

Explorer WA ED Oasis-C+ 8x42

Steve Young (March 2018)

These binoculars arrived for review at the same time as the “Beast from the East” brought large swathes of snow across the country. It was bitterly cold with a biting easterly wind when the parcel arrived and it was all I could do to open the door to the delivery man - never mind go out and field testing them!

The latest Oasis-C+ version of the Explorer WA is an up rated version of Opticron’s entry level “ED” range of binoculars. Positioned just over £200 they are manufactured in China rather than Japan but first impressions were good - the magnesium alloy body is covered in a nice looking black soft touch rubber covering. At 660g they are neither light or heavy and with a wide padded neck strap feel comfortable enough to use all day. The eyecups are 3-step retractable so there is a setting for virtually everyone including glasses wearers.

Once I’d attached the strap, which is a bit too long for my own taste and the rainguard I ventured out. Although they are waterproof, if it’s raining, the first thing I do is put the rainguard on and cover the binoculars under my coat. I know - if they’re waterproof just let them get wet but it’s a throwback to the days when binoculars weren’t and could get soaked inside.

A dull day awaited me but for a non-expensive pair of binoculars the light gathering from the ED glass objectives and new prism coating was impressive. Overall sharpness, eye-relief, colour rendition and ease of focus were also impressive – especially considering the price tag. I did notice light colour fringing at the extremes, but had to look hard to see it and in normal use it wasn’t noticeable.

With the weather brightening over the next week I went out on a warmer and brighter day to have another go. It was certainly more spring-like and a soaring, calling Buzzard was picked up nicely as was a singing Chiffchaff flitting through the bushes. Again there was almost no colour cast on either of these species, one soaring against blue sky and the other moving through a budding bush.

The weather changed again, this time with torrential rain. When a company says its binocular is waterproof then I have to put it to the test; so out into the garden I went to get wet. The Explorers got a real soaking as I stood them in a puddle and then lay them down for five minutes in the rain. Back in the house a quick wipe down of the body parts with a towel was followed by a dry of the lenses with the cleaning cloth provided, and they were as good as new; no water inside and the focus ring working.

Obviously at this time of year there were no butterflies or dragonflies for me to look at, but with a close focus of 2m these will be an ideal pair if you like to look at these subjects when the warm weather arrives. With a price tag of £219, waterproof, a 10 year guarantee and supplied with case, strap, rainguard, cleaning cloth and objective lens covers these are a value for money binocular that feel like they won’t let you down. Also available in a 10x42 model.



Steve Young is one of the UK’s best known bird photographers; his work has been published in countless magazines and books and he is Photo Consultant for Birdwatch magazine. A keen bird watcher since the late 1970’s Steve has used many different types of binoculars and telescopes over the years. He writes a monthly column for Outdoor Photography magazine, has written two books on bird photography, is the Photo Judge for Birdguides’ weekly competition and was overall winner of the British Wildlife Photography Awards (BWPA) in 2010.