

Opticron Discovery WA ED 8x32

Lawrence Chip Clouse (August 2021)

For years I've been trying to convince birders who are looking for something small and light as either a primary or a secondary binocular for the car, a purse, a daypack, a golf bag or whatever to go with a mid-size 32mm binocular vs. a compact binocular. Compact binoculars have an objective lens of only 25mm or less which really limits the amount of light that can reach your eye.



While it is true that compact binoculars do just as well in bright light or when looking at a lighted stage or ball field, and certainly have their place, a larger objective will let in more light when it is needed while birding. And I'd rather have the option of more light than less any day. Of course, a larger objective usually means a bigger, heavier binocular and most 32mm models weigh over a pound – some 20oz. or more. Not so with the new Opticron Discovery WA ED 8x32! Weighing in at under 14oz., this Discovery model boasts a polycarbonate body and a new optical system with extra-low dispersion (ED) glass and is sharper and brighter than the non-ED Discovery for only about \$20 more.



For those looking for a secondary binocular, I've also always encouraged birders to not drop too far in quality from their primary binocular lest they be disappointed in the view. While there are compact binoculars at less than \$100 and 8x32s at \$150 or less, most lower priced models don't compare in quality to their more expensive cousins. You get what you pay for, as they say. Now with the Discovery WA ED, the step-up in glass quality provides a small, light chassis with a view that is also clear and bright and sharp.



I recently got to try out the Discovery WA ED 8x32 in the field. I was carrying a large scope and tripod on a backpack harness and also needed to bring water, snacks, rain gear and more as I climbed the Island Lake Trail in the Ruby Mountains of Nevada in search of Himalayan Snowcock. With 1000 feet of elevation gain in less than 2 miles, I figured that hauling 14 oz less in binocular weight couldn't hurt! While scanning for the Snowcock, the Discovery felt almost weightless. And I was so excited to have such a wide angle view (8 degrees or 420 feet at 1000 yards) to

help pick up movement in my periphery. I was even able to check out details on up-close butterflies visiting alpine wildflowers since the Discovery WA ED also boasts a 3.9 foot close focus.

I missed seeing Snowcocks as the rain and hail forced my retreat but I did hear them AND I gained a new appreciation for this mid-sized gem that is both bright and sharp as well as small and light. Opticron has done it again! Bravo, I say!