



Leica Noctivid Review by Ben Lizdas

The Leica Noctivid is beautifully made and, under certain viewing conditions, allows you to see detail that less expensive binoculars simply can't provide. It is firmly in the top tier of birding optics and carries with it the requisite price tag.

The Noctivid is a new type of binocular for Leica. Its previous top-of-the-line models featured a well-designed yet traditional roof prism body style; the Noctivid joins the ranks of binoculars with an open bridge center hinge, allowing users to fully wrap their fingers around the binocular's barrels. At just under 6 inches tall and 30 ounces, the Noctivid presents the most compact body design of the open bridge 42mm models available. You won't find any ergonomic

thumb stops or indentations on the barrels of the Noctivid, nor will you find sculpting of the body to indicate where your hands should grip the binocular. The rubber armor-ing provides a comfortable grip and tactile experience without surface texture.

The mechanical components of the Noctivid are well executed in both design and precision. The right-eye diopter adjustment mechanism is among the most well-thought-out in the industry. Its easy-to-read diopter indicator is viewed in a small window on the back of the focus wheel. One glance at the binocular tells the diopter setting. Not only is it functional, but it looks cool, like having a speedometer on your focus wheel.

The Noctivid's eyecups are well designed, sturdy, and easily removeable for cleaning or replacement. With 19mm of eye relief, birders who wear glasses will find the Noctivid comfortable and easy to use, with full access to the binocular's wide field of view. Firm stops along the travel of the eyecups allow them to be put in multiple positions, making them adjustable enough to accommodate faces of all shapes and sizes. With a minimal interpapillary distance of 56mm, the Noctivid will fit any user.

At the other end of the binocular's barrel are well-designed objective lens covers—a design challenge on open-hinge models. The Noctivid has a ring that fits around the barrel and center hinge of the binocular, to which a lens cover attaches. The lens cover grips the inner circumference of the objective barrel securely. They are easy to put in place and quickly remove.

As with all premium binoculars, the Noctivid's lens system is designed to increase peripheral edge clarity (often referred to as field-flattening

lenses), accompanied by a wide field of view: 404 feet at 1,000 yards. This optical feature sets the Noctivid apart from Leica's other models.

Close focus is within six feet. The resolution, contrast, and brightness of the new Noctivid places it firmly and competitively among premium binoculars.

The Noctivid has a birdy namesake, the little owl (*Athene noctua*), which often appears in Leica's advertisements and marketing materials for the Noctivid. The owl recognizes the origins of the Noctivid as an instrument designed with birders in mind. Furthermore, this tiny bird of prey is diurnal, effectively seeing well both day and night. It's a good match for the Noctivid, complementing the binocular's compact body, efficient design, and capability to resolve detail day and night.

One thing missing on the Noctivids is an attachment point to mount a tripod. This generally isn't a show stopper for any birding use, but worth noting.