

Natura BGA ED 8x42

Tim Sexton (August 2019)



When I was asked to field test the 2019 Opticron Natura BGA ED 8x42, I was also about to undertake the summer waterfowl count at Attenborough Nature Reserve. Despite the recent heatwave, an overcast morning provided the perfect conditions to put them through their paces.

Using binoculars on an almost daily basis, I was pleased to see that the new Natura is now 100% made in Japan. Judging by my trusted (and well-used) BGA 8x42s from Opticron that should mean that they are built to a very high standard.



When I first took the binocular out of the box, I was a bit concerned that the strap was narrower than I would expect for a 42mm model. That said it was comfortable around my neck and provided adequate support during the test.

With my clip-board in one hand, the micro-bridge design meant I could use the Natura single handed with the other. I have used the open-bridge Verano BGA HD in the past to carry out bird surveys and the Natura BGA ED has a similar feel.

Scanning the lake, I was conscious that the 7° field of view (FOV) is at the narrow end of the scale for 8x42's in this segment. What was striking however was how the superior edge-to-edge sharpness meant it did not compromise my ability to locate and track birds in flight. I have since found out that to increase the FOV may also increase weight. At just 648g I might be willing to forego a little FOV for pin-sharp edge-to-edge resolution.

While the ducks are looking a little drab at this time of year, the colour tones delivered by the Natura were natural and true to life. At one point a kingfisher shot past and perched up on a nearby branch giving me the opportunity to see its vibrant blue tones at close range. The ED glass created a bright, clean image even with dark clouds overhead. When a male gadwall, still in breeding plumage came close to the bank, the vermiculations on its flanks appeared crisp and sharp. Despite trying to be critical, it was hard to notice any colour fringing - even during the rare occasions when the sun broke through the cloud.

The dioptre adjuster is positioned on the central focussing wheel and locks in place. When switching between binoculars and clip-board I know from experience it is possible to inadvertently brush a dioptre adjuster located on the right-hand eyepiece tube a little off centre which can be annoying. The focus wheel is smooth to operate and has a wide wheel large enough to operate comfortably with gloves.

Luckily for me it didn't rain during the survey but just to check if they were waterproof as stated, I put them out during a downpour the very next day. After a pat down with a towel there were no signs of water or fogging inside.

In summary, the 2019 Natura BGA ED is a fantastic binocular for the price. They come with a 30 year guarantee which gives you an indication of the build quality, are comfortable to use and certainly live up to Opticron's maxim; smaller, lighter, brighter, sharper.

