oz)
Steiner 8x30 Military-Marine: 510g (18ozs)
Kowa Genesis 10x33 XD : 590g (20.8oz)
Minox 8x33 BL Binoculars: 649g (22.9oz)

However as you can see below, comparing them to some full compacts (that have much smaller objectives) they are still a fair amount heavier:

Kowa 8x25 BD: 320g (11.3oz)
Minox 7x28 BD: 340g (12oz)
Pentax 9x28 DCF LV: 366g (12.9oz)
Kite 8x30 Lynx HD: 462g (16.3oz)

Because of the fairly unique dimensions, I find it quite hard to give this Lynx HD 8x30 a score for their body stats. This is because all my scores are relative and used to compare other similar binoculars in the same size class. However I would say that they look and handle more like a mid-sized bin than a compact and so I have decided to rate them as such:

Best Binoculars Rating for Body Stats: 10/10



Kite Lynx HD Optics

Like the main body, Kite Optics do not go into much detail in their marketing as to the optical components and their coatings they have used on the Lynx HD, other than to say that the "Lenses and prisms are of highest quality and treated with KITE's latest technologies in coating, offering you brilliant colour reproduction and an exceptionally bright image." However after writing to them they have supplied me with much more information, which I can now share with you below:

Lenses

The ocular lenses on the 8x30 Lynx HD have a diameter of 22mm, which is better than most mid sized bins and indeed matches most full sized binoculars.

30mm Objective Lenses

ED or extra low dispersion glass has been used as one of the elements in each of the compound lenses. This glass gives the lens designer more options to better control the wavelengths of light and thus potentially be able to produce an image that has less or even no color fringing.

As I have already mentioned, at 30mm in diameter, the objective lenses are somewhat smaller than what is normally used on a mid-sized binocular. This has the advantage of reducing the size, weight and to a small degree the cost of the binocular, but how in theory does this affect the view?

Well all 8x32mm mid-size bins produce an exit pupil of 4mm which in most light conditions, except the very darkest should be just enough to produce a reasonably bright image to enable them to be fairly effective - assuming good quality glass and coatings are used.

These Lynx HD binoculars, with their smaller 30mm objectives and the same 8x magnification produce a slightly smaller 3.75mm exit pupil. This is not a huge difference and in most conditions, you will probably not notice any difference in brightness (all other things being equal). It is in poor light, like before sunrise or just after sunset, where a larger exit pupil would be better.

For more on the exit pupil and image brightness and why there occasions when smaller objectives can seem as bright as larger ones, please take a moment to read my complete guide to the Exit Pupil.

Prisms

Other than the straight through design, which identifies these as having roof prisms, I can not say much more about the prisms used in this binocular. My guess, buy the overall quality and by looking back down the objective lens at the nice rounded image is that Kite Optics have used good quality BAK-4 glass to make them.

Optical Coatings

The Kite 8x30 Lynx HD has fully multi-coated optics, meaning that every glass surface that comes into contact with air has multiple layers of anti-reflection coatings added to them and makes a big difference to quality of the image as well as the transmittance levels and so will produce a better quality and brighter image than those with only single coatings on all or even just some of the glass surfaces.

Kite Optics also mention that the exterior surfaces of the lenses have had a special coating applied to them which is far more resistant to scratches than conventional lenses and is water and dirt repellent. They call this their PermaVision coating, which I am sure is similar to that found on a few other high end optics. The main advantages of these coatings is that they require less cleaning and when you do clean them the scratch resistance helps ensure that you don't accidentally mark them.

As for the prism coatings, the Lynx HD has the very best dielectric coating on the reflective prism surface, which once again will outperform those with only silver or aluminium coatings.

The roof prism has also been phase corrected, meaning that It has received special coatings that correct the phase shift that occurs on one surface of the prism and so will once again produce a better quality image than those that have not had this treatment.

Optical Components Score: 9/10

Optical Stats

Field Of View

The view through these 8x30 Kite binoculars is a very impressive 151m wide at a distance of 1000m or 453ft @ 1,000 yards.

This as you can see below is excellent and beats almost all it's direct competitors in this size and magnification class:

- Kite 8x30 Lynx HD: 453ft @ 1,000 yards
- Minox 8x33 BL Binoculars: 421ft @ 1000 yards
- Swarovski 8x32 Traveler EL: 420ft @ 1000 yards
- Nikon EDG 8x32: 409ft @ 1000 yards
- Swarovski CL 8x30: 372ft @ 1000 yards
- Kowa Genesis 10x33 XD : 357 at 1000 yards

Close Focusing Distance

At only 1.3 meters (4.3ft) away the close focus on these is superb - I consider anything under 6ft for a standard binocular to be excellent.

This makes these ideal for the close observation of things like flowers, birds and insects, especially butterflies.

Eye-Relief:

The 15mm of eye relief is good, but not excellent however it should be enough for the average eyeglass wearer to be able to get the full view without any blurring on the edges.

Optical Stats Score: 9/10

Optical Quality

I try to keep what are my opinions of the view through the binoculars that I review as consistent and fair as possible. To help me, I have a number of benchmark binoculars in all of the size classes that I use to compare the view with the bin that is under review with and then I score them against that:

Brightness

I compared the view through these Kite Optics Lynx HD 8x30 binoculars with that of my 8x32 controls in good light during the day as well as poor light after sunset and I must say that to me they were as bright and I really could not see a difference, which is impressive.

In poor light and comparing them to my 26mm compacts these were notably brighter, but what is also impressive is that compared to my mid level 8x42 control, these to me were almost as bright, which implies to me that they have used high end coatings and glass, which counters the smaller objectives and exit pupil and thus have higher transmittance level.

Color Fringing

The amount of color fringing caused by chromatic distortion was very hard to pick out and I would say there was almost none, even when I was very closely observing the edges of white objects in front of a dark background.

Like most bins, I did see a slight blue/green fringe on the edges of objects with the sun in the background (being very careful not to look directly into the sun).

Softening

Like the color fringing, the extent of the softening at the periphery of the view is extremely small and ranks up there with some of the best that I have used.

Contrast & Color Reproduction

Of all the parts that I look for when reviewing a binocular, I find this section the most difficult of all. This is because colors and contrast are very subjective and to be honest it is rare that I find a good quality binocular that performs vastly different to that of my controls.

Many cheap binoculars have very high levels of contrast and the colors look unnatural, this was most certainly not the case with these and I thought that they compared very well with that of all the bins that I was testing them against, which in turn means they are as good as most of the high end, high quality binoculars out there.

Image Quality Rating: 8/10



Included Extras:

Carry Bag

The Kite HD carry bag looks great and appears to be made to a very high standard. Whilst it is technically a soft bag, it does have some resistance to collapsing on the side walls which will help protect your bins from being crushed, in places like your luggage etc.

Access to the interior is via a long zip that runs right over the top and quite far down each of the sides, which makes it simple to get at or replace the bins. I do prefer a zip to something like Velcro that is often used as it is easier to make less noise when opening or closing the bag, something that can be important should you be stalking jittery birds or even larger wildlife.

Inside there is also plenty of really good padding which once again will do a good job protecting your investment. There is also plenty of room and perhaps a little too much so these small bins do move around a bit, but it does mean that it is easy to store them, even with the central hinge fully open and your eyecups fully twisted out.

There is no internal pocket, but there is a good one on the outside which also has a zip to keep it closed and so is perfect for keeping a few small valuables with you and possibly a cloth etc.

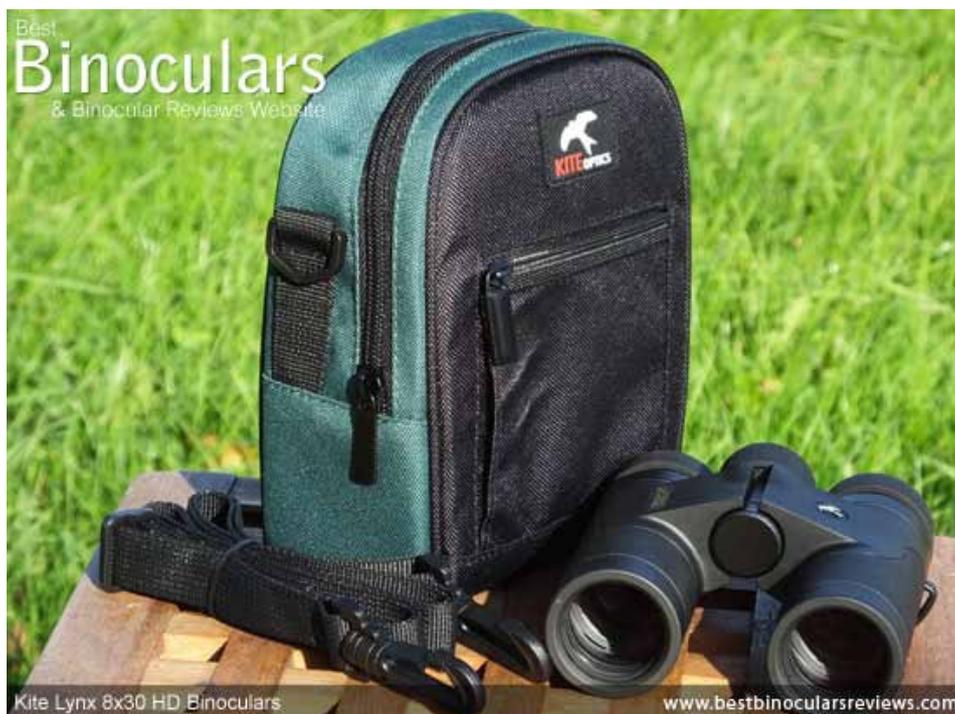
The bag comes with it's own fairly simple and un-padded carry strap that has swivel quick release connectors and on the back of the bag is a belt loop, should you want to fix the bag to your person instead.

Neck Strap On the Kite Lynx HD Binoculars Neck Strap

Any binocular this weight and size really does not need a neck strap with huge amounts of padding and the one that comes with these is more than adequate.

It fixes to the binocular in the usual way of threading it through the two eyelets located on each side the binocular and then back on itself.

What I would like to mention is that whilst the quality is good and matches that which you get on most many mid-level bins, I did feel that it did not quite match the level of the carry bag or the actual binocular which is a bit of a shame.



Kite Lynx 8x30 HD Binoculars

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Ocular Lens Protection

The rainguard looks to be constructed from rubber or a very soft plastic and on the one I tested it fitted nice and securely over the eyecups.

There are two eyelets (one on each side), that you use to attach it to the neck strap, one of which is designed so that you can easily add and remove it from the strap when glassing to get it out of the way which works well.

They have also made the bridge that connects each of the cups on the guard nice and bendable, which makes it much easy to fit them onto the end of binocular, without having to open the binocular and change your inter-pupillary distance.

Objective Lens Covers On the Kite Lynx HD Binoculars

The plastic objective lens covers fit within the ends of the barrels well enough and will not easily come away by accident.

Whilst each one has a loop with a cutout on it that makes them simple to attach and remove from the neck strap, I personally find this way of keeping them handy at all times a little cumbersome, especially with the rain-guard also attached and far prefer the softer rubber lens covers that are tethered to each barrel with a rubber loop, but this is just my personal preference and am sure that others may disagree with me.

No Lens Cloth

Strangely Kite do not include a lens cleaning cloth with these, which is usually included. This for me is not a huge deal as I always recommend that you get yourself a proper lens cleaning kit to better look after your optics anyway, but it is nice to have a cloth handy for light use out in the field.

Guarantee

Kite Optics offer a 30 year warranty on these Lynx HD bins.

Extras & Attention to Detail score: 7/10





Final Words...

As I have seen with the Swarovski CL 8x30 Companion and now with these, so long as you are using really good quality optics and coatings, the smaller 30mm objectives can perform as well in almost all areas as the more commonly used 32mm ones on most mid-sized bins, but you get the advantage of a smaller and lighter instrument.

Strong Points: Wide Field of View, Compact, Lightweight, Build Quality, Good Quality View

Weak points? Small things like no lens cleaning cloth and for me not having better quality and tethered objective covers and possible a higher spec neck strap and a lockable diopter ring are areas where Kite Optics could have done a little better.

Ideal Uses

Whilst their size and weight does not match that of a true compact, they are easier and less fussy to use for those with larger hands or when wearing gloves and will outperform all but the very best compacts in very poor light. So unless you really need an ultra-compact binocular that fits into your shirt pocket, these will fit into a coat pocket and be great as a take everywhere binocular.

So the fact that they are smaller and lighter than most other mid-sized bins and not that far off from being described as a compact means that that are obviously also a great choice as a binocular to take travelling and I have no hesitation in endorsing them as an ideal bin for a safari holiday, camping trip and even for hiking.

Whilst their smaller objectives mean that they possibly don't perform quite as well as top end 8x42 binoculars in very low light, but they still perform well enough and better than most compacts and as good and many lower spec 8x42s. So taking this into consideration and their really wide field of view makes them a great easy to carry bird watching binocular, but combine this wide FOV with their small size and you have the perfect pair of optics for most most outdoor sporting events like motorsports, cricket, tennis, rugby, football, horse racing and more.

Those with smaller hands & faces will appreciate these because once again their smaller size, the ease at which they can be held, the large easy to reach focus wheel and their close minimum interpupillary distance means these will really suit those with smaller hands making them ideal for older children and some women.

People who carry lots of gear out in the field like photographers or some hunters will also value being able to store these in a jacket pocket.

Their very close focus distance also makes these stand out as great bins for those who like to get better views of things like flowers and insects, especially butterflies at close range.

Body Construction Quality:	7/10
Body Stats:	10/10
Optical Components Quality:	9/10
Optical Stats:	9/10
Image Quality	8/10
Extras & Attention to Detail:	7/10

83%

OUTSTANDING