



August 2026: Our Observations on Kite Optics Image Stabilized Binoculars



KITE OPTICS

Disclosure: A few months ago we were sent the APC Stabilized 12x42 ED model from Kite Optics in Belgium to try and out and decide for ourselves whether we wanted to become an ambassador for their APC binoculars.

After our own trials and agreement we will henceforth receive a commission on any sale of APC binoculars that we generate.

Anyone interested in purchasing these binoculars or others from the APC range **should request a special code from us which will enable them to receive a 10% discount** on the price listed on their website www.kiteoptics.com



So, let's start. APC Stabilized Binoculars. A game changer, or a gimmick?

Read on. To be as objective as possible, we'll start with what we see to be ...

The Cons

1. Unwieldy?

Any birder who uses their binoculars as much as I do will probably get a small hit of dopamine every time their hand curls around and grips the familiar shape and feel of their most trusted and reliable observational tool when watching birds.

Your binoculars become an extension of both your hand and your eyes. Your fingers instinctively extend to the focusing ring if needed, your thumbs cosy in to the indentations on the binocular body, and your shoulders and elbows weigh in with familiar flexings to bring the lenses to your eagerly awaiting eyes.

In other words, **ergonomics**. How do your binoculars feel in your hands?

Well, I've allowed for an adaptation period, to familiarize myself with the new layout of these APC binoculars.

For one thing the increased distance of the smaller, more integrated focusing ring from the eyepieces means that I now use the ring finger instead of the index finger to focus in or out on my subject. This takes a little effort to master.

Then, there's no nice nestle cavity on the body for the thumbs, and the greater bulk of these binoculars might mean that small hands have to work harder and with less comfort to make the most of their very special optical capabilities (we're getting to that).

They're 3cm longer than my Swarovskis, but fortunately still fit in the space I have for quick access to my bins below the car dashboard.

On the other hand, the protective silicon fit-on outer in grey or green is cool and pleasant to the touch with just the right balance of friction and smoothness, which actually beats the armouring of the Swarovski binoculars on this count IMHO.

2. A bit heavy?

I took out the kitchen scales and weighed both models, the new kid in town and my trusty Swarovski EL 8.5 x 42. The APCs weighed about 50g more, rolling in at around 900g (my kitchen scales are very basic).

So, a little more weight to carry around your neck - or over your shoulder as I do -, but not a huge difference here.

3. Field of view?

Now to the optics. 12x42 means you have a lot more magnifications at your immediate disposal, but the downside is a more limited field of view. This is not always important,

especially when watching distant birds – which the greater magnification and the stabilizing technology invites you to do – but when the birds are close-up, and especially when they are moving quickly around a bush or flying close to or overhead, then the initial action of locating the bird in your field of view requires more skill than you might have. Practice makes perfect? Maybe.

Now, here come the good bits

If you've just focused on a bird with these binoculars then you're already seeing it at 12 magnifications, and not just 8.5. Great! But, wait ... you may have to fall back on special breathing techniques, stance and posture, and even military training - if you have any - just to counter your natural hand shake and to try and get what you're seeing to keep still.

So, then you flick that switch.... The stabilizing mechanism sets into play ...

... **and all is forgiven**. Well, nearly all.

- *Large, soaring birds at distance* – for example raptors in flight over the Straits of Gibraltar, where we'll be in a month's time with these binoculars. I've already tried them out in the Pyrenees with Lammergeiers and Eagles and have been very pleased with the results. I want more!
- *Just imagine* – **hand held 12x magnification**, no hand shake, and very acceptable image clarity meaning that you can make out far more of the bird you're watching than you'd ever been able to before. Game changer? Yep!
- *Seawatching from a ship* – rocking and rolling on the waves, where using a telescope is usually a quaint but futile endeavour. You may be bobbing up and down, but that shearwater you're following in your APCs isn't. So, for seawatching at sea, and even from land, game changer.
- Have you ever tried watching birds through your binoculars as *a passenger in a moving vehicle*? I virtually gave up on that many years ago. Now I'm hoping that someone will drive me around for a change so that I can see what a difference these binoculars make.
- *Waders at a distance on mudflats*? Ducks on the open water? Roosting gulls? Flocks of passerines in fields?

If much of your birding time is occupied by these activities then you should seriously consider these stabilizing binoculars as a very worthwhile step to identifying even more birds in the field.

- On an aside, I was very pleased when stargazing one night I focused on what seemed to be a planet and *could actually make out the rings of Saturn*. Of course, the next move was to set up the telescope, but I'm 100% sure I wouldn't have noticed the rings with my Swarovskis.



Distant birds and the eagerness to spot them – the ideal scenario for the APC stabilized binoculars

Anything else? Some minor details

- There's a spare battery compartment
- There are accessories which include silicon sheaths, shoulder harness, neck straps, and cleaning kit.
- The binoculars have a 30 year warranty
- They're considerably less expensive than high-end Swarovskis
- Free Shipping

AND, IMPORTANT!

There's a **whopping 10% discount** on all APC stabilized optics and matching accessories on the website www.kiteoptics.com using the special code that you can request from us.

Once you have it go to the Kite Optics site and enter the code during checkout to receive your 10% discount.