

Opticron Ranger 800 6x21 Laser Rangefinder

Kieran Lynn (December 2022)

IN SHORT: Compact, accurate and unbelievably user friendly

It's December, it's 8:00 am, and I'm sitting at the edge of a small patch of woodland, trying to complete my British deer list.

I've already seen the red, the roe, the fallow, the sika and the muntjac, and now I'm at a spot where the Chinese water deer are said to be a cert.

But this isn't all about getting a tick or spending time with wildlife; this is about testing out the Opticron Ranger 800 6x21 Laser Rangefinder.

While waiting for the deer to show up, I decide to test out the range, so I focus on the furthest thing I can see. It's a small house that I can barely make out in the early morning light; the Ranger has no problem telling me that it is almost 600 metres away, though.

Then a large flock of birds lands in the trees not far from where I'm sitting. Using the Ranger as a monocular for a moment, I can make out long-tailed tits, chaffinches and even a stunning yellowhammer, which stands out in the light brown background of the bare trees.

Then I hear a rustle. It's close. And a moment later, two Chinese water deer appear from the woodland. They're small, tiny compared to some of the larger deer in the UK, but they're also distinct, with prominent tusks protruding from the mouth.

I lift the Ranger and can see within seconds that they're 32 metres away. If I were stalking these deer for population control, this information would be vital and to access it so quickly, incredibly helpful. But today, I'm just looking on. At least I am for a few minutes, as it isn't long after that, that the deer disappear back into the woods, and I'm ready for a hot drink.

I use the Ranger to tell me the car is 389 metres away. This would be handy for orienteering or archery. In fact, once I start to think about it, there are many things I could use it for. It will definitely be coming with me in the spring when I try and bag a few peaks, for example. And because it's so lightweight, I won't have to worry about it adding any extra weight to my pack. It's waterproof too, so sudden showers won't be a problem, either.

And, when the weather warms up, I suspect the Ranger will find its way from the pocket of my winter coat into the pocket of my golf bag. If only it could help with my backswing.