



Photographic Accessory Review...

Carson XM Series Binoculars

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Binoculars are a useful accessory for any nature photographer. Carlson's new XM Series are of particular interest, offering high build quality, excellent optics and rugged, waterproof construction at an attractive price.

The XM Series is available in three sizes; 10X50, 8X42 and a compact 8X32 model. Features include;

- Fully multicoated (phase coating) optics
- O-ring sealed, waterproof body
- Roof prism construction
- Extra long eye relief
- Rubberized coating
- Limited lifetime warranty

Additional features include twist-lock eye relief cups, adjustable right diopter and tripod adapter tapping on all models. Also included in the box is a very useable soft case with carrying strap, lens caps, binocular strap and cleaning cloth. The XM-150 is shown above, and is very similar in overall size and configuration to the XM-842 model. The compact XM-832 is considerably smaller - see thumbnail image below.



| Specifications | XM-832 | XM-842 | XM-150 |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Magnification | 8X | 8X | 10X |
| Objective Lens | 32mm | 42mm | 50mm |
| Field of View | 420' at 1000 yds | 330' at 1000 yds | 262' at 1000 yds |
| Prism | BAK-4 (roof) | BAK-4 (roof) | BAK-4 (roof) |
| Eye Relief | 15.5mm | 22mm | 19mm |
| MFD | 9.8 feet | 13.0 feet | 19.0 feet |
| Weight* | 20.4 ounces | 24.2 ounces | 26.4 ounces |

* As weighed on an electronic postal scale without strap, lens caps or carrying case.

In the Field - A short review by Bob Steele.

Editor's Note - Thumbnails are links to larger images, presented in slide show format.

I was a bit skeptical when Jim asked me to review these binoculars. I'd never even heard of Carson Optical before, and didn't have much hope for a high quality optic at such a reasonable price. I've been around the birding game for over 20 years. In my time I've owned or used many, many binoculars – all the way from \$50 discount specials to the top of the line Swarovski EL's. My house is littered with binoculars of many makes and models, so comparing this new product with several others was quite easy.

The pair Jim sent for evaluation was the XM Series 10X50. My first impression after taking them out of the box was the impressive build quality. The XM is a smartly designed roof-prism binocular with easy to use twist lock eye-relief cups. The rubber armor coating provides a nice feel in the hands and ensures adequate protection from the usual bumps and dings. Focus adjustment was quick with the standard top mount dial. But what impressed me the most was the very remarkable optical quality. Comparing

against my every day Pentax DCF 10X40, the Carson XM was every bit as bright, if not slightly brighter. The large field of view was crisp and clear from edge to edge, and the color fidelity was excellent as well. Now for the unfair but real test of optical quality. I tested these new binoculars side-by-side with my wife's Swarovski EL 10X40 – considered by many to be the top of the heap in field binoculars. Again, I was very impressed. While the Carson product can't quite match the overall optical quality, brightness, and color fidelity of a \$1000 binocular, it wasn't far behind. The only minor negative I had with these binoculars was the modest 15 feet close-focus limit. For those who point their field glasses at the occasional very close butterfly or other subject, this may not be the best choice.

For those looking for a very reasonably priced binocular, the Carson Optical XM series is an outstanding value. Excellent build and outstanding optical qualities make these a worthy competitor to others in their price class.

Conclusion

The Carson XM Series binoculars offer quality construction and optics - an excellent value for the money. If you are in the market for high quality binoculars for under \$300, the XM Series is highly recommended. All three models are in stock and available for immediate delivery from the [NPN Gift Shoppe](#).

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