

## Can Eden's budget bins impress?

New manufacturer on the block Eden has produced a budget ED binocular. *Mike Alibone* took the model out into the field to find out how it performs.

### Review: Eden Quality ED 8x42 binocular

Stylish, robust and seemingly well constructed – these were my first impressions of the Eden Quality ED 8x42 binocular when I received for review an example of this model which was launched in Europe last year. There are four binoculars in the range, of which this one is the top, being the only model to feature ED glass. All are competitively priced and they originate in China from a manufacturer which produces optics for a number of other well-known brands.

In common with most contemporary roof-prism binoculars, these are rubber armoured; this is smoothly finished except for the area in contact with your hands, which has a leather-like texture. Interestingly, this binocular has a broadened rubber rim around the edge of the objective lens housing. This offers further protection to the already deeply recessed (13 mm) objectives, and I liked the rigid plastic click-in objective lens covers which Eden has used – a design more commonly found in telescopes. This means they don't become easily detached and potentially lost like conventional, untethered rubber lens caps. I found the central hinge to be really quite stiff, but this is of little consequence as the interpupillary distance is unlikely to be changed with any frequency.

Unlike most low-cost binoculars, which have the dioptre built into the right ocular, the Quality ED features a narrow central dioptre adjustment which is located just behind the focusing wheel. It has no numbered incremental scale, but there is a prominent node which gives some indication as to the setting. It moves easily and I do have some concerns that it may become accidentally changed during use, although this might be unfounded as it didn't happen during field testing.

The central focusing wheel turns very smoothly with no slackness or play in it; just one and a quarter anti-clockwise turns taking

the focusing from near to infinity. Eden gives the close focus distance as 3.5 m, but I was easily able to focus on objects down to 2.3 m – a clear 1.2 m closer!

The eyecups are shrouded in soft rubber and loosely lock in three positions – fully extended, fully retracted and an intermediate position about halfway between the two.

For a binocular at the lower end of the price range, the field of view – 142 m at 1,000 m – is excellent and matches top-drawer optics in this respect. During use I did not get the impression of being hemmed in or having restricted horizons, which often happens with budget bins.

The image is also commendable, with the ED glass no doubt contributing to this. There is still what I would call an 'average' amount of chromatic aberration, though, and the colours are rich to the point of being a shade darker than reality. The overall colour rendition is 'warm' or yellowish and, although generally very sharp and bright, there is a noticeable softening around the edges of

the field.

This binocular is one of an increasing number to have a water-repellent

coating added to both the objectives and the eyepieces, helping to dispel water droplets during rainy conditions, as well as making them easier to clean. In addition to the clip-in objective lens caps, accessories include an articulated rainguard and a broad, padded neck strap.

Argon gas-filled and with a compact and lightweight magnesium body, this binocular offers something a little different in terms of design. It's only available in Eden's online shops and there are no British stockists. However, Eden Webshops ([www.edenwebshops.co.uk](http://www.edenwebshops.co.uk)) is a service-driven company which, it tells me, aims to build long-term relationships with customers. If repair is required, British buyers can send damaged or broken binoculars to their local office. Depending on the problem, Eden will send out replacement binoculars from their storage centre in The Netherlands, so owners don't have to wait for the repair. All the binoculars are covered by a 25-year warranty on defects in material or workmanship.

### Birdwatch

Reproduced from the August 2011 issue (230: 72)

Binocular body fully protected by smooth rubber armour

ED glass delivers a commendable image, but there is some chromatic aberration



At 142 m at 1,000 m, the field of view matches higher-spec bins

Broad rubber ring and deeply recessed objectives protect the lenses

### Tech spec

**Price:** £245  
**Size:** 140x110 mm  
**Weight:** 680 g  
**Field of view:** 142 m at 1,000 m  
**Close focus:** 3.5 m  
**Gas-filled:** yes  
**Waterproof:** yes  
**Guarantee:** 25 years