

Kite Lynx HD 8x30

Chocolates, waffles and now binoculars. David Chandler tests the latest Belgian export

KITE IS A Belgian binocular brand. Their range is extensive, but their UK profile is not great. That's something they want to change, and the Lynx HD may help them to do that. There are two Lynx HDs – an 8x30 and a 10x30. I got to play with the 8x30.

Look and feel

The Lynx HD is a classy-looking binocular with a simple, elegant design. There are no thumb indents and it's not over-adorned with branding. It is great to hold, handles very well and its build-quality impressed, too. Initially, I thought the hinge, dioptre adjuster and eyecups moved a bit too freely. But in use, with one minor exception, there were no problems. The exception is more about the rainguard than the eyecup. The rainguard is fairly tight fitting and sometimes caused an eyecup (which don't have click-stops) to twist down. Using a looser-fitting rainguard sorted that out. And of course, the Lynx HD is armoured, gas-filled and waterproof.

What the photo, or measurements, don't really show, is how compact and light this binocular is. The measurements may not seem much less than a typical 8x32, but put them side-by-side and the difference is obvious. With a body of aluminium alloy and fibreglass reinforced polycarbonate they weigh just 461g, but didn't feel too light. Some people may find them too diminutive – they are like a very big compact – but my big-handed birding friend was very positive about their handling. There is something about this binocular that made me want to pick it up and use it. Again and again.

The rainguard and strap are proportionate to the size of the binocular. Often, some of the small packed size advantage of a mid-sized binocular is lost because of an over-sized strap – that's not the case here. The padded case is good quality, but could be a tighter fit to make the most of this binocular's reduced dimensions. The objective covers simply push in – they are not tethered.

Looking through

The image is clean, crisp and wide – very wide. It's quoted as



151m@1,000m or 8.6 degrees – I don't know of any other 8x roof-prism that can match that. Sharpness is excellent. This little binocular picked out the barring on a male Sparrowhawk perched about 70m away. I was sometimes aware of some peripheral softness though – the price you pay for that remarkable field of view, perhaps.

Brightness and low light performance are very good, especially when you consider their objective size. To my eyes, they weren't quite as good as a top end 7x42 in low light – but that isn't comparing like for like, and the difference may be less than you expect. I did sometimes see a little colour fringing, and some flare spots and reflections – shielding the eyecup with my hand eliminated some of these. Their quoted close-focus is just 1.3m. I measured it at about 1.5m, which is still very good.


Focus and mechanics

The focus wheel is one finger wide, moving smoothly against moderate resistance, clockwise towards infinity. There is a little more than one revolution of travel, but for birding, mostly you won't be moving it more than an eighth of a turn. The dioptre ring doesn't lock, but stayed in place during field use. There are no intermediate positions on the twist-up eyecups. The eyecups are metal, with a rubber cover, and are removable.

Fifteen millimetres of eye-relief should be just enough for glasses wearers – but if that's you, try it to make sure.

Verdict

Great in the hands, with excellent sharpness, very good brightness, a huge field of view and a very good close-focus. If small and light is important to you, you should try this binocular.

The Lynx HD is worth comparing to any 8x30 or 8x32. I really like it. Welcome to the UK, Kite. 

FACTFILE

Exit pupil: 3.75mm
Eye relief: 15mm
Field of view: 8.6 degrees.
151m @ 1000m
Close focus: 1.3m (quoted)
Dimensions: 120x114-96mm
Weight: 461g
RRP: £459
Warranty: 30 years
Supplied accessories: Narrow neoprene strap, rainguard, objective covers, padded case
Contact: Alpha Optical Distribution Limited, 54 Meadow Way, Theale, Berks, RG7 4AX. 07725 081436, kite-optics.co.uk, info@kite-optics.co.uk

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