

# GEARFINDER

The best optics and outdoor products tried & tested for you



## BINOCULARS

### EDEN XP 10X42, £245

Reviewed by Matt Merritt

**E**den is something of an unfamiliar name on the UK optics market, but we were impressed by one of their entry-level binocular models a few years back, so we were intrigued to see how their flagship XP range measured up.

#### In the field

First impression is that they're nicely compact, for 10x42s, with an unfussy closed-bridge design that feels well balanced and comfortable in the hand. The

weight of 650g makes them easy enough to hold steady with one hand on occasion.

The oddly rectangular thumb indents seem a bit superfluous, but the body is sturdy and well armoured with hard rubber, and the hinge stiff enough to keep the barrels your preferred distance apart.

Its hard rubber eyecups are comfortable in extended use, and twist up and down to four distinct positions, offering a maximum eye relief of 18mm, excellent for glasses wearers.

The dioptre adjustment is on

the right barrel, and sets easily, although the ring did feel loose enough to perhaps move accidentally in the field.

The focus wheel is just over a finger in width, with prominent enough ridges to make grip

easy when wearing gloves. It takes just over one-and-a-half anti-clockwise turns from close focus to infinity, travelling smoothly and moderately stiffly. Focus was easy to find and maintain.



The Eden XPs come with standard accessories

“ONE REAL BONUS, THOUGH, IS THE CLOSE FOCUS, WHICH CAME IN AT AROUND 1.2M”



The eyecups offer a maximum of 18mm eye relief

Close focus, at 1.2m, was a real bonus feature



So what about the optics? Well, the colour feels natural, and more than bright enough, including at dawn and dusk and in some pretty murky drizzle. Sharpness is excellent, going right to the edge of the image, so you get the full benefit of the 114m@1,000m field of view. That's really pretty good for 10x42s, and certainly I never felt my view was too restricted.

Colour-fringing was never a problem, although there were small amounts against very strong sunlight, and especially when following a moving target. But that can be true with most bins, and if you take the time to get the interpupillary distance and eyecup position right, you can help reduce it to an absolute minimum.

One real bonus, though, is the close focus, which came in at around 1.2m. That makes them good all-rounders. Birders tend to opt for 10x magnification if they do a lot of sea- or estuary-watching, or to read rings on much closer birds, so it's excellent to find that the XPs also do a really good job for bug-watchers.

## SPECS

Eye relief: 18mm

Field of view: 114m@1,000m

Close focus: 1.2m

Weight: 650g

Size (LxWxD): 145x120x55mm

RRP: £245

Supplied with: Case; strap; rainguard; tethered, removable objective lens covers, lens cloth

## VERDICT

Excellent all-rounders at a very affordable price, and especially worth looking at if you're into dragonflies, butterflies, etc. as well as birds. They do a good job in all conditions.

OPTICS ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

OVERALL ★★★★★

## TRIED & TESTED GEAR

### JACKET



The Woodlark refines some already good designs

### COUNTRY INNOVATION WOODLARK JACKET, £295

Reviewed by Matt Merritt

I've been birding in a Country Innovation jacket for a few years now, and I've had no complaints at all. Comfortable, rustle-free, capable of keeping out the worst of the elements, and with so much pocket space I can get away without taking a bag out most of the time.

So what does the Woodlark offer? Well, more of the same. It's made from a tough cotton material, which is soft to the touch and rustles very little in the field, and which combined with a breathable waterproof lining offers great protection from wind and rain. It's very comfortable, too. There are waist and bottom hem drawcords, for a better fit (very useful if you're putting on or taking off extra layers underneath), adjustable cuffs, and an excellent detachable hood, with a wired peak and a high front fastening drawcord. The underarm is articulated, so you've got plenty of freedom to move, the inner collar is fleecy, and the front zip is both two-way and concealed behind a double placket, to stop water seeping through.

And then there's those pockets. Eleven in all. Of the four inner pockets, two are zippered, there's a zippered vertical security pocket offering plenty of room, and then two large vertical chest pockets, two large lower pockets (which easily housed my 8x32s), and two fleecy lower pockets, for hand-warming. That's a huge amount of room for optics, camera accessories, field guides, etc. and I can't imagine you'd need more. **BW**



## VERDICT

This might be Country Innovation's best all-round jacket yet – it coped magnificently with cold, gales and lashing rain, and it's always so comfortable (and quiet) that you can forget you're wearing it. Perfect for birders and photographers.

PICTON BAILEY