

Opticron Imagic IS 10x30

Brittany Maxted (May 2021)

Brittany Maxted is an ornithologist, scientist, and conservationist. Having graduated with a degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Oxford in 2018, she is now a PhD researcher studying the ecology of the British osprey population. She is currently based in Dorset, where she is also responsible for managing the Poole Harbour Osprey Translocation Project.



The image stabilisation feature of the Opticron Imagic IS range really is a game changer. It has transformed the way I watch birds, simultaneously enhancing the experience of observing their behaviour and my ability to identify species. I feel as though I am seeing even the most common birds in a whole new light, noticing features that I have otherwise missed or overlooked for many years.

The level of detail attainable in the plumage – which would ordinarily be indiscernible owing to handshake – is breath-taking.

The benefits are pronounced not only when watching perched or stationary birds, but also when catching those frustratingly fleeting glimpses of a passing passerine or a distant raptor soaring high in the sky. This is of particular value to me in my research on Ospreys, allowing me to pick out underwing markings of birds in flight and thus identifying individuals on the wing: something I've rarely achieved with a handheld device before now.

Another time the image stabilisation has come into its own is on pelagic trips and survey boats. Even with the added motion of a boat the image remains steady, allowing me to track seabirds dancing between the waves or spot divers about to disappear below the water's surface. The binocular even performs well in low light, when watching nightjars displaying or barn owls hunting at dusk.

The new body shape takes no time at all to get used to and fits nicely in the hand. I'm often out for hours at a time either conducting fieldwork or birdwatching recreationally, so having a compact and lightweight binocular like this is perfect, and much more suitable than some market alternatives. The same is true of the price tag and the service provided by Opticron, whose company ethos and ethical stance make them a shining example in the optics industry.

I'd recommend this range of binoculars to birders of all ages and abilities, but believe several groups can especially benefit from the features they offer. I often meet keen birders who are eager to advance their birding skills and upgrade their binoculars to a higher magnification but worry that their handshake will be too pronounced to see any benefits. Other people tell me they often suffer from eye strain, motion sickness and headaches after prolonged binocular use. All of these issues are eliminated with the Imagic IS, making the birding experience more enjoyable than ever.