



22 BINOCULARS YOU CAN AFFORD, PAGE 22

# BIRDERS' WORLD

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## How birds keep warm

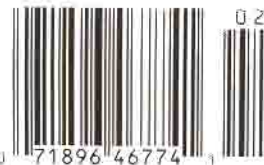
**The truth about bird flu p.14**

Who pecks who in backyard flocks • Birds that don't migrate straight • Where to look for Flammulated Owls • The other Las Vegas • How to identify winter goldfinches

Mourning Dove



\$4.95 • \$6.50 Canada



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# 5 PICKS

by Steve Sosensky

\$176.95



## Celestron Outland LX 8x42

Celestron has been in upgrade mode. Some lines got improved coatings and prisms. With this model the company went a step further. In addition to adding nitrogen purging and fully multicoating the lenses, Celestron redesigned the optics to make the Outland LX a true birding glass. The field of view was widened, close focus was reduced from 20 feet to 6, and the weight was pared to 23 ounces. The image is clear and bright, and edge distortion is less than we've seen on binoculars that cost more. With street prices around \$100, this binocular is a real bargain. Also available as 10x42.

\$279.95



## Audubon Equinox HP 10x42

When Audubon introduced its Equinox line, the binoculars rated near the top of their price range. Near the top, however, apparently was not good enough. Just \$20 more than the original Equinox, the HP models offer improved lens and prism coatings for a brighter and sharper view. New ergonomics include eyecups with rounded edges, softer rubber for added comfort, and detents for fine adjustment of the eyecup extension. The 10x42 is an excellent binocular for birdwatchers who are just starting to get serious about the sport but aren't ready to spend for the top optics. Also available as 8x42.

\$499



## Brunton Eterna 8x45

This is another binocular line that received an interesting makeover. Brunton has remodeled the exterior with a more modern shape and replaced the problematic hinged lens covers with a pair of individual neoprene "bino-gloves" that fit like Ped socks and slide up the binocular strap when not in use. Optically, the 8x45 is beautifully bright and sharp. It's also superbly balanced, so hand-holding the higher powers is easy. Also available as 11x45 and 15x51.

\$575



## Kowa BD42 10x42

Too often we hear the question "Kowa makes binoculars?" That might be because the company, though well known for excellent spotting scopes, really didn't do much to promote its binoculars. This series is something to crow about because it fills a middle price niche with solid performers. Proprietary phase coating gives improved brightness and much improved sharpness over previous BD42s. Kowa also upgraded the eyecups by adding detents to the twist-up mechanism and shed the old gray and royal purple for a natural, sturdy, green rubber armoring. Give this model a try. You will be pleasantly surprised. Also available as 8x42.

\$698



## Pentax DCF SP 8x43

One of my favorite best buys, this series has a lot of models, and all are great birding choices. The 8x43 is light and bright and competes very well with binoculars costing much more. It offers great close focus (measured near five feet), with a clean, bright view in a chassis that is light for its class. Focusing is quick and precise. Twist-up eyecups with detents, objective lens covers that are tethered to the central hinge, and a locking diopter ring are standout features. Also available as 8x32 and 10x43.

*Steve Sosensky is vice president of operations for Optics4birding.com, cofounder of SoCA Bird Guides, and copresident of the Southwest Bird Study Club.*

Prices shown are suggested retail prices obtained from the manufacturers or their marketing representatives. Street prices will be lower.

