

Kite KSP 80 HD, 25-50x WA

Can these Belgian new boys compete with the established brands?
David Chandler finds out

EARLIER THIS YEAR I reviewed the diminutive Lynx HD 8x30, an impressive binocular from Kite, a Belgian brand that is relatively unknown in the UK. This review looks at a somewhat weightier Kite product, their top-end scope with a street price that nudges £2,000.

Quality build

The KSP 80 is a substantial piece of kit – a solid scope with excellent build quality and a large objective. It is not a lightweight – with the eyepiece on it weighs 1910g. To put that in perspective, a Swarovski ATS 80 with a 25-50x eyepiece is 235g lighter. But, given that the total weight you'll be carrying will probably include a tripod too, 235g is not of much consequence.

The focusing wheel wraps around the lens barrel (helical focusing) and has big rubber ribs. Its movement is very nice – quite light and very smooth. There's one revolution of travel, anti-clockwise towards infinity, but for birding, about a quarter of a turn does the job. Not only does it move well, it focuses well, too – focusing precision is very good, with a gentle touch needed from time to time, especially and not surprisingly, at high magnification.

The chunky zoom eyepiece is bayonet mounted with a locking ring on the body to secure it in place. This ring moved more easily than I would like, but I don't think it will cause any problems. To zoom, you just twist the ribbed ring on the eyepiece – it moves smoothly against quite a bit of resistance – that's just a description, not a problem! The eyecup twists up and down and has two intermediate click-stopped positions. I did experience some blackouts (dark

The scope feels like a bit of quality and is very well balanced

The rubbery focusing wheel is easy to get hold of and precise in use



as good at high magnification. I estimated close-focus at about four metres – similar to the quoted value.

On the down side, I did see a bit of colour fringing – yellow on a Black-headed Gull's hood, blue on a distant Mute Swan, and a narrow yellow ring at the periphery of the field of view, but for me, none of these would be a deal-breaker.

Also available

A Skua stay-on-case is available for £79.99. If you want to use this scope for digiscoping Kite recommend the Novagrade digiscoping adaptor. This costs £149 and works with phones and DSLRs.

Verdict

Quality scope. Kite describe this as one of the best scopes available. I wouldn't argue with them. I'd be content with this as the big scope in my cupboard. [EW](#)

crescents coming into the view) at first, but using a lower eyecup position improved things. No other eyepieces are available.

It's rubber armoured, waterproof and nitrogen-filled, and has a pull-out lens hood. There's a hole for an anti-rotation pin on the tripod plate and a rotating collar with eight click stops – a feature I like. And when you mount the KSP 80 on a tripod, its balance is excellent – neither front-heavy nor back-heavy. There's a 30 year warranty, too.

Quality view

The view is natural, with good colours and isn't claustrophobic. I was particularly impressed by its low light capabilities during a Nightjar session in Suffolk at the end of May. A very obliging Hobby sat on a tree snag about 300 metres away – at 8.43pm the 50x view was sharp, and brighter than you might expect. Later, I had to check to see that I was at 50x – the view was that good. The 50x view still impressed at 8.57pm. 15 minutes later, and five minutes after sunset, it wasn't quite as good but was still very useable, but, not surprisingly, was better at 25x.

Brightness was very good during a normal daylight session at Fen Drayton too, even at 50x, and sharpness was excellent, though perhaps not quite as good at very close range. Edge sharpness is very good too, though peculiarly seemed better on the left than the right and, predictably, wasn't

The 25-50x zoom eyepiece has an eyecup that twists to two positions



RATINGS: 1-10

Optics 9
Design 9
Value 8
Overall 9

FACTFILE

Magnification: 25-50x
Objective diameter: 80mm
Exit pupil: 3.1-1.6mm
Field of view (at 1000 m): 39.5-28m
Close focus: 3.7m
Eye relief: 18-17mm
Length without eyepiece: 319mm.
Length with eyepiece: 378mm.
Weight with eyepiece: 1910g
RRP scope and eyepiece: £2350.
Warranty: 30 years
Accessories: Screw-in objective cover, eyepiece cap
Contact:
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