

# Opticron Aurora BGA VHD 8x42

**Miles Cluff** (November 2021)

The first thing you notice about the Aurora is the weight. At 725g the binocular is light and I immediately felt able to hold them up for longer compared to other binoculars I've owned. The Aurora BGA VHD is structurally different from the lower priced DBA VHD+, constructed using a single hinged bridge rather than an open bridge or double hinge. They are physically longer measuring 152mm/6" vs. 145mm/5.7" which is a result of the different optical system and depth of the eyecups which have 4 adjustment settings. If I were to be picky, the twist-lock felt quite loose and it only required a small knock to move them into a different extension setting. Not a major issue but one to be aware of.



The Aurora has textured rubber rather than the finger grooves of the DBA. I prefer the textured feel as it allows the binocular to remain as sleek as possible and not feel 'clunky'. I am very keen on wildlife sketching and painting so having a pair of binoculars I can use single handed is crucial. The overall balance combined with the position and weight of the focusing wheel made single-handed viewing perfectly possible.

In addition to their light weight and excellent balance, the stand-out features of the 8x42 are the brightness and wide field of view. At 8.1° (141m at 1000m distance) they deliver the 'wow' factor you expect from high end optics.

How did these binoculars perform while out and about?

To test the capabilities of the Aurora BGA VHD I used them on several Gull roosts in the late afternoon. As some of you might know, bright and sharp optics are required for searching Gull roosts and the binocular excelled. Images are crisp and sharp to the edge with very little chromatic aberration or distortion. They were ideal for examining fine features on juvenile Gulls loafing on the water. I found a gorgeous first-winter Caspian Gull and was able to nail the diagnostic features. Identifying large Gull species is difficult, but the Aurora made it just that bit easier to sift through commoner species in hope of finding something rarer!



Low light birding in dense woodland and scrub was made easy as the Aurora provided colourful, bright and sharp images in the gloom on the woodland floor or looking up through the silhouetted canopy. I was also lucky enough to see a mega rare Taiga Flycatcher as well as a Red-flanked Bluetail at Flamborough Head in a single afternoon. Both species were in shadowed scrub, but I still got fabulous views of both.

Perhaps my favourite time using the Aurora was when I caught a large passage of thrush species from Scandinavia. The field of view made it ideal to pick out high flying flocks of Redwing and Fieldfare on the horizon. I normally do a lot of scanning with my spotting scope in situations like this, but I was finding myself opting to use the binoculars!

These binoculars have quite simply blown me away and I can honestly say Opticron have done it yet again - providing affordable binoculars that are "Smaller, Lighter, Brighter, Sharper".