

Olivon PC 8x42

How did this entry-level pair of binoculars do in the *Bird Watching* test? Matt Merritt finds out.

When you're starting out in birdwatching, buying your first pair of binoculars is always going to be an important moment, and there's an awful lot to be said for making sure that, above all, you find a pair that you can use enjoyably without having to think too hard about it.

Olivon's PCs fit the bill there, in terms of looks. They're unfussy but thoroughly functional, with an uncluttered roof prism design, and although there are no cutaways, weight is 670g, and feels considerably less. That's because they're compact and well-balanced, I think – they're short enough that they can easily fit a decent-sized coat pocket.

They're well built enough, though, to take a little rough handling, with hard rubber armouring, hard rubber coated eyepieces that twist up and down to three positions, and as good a focus wheel as I've found on a sub-£400 pair of bins. Around 1.25 fingers wide, and heavily textured for extra grip, it moves perfectly evenly at medium resistance, taking two anti-clockwise turns from close focus to infinity. That allowed me to focus precisely and quickly – there's never a feeling that there's that little bit extra waiting to be found.

A dioptre adjustment on the right barrel completes a very good first impression – it sets easily, and although you can't lock it in place, you'd have to go out of your way to shift it in normal use.

So what sort of an image is produced? Well, the colour is very natural, and the image was bright and sharp in pretty well all conditions. There was a little fall-off in really poor light, but no more than you'd expect, and all things considered they even compared favourably with many binoculars that use ED glass.

There's a large sweet spot (possibly just below the centre of the image), but in fact the sharpness to the edges is very impressive anyway. Field of

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Rubber-coated eyecups twist up and down to three positions, making them very quick and easy to use

Focus wheel is smooth and precise and chunky enough to find even with gloved fingers – useful in winter

The hard rubber armouring and squat shape add to the tough, durable feel of these binoculars

Weighing in at 670g, the PCs feel light in the hand and are small enough to slip into a coat pocket



view, at 129m@1000m, is more than adequate for most situations, and, try as I might, I struggled to find much in the way of colour-fringing (chromatic aberration), except against the strongest of light. Even then, it was far from over-powering.

Close focus is around 2m (I actually managed to get it down a bit below that), meaning that these are binoculars with excellent potential for the more all-round naturalist, or for anyone who does most of their birding in the back garden.

They're waterproof and fog-proof, and come with removable tethered objective lens covers, a rainguard, a fabric carrying case and strap, and a really excellent padded neck strap. That's not a deal-breaker, of course, but it's one little extra you won't have to worry about buying.

There's a 10x42 model too, for that bit of extra magnification, but the

8x42s add up to a really solid all-rounder that's hard to fault and that ticks the boxes for any beginner – they're optically excellent, very well put together, and above all you quickly forget you're even using new binoculars and start enjoying the great views they give you. **BW**

Factfile

Field of view 129m@1000m
Close focus 2m
Eye relief 17.5mm
Exit pupil 5.2mm
Dimensions 135mm x 125mm x 52mm
Weight 670g
RRP £280
Contact Optical Hardware Ltd, Mount Osborne, Oakwell View, Barnsley S71 1HH, 01226 203275, info@opticalhardware.co.uk