

Discovery WP PC 8x32 - A different perspective

Pete Morris (December 2014)

As parents of two young wildlife enthusiasts, it has been interesting watching their hobby develop over the years. Of course, they're chips off the old block really, but despite that, their individual abilities and interest when out and about continually change and develop. One thing that has always intrigued us has been the relative reluctance, especially at a young age, for them to use binoculars; preferring instead to see everything with their ultra-sharp unaided eyes! Our eldest is now 14, and now happily uses his binoculars, but our younger son, Josh, just turned 11, didn't really like his binoculars, and found ours too heavy and cumbersome. As a result, he had developed a habit of photographing everything and viewing it on the viewfinder of his camera. Resourceful yes, and he'd become exceptionally good at it, but it was clear he would really benefit from a decent pair of binoculars, providing he was happy to carry them around and use them...



Josh Morris

Over the last few weeks Josh has been fortunate enough to use a sparkling new pair of 8x32 Discovery binoculars. What first struck us about the binoculars was the amazingly small size and light weight for a pair of 8x32s. They are barely bigger than a pair of compacts yet pack the punch of a full size pair. They are ideally designed for small people, and instantly feel comfortable in their hands. They are neatly constructed, with smooth rubber-armouring, a large, smooth, focusing wheel and neat pop-up eye cups. The dioptre is adjusted on the right eye, though this is not lockable and can easily be moved by fiddly fingers! In addition there is a small but effective rainguard (doubles up as a food guard in Josh's case!) and, for those that

wish, attachable lens caps for the objective lenses. They also come with a perfectly adequate carrying pouch, a microfiber lens cloth, and a strap which is easily fitted and comfortable, which in keeping with the binoculars, is small and lightweight. Another added advantage is that the binoculars are waterproof, though we did not test this quality thoroughly!

We were able to test the binoculars extensively during a recent week long break in Norfolk, and were able to use them alongside other, more expensive options. The first thing that strikes you is that the image quality is surprisingly good for such a compact pair of binoculars. It is impressively bright, with a good field of view (when compared to much more expensive models). The colours seem to be rendered faithfully, lacking the yellow or blue cast visible in some pairs, and, remarkably, the close focus is so close that I can focus on my own feet! The latter will make them an excellent aid when insect watching in the summer.

Perhaps most important of all, to us at least, was that they were easily portable and eagerly used by Josh. No longer was the camera the weapon of choice, and many a smile was accompanied by a comment such as "I can't believe how sharp they are" or "they're really bright". I think it's safe to say that he's been won over, and proudly sports his new optical aids whenever he has the chance.

So what's the catch? They're tiny and only cost £170, surely something has had to give? For me, the biggest disadvantage is that the depth of field is very narrow, meaning that precise focusing is necessary, particularly for older eyes like mine that do not accommodate quite so well. I hasten to add that Josh's younger eyes have not noticed this. Other minor quibbles for me are that the dioptre adjustment cannot be locked (though this is easily remedied with a little tape if required), and, we had a small issue with the rubber on the eyecup coming off on one cup, but again this was easily sorted out.

So would we recommend them? A resounding "yes" came without hesitation from both of the boys, and I have to say, I would endorse this. Of course there are better binoculars on the market, the top of the range models cost ten times as much as these, but if you're looking for a lightweight, waterproof, relatively inexpensive pair of binoculars, you'll struggle to do better than these.

Pete Morris has been birding for over 40 years. Having birded throughout the UK he travelled the world extensively, and became a full time bird tour leader almost twenty years ago. He now spends most of his working time and leisure time birding! Fortunately his obsession with all things feathered has worn off on his family, and Pete, Nina, Jack and Josh can be found anywhere from Portland to Spurn to the Scottish Highlands, but more usually in Lancashire where they reside in the Ribble Valley.