

Birdwatch **GUIDE TO** **OPTICS** 2015

EXPERT BUYING ADVICE • EVERY MAKE AND MODEL DESIGNED FOR BIRDING

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COMPREHENSIVE DATA TABLES LISTING ALL KEY
BINOCULARS, TELESCOPES AND TRIPODS



Fit for a king?



REVIEW

Celestron Regal 100 M2 F-ED telescope

DESIGNED to impress, Celestron's new 100 mm telescope is the latest addition to the company's flagship Regal M2 F-ED range. This is not a scope for the faint hearted. It's big both in weight and dimensions, while the magnification range runs from 22x to 67x via an interchangeable zoom eyepiece. Despite the magnesium alloy body, with its thin covering of rubber coating, it weighs in at just over 2 kg, and I used the First Horizon 8115 heavy-duty tripod reviewed on page 22 to support it.

With a 100 mm objective, it's safe to assume that both the resolution and the light-gathering capacity will be considerable, and they are. When tested in overcast conditions the scope performs extremely well, producing an impressively bright image that remains sharp to the very edge

of the field. At the highest end of the magnification range there is, understandably, a decrease in brightness, but this is minimal. Obtaining a sharp image, however, becomes much more difficult.

I found the dual focusing ring helps considerably in this instance. It's split so that roughly 60 per cent of proximal turning length governs general focusing, while the remaining distal portion allows the final fine focus adjustment. There is an incredible amount of tolerance in this adjustment which makes precision focusing much easier. This is reflected in the number of turns of the main focusing wheel: approximately 3.75 rotations lie between close focus and infinity, which renders general focusing a little slow.

My only minor grudge relates to the wheel's positioning on the

body of the scope – it's mounted well to the right of the centre of the body, which means it is more difficult to operate with the left hand while using your right hand to operate the pan-and-tilt handle of the tripod.

Overall image quality is commendable, reflecting bright, natural colours with a pleasing degree of contrast, coupled with an acceptably low level of chromatic aberration evident only in the periphery of the field. The overall colour rendition of the image carries a cold, bluish hue.

If the intention is to use the M2 for digiscoping it's worth noting that the package includes a T-adapter ring for use with a T-Ring for DSLR photography. A sliding balance plate is also included and, along with the three threaded ports on the scope's tripod foot, allows users to compensate for the

extra weight of the camera in repositioning the telescope on the tripod. A generously padded stay-on carry case is also supplied as part of the package.

Mike Alibone

FURTHER INFO

- **Price:** £900 (including zoom eyepiece)
- **Size:** 489x121 mm (including zoom eyepiece)
- **Weight:** 2,084 g (including zoom eyepiece)
- **Field of view:** 33 to 16 m at 1,000 m
- **Close focus:** 8 m
- **Gas-filled:** yes
- **Waterproof:** yes
- **Guarantee:** limited lifetime

VERDICT

- ✓ Excellent light-gathering properties
- ✓ Sharp image with natural colours and contrast
- ✗ Difficult to operate the focusing wheel with the left hand

Entry-level precision

REVIEW

Helios Fieldmaster ED85DS Doublet 20-60x85 telescope



AS a brand new addition to the Helios range, this 85 mm ED telescope set out to cut no corners in quality or performance when it made its debut on the British market this summer.

Similar in style to the closely

related ED82DS Triplet 20-60x82 (reviewed in *Birdwatch* 276: 70-71), it shares the same hard anodised body. This is solid, well constructed and exudes all-round robustness. In addition to having a slightly larger objective, the new model is designed differently from the 82 mm scope. I found the centrally mounted dual-focusing wheels easier to use as a result of their being larger and fully exposed

instead of partly recessed, as they are on the 82 mm model.

The body includes a tripod foot which rotates through a full 360 degrees, subtly click-stopping at 45 degrees and 90 degrees to the horizontal. The deep, sturdy objective lens hood pulls in and out effortlessly. Bayonet fitted, the 20-60x zoom eyepiece is secured by a locking device on the body, above the prism housing.