

ES 80 GA ED, SDLv2 & Waterproof Case

Dan Rouse (November 2016)

Over the past couple of months, I've been field testing the Opticron ES 80 GA ED fieldscope fitted with the SDLv2 20-60x eyepiece. The scope itself is not all that heavy (1591g), nor too big at just under 400mm long. Personally I prefer larger scopes as I find I can keep them steadier in high winds compared to smaller ones. The ES has good weight distribution and is easily balanced once fitted to a tripod. It has a retractable lens hood which is ideal for keeping the rain off plus an integrated rubber objective lens cover. The large band-like focusing wheel is ideally placed at the top of the scope and large enough to wrap your hand around even with gloves on. The body is rubber armoured which helps protect it from any knocks or scratches. It also provides a surface to grip onto if you do not have a case. One of the best features is the nitrogen waterproofing which works brilliantly in the rain and means it doesn't fog up either.

The sales information talks about "tri-element HD objective lens system, combined with the F-type multi-coating." In practice this means really bright clear images with nice colour contrast making each subject viewed stand out on its own. The scope is compatible with a range of eyepieces. I had the SDLv2 which comes in at £289. It is waterproof and fitted with a rotating eyecup which is a soft material and so doesn't cause discomfort if sea watching for a long period. The magnification is 20-60x and you don't lose any quality with the long range zoom.

One accessory you can buy is the stay-on-the-scope waterproof case. I went for one in green. I always think cases for scopes are a must have for using the equipment in the rain. I also use a Scopac and sometimes knock it so feel more comfortable with the extra protection. The Opticron cases are water resistant, padded and designed to fit each model comfortably. Probably an over-looked feature but one I find particularly useful are the buttons where you can attach the removable end caps to stopping the caps flapping around in the wind. Another accessory I opted for was the digiscoping adaptor for my phone. I usually carry a camera but with the long range of the scope combined with the zoom of the eyepiece and the great quality and clarity of the glass meant the digiscoping adaptor was a sensible choice for taking images and videos. Opticron also do adaptors for compact cameras.

I've been immensely impressed with the scope and the ability to personalise all the additional elements from eyepieces, to cases and adaptors. With the Opticron 30 year guarantee and great customer service, it's the usual quality I would expect.

Dan is a young female birder from South Wales. Passionate about encouraging young people to be active in the birding community and close to raft between generations. WeBS counter and Patcher on the Burry Inlet in Carmarthenshire now onto her second year of competing in Patchwork Challenge. Hobbyist field sketcher and artist, Marine Mammal Surveyor for ORCA, Nest Recorder and Bird Ringer for the BTO. Currently planning travels around the UK and Abroad and blogging about them, other issues and events on her blog at: www.danrouse.org.uk