

Avian Multiview 80 with 20-60x eyepiece

Reviewed by David Chandler

RRP: £269 including the zoom lens. CLOSE FOCUS: 7.5m LENGTH: 46cm (with eyepiece straight) WEIGHT: 1,795g FIELD OF VIEW: 2° at 20x (35m at 1,000m), 1° at 60x (17.5m at 1,000m) WARRANTY: Fully guaranteed for 1 year. ALSO SUPPLIED: Metal case with foam insert. Objective and eyepiece lens covers. SOLD BY: Ace Optics, 16 Green Street, Bath BA1 2JZ. Tel: 01225 466364. Fax: 01225 469 761. Website: www.acecameras.co.uk



The eye-piece can be moved through 90° from straight to vertical and locks in place securely.



The scope comes in a strong metal case.

This 80mm scope retails at just £269, including a 20-60x zoom eyepiece – a bargain, as long as it's good, of course! 'Avian' is the brand name of Ace Optics, a Bath-based retailer. This Taiwanese-made scope is the first to bear the Avian name and it's a scope with a difference – the eyepiece can be moved through 90° from straight through viewing to vertical and can be locked in any position along the way. The idea is that this increases the scope's versatility – making it easier for people of different heights to share the scope, for example.

What I liked

The Avian's build quality impressed me. It has more moving parts than the average scope, but all worked well. The objective lens is set back about 2.5cm into the body, which provides a lot of protection to the big front lens. There's a pull-out lens hood and a rotating collar for mounting the scope on a tripod. The collar isn't click-stopped, but isn't too loose and works well enough. The eyepiece attaches via a screw-

in collar and has a smooth and pleasantly, heavy zoom movement. The view feels narrow, but actually compares reasonably well with other zoom eyepieces – and there's a 30x eyepiece on the way. The view it provides may surprise you – at low magnifications, central sharpness, brightness and contrast are very good. As you pump up the magnification, the scope continues to perform well.

At the highest magnifications, the image isn't as crisp, is noticeably duller and careful focusing is required, but this is to be expected, and in good conditions I was impressed with what this eyepiece could do, delivering a functional image even at 60x. Focusing precision is good and I found no major colour fringing. There is a slight blue colour cast, but it didn't bother me.

What of that variable eyepiece? You might think the movement would be sloppy and poorly engineered, but think again. The mechanics are good and it really gives you a more versatile bit of kit.

What I didn't like

For me, there was too little eye relief at low magnifications and some careful eye positioning was required. At 20x there was noticeable softness at the edges, too, but this was less of an issue at higher magnifications.

This scope is big and heavy, but that isn't an issue for everyone. It's not nitrogen-filled or waterproof (it's described as 'shower resistant'), and the metal body can get very cold, but a stay-on case is available

which solves these 'problems'.

If there's a MkII, some click-stops in the twist-up eyecup, a bit more eye relief and a wider focusing wheel would be good additions.

To nit-pick, the quoted close-focus seemed a little ambitious – for me it was more like nine metres, not the quoted 7.5m; and the screw-on objective cover is fiddly. But don't forget – it costs less than £300. At this price, its performance is commendable.



Overall verdict

A big scope with an impressive performance and a not-so-big price.	
Design and ease of use (out of 10)	8.5
Optical rating	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	9.5

Please note: Marks are given in comparison to telescopes in a similar price range.