

MMS 160 Travelscope

Phil Farndon of Cley Spy (July 2017)

Well this is an interesting piece of kit! There are a few image stabilised monoculars out there now, but where this one breaks the mould is it is compatible with Opticron's top quality scope eyepieces. With the HDF or SDL zooms attached you get a light weight, pocket sized monocular with a useful magnification range. To assess its capabilities I took the MMS with Opticron's best selling HDF zoom eyepiece to the French Alps for an extended test.



In the field

The obvious application for this is as an addition to an Opticron scope for those occasions when you want to travel light. Brilliant as the latest generation of 50mm travel scopes are, unlike this stabilised monocular they still require you to carry a tripod, or at least a monopod to keep them steady. The magnification range on the MMS 160 is more limited than a spotting scope but it has a clear advantage in being only 20cm long (including eyepiece) and weighing under 500g.



While this is a very capable standalone piece of kit, it works best as an addition to your binos. In theory the 7-21x magnification range of the MMS 160 should bridge the gap between 8x or 10x bins and a small scope, but in reality no monocular can truly be a substitute for a good binocular. The literal "binocular vision" you get from binoculars, delivers a level of resolution, width of field, ergonomics and comfort that similarly specified monoculars cannot achieve.

Taking this into consideration the MMS 160 still has something different and truly useful to offer. For those occasions when the prospect of a long walk, high temperatures or challenging terrain puts you off the idea of lugging scope and tripod, this is a great alternative.

What we like:

- Light weight
- Stabilisation is effective right up to maximum magnification
- Compatible with existing eyepieces for Opticron scope users
- Excellent for observing butterflies and other insects
- Good build quality

What we don't like:

- 26mm objective lens is a bit restrictive for low light use
- Batteries could get pricey unless you use rechargeables

Conclusions

Opticron have come up with the goods yet again with this truly useful innovation. The MMS 160 could be an invaluable addition to the armoury of any birder. Wildlife photographers who carry large cameras and lenses combinations, that can easily weigh over 5kg, would also find this a really useful light weight spotting tool. Those who already own an Opticron scope will be the most obvious audience for the MMS 160, but we have already sold these to customers who have part exchanged scope and tripod in favour of this compact alternative.

