

## UTA 2x

Paul Brewster (November 2016)



I recently put the Opticron Universal Telescope Adapter (UTA) through its paces on both binoculars and telescopes and was pleasantly surprised at the results; so much so that it will now be part of my standard 'birding kit' in the future.

My first impression was of a very portable piece of equipment, only 11cm long and 4cm in diameter - very pocket-sized. Looking through it as a stand-alone optic it was a high quality 2x monocular, sharp to the edge of field with a decent field of view, even with me wearing spectacles. My next test was to attach it to my binoculars,

in this instance Swarovski 8x42 SLCs. I do a lot of local patch watching and this includes a good sized lake, so I usually struggle with bins alone to ID very distant wildfowl and gulls, as more often than not I leave my scope behind, not an ideal scenario. So would the UTA help when using bins alone? The emphatic answer is yes! On my first trip out I managed to pick out my first Goldeneye of this winter on my patch, dull female-type birds, which I would have missed using bins alone. On murky winter days light transmission is understandably reduced using the UTA, but not significantly and on brighter days there was little noticeable reduction. Holding it steady was tricky when using it for long periods, but by sitting and bracing my elbow on my knee I overcame this problem too. Holding it in position using the correct diameter screw-on adapter for my bins (with eyecups in the up position) was very easy, my hand position being perfect for focus-wheel use without any awkwardness. There was no learning curve, it just worked straight away on first use!

My second test was with the Opticron GS52 scope and SDL eyepiece. Again using the correct screw-on adapter on the objective end, the UTA fitted snugly over the raised eyecup. Using it on a scope attached to a tripod was a revelation. The usual 12-36x zoom range was increased to 24-72x and the small scope was performing like its bigger cousins. Use with spectacles proved no problem - mine are varifocals - and the UTA worked perfectly with them from day one. The image was crisp, bright and the extra power incredibly useful in the same situation as above, scanning wildfowl and gull flocks at a great distance on a lake. Subtle markings such as white facial patches on Tufted Ducks could be picked up without any thoughts of these being Scaup, the extra magnification really did do the business!

I see the UTA 2x Booster as a perfect piece of kit for the patch-watcher like myself, where walking round with just a pair of bins is the norm. To have the capability of using 16x power when needed is not only useful, but is sometimes a necessity. Using the UTA with smaller objective telescopes such as travel scopes allows birders to travel light but still have lots of power in their eyepiece without the big increase in weight a larger objective scope would bring. With a range of objective rings already available, and more to come, the UTA will fit a wide range of optics, so versatility is built into the design. I am so impressed with the UTA it will be in my pocket now every time I am out birding, and others who have tried it and seen me using it seem equally enthused and I can see this being part of the birding tool-kit of many of them in the future.