



Edition
02

Focus on Wildlife



| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Marek Borkowski | POLAND |
| Andrea Corso | ITALY |
| Wolfgang Dreyer | GERMANY |
| Dick Forsman | FINLAND |
| Jean-Yves Frémont | FRANCE |
| Ricard Gutiérrez | SPAIN |
| Killian Mullarney | IRELAND |
| Bill Oddie | ENGLAND |
| Ian Sinclair | SOUTH AFRICA |
| Lars Svensson | SWEDEN |
| Charlotte Uhlenbroek | ENGLAND |
| Arnoud van den Berg | HOLLAND |



Editorial

Well, here it is, the second issue of *Focus on Wildlife*, the magazine that brings you closer to some of the best-known birdwatchers and wildlife experts from many different countries. These are people who dedicate a large part of their time in some way or other

to the benefit of wildlife around us, in the process helping us to learn how to appreciate the wonders of nature! Surely, our thanks must go to the likes of Bill Oddie, Lars Svensson, Wolfgang Dreyer and all the others represented in this issue (as well as those not yet included) for making us aware of the immense pleasures to be derived from observing wildlife.

In the first issue of *Focus on Wildlife* our aim was to introduce you to a team of international 'Leica Leaders', looking especially at their approach to wildlife observation, favourite birdwatching locations, etc. In this issue we want to give you an insight into some of the other activities they are involved with and how they have achieved results which have put them at the forefront of their chosen field.

Read how Dick Forsman of Finland has perfected his bird photography, how Sweden's Lars Svensson studies Birds or how Killian Mullarney from Ireland approaches the sketching and painting of birds for books and magazines. How does the German Doctor Wolfgang Dreyer teach his students to memorise different bird species and why did Marek Borkowski, Poland, bring back Tarpan Horses to his Biebrza Marsh nature reserve? Hear the urgent message from Britain's Charlotte Uhlenbroek about the plight of the Great Apes and find out what makes bird song so interesting to Arnoud van den Berg in Holland. Of particular interest are the comments made by Andrea Corso, Italy, and Jean-Yves Frémont of France about the growing popularity of birdwatching in their countries. We also introduce you to two new 'Leica Leaders in the Field', Ian Sinclair in South Africa and Ricard Gutiérrez in Spain. Finally, we examine Bill Oddie's phenomenal success as the UK's favourite TV Wildlife Presenter.

We believe there is something of interest to everyone in this second issue of *Focus on Wildlife* and hope that the profiles of some of the best-known bird and wildlife experts will inspire you to get maximum enjoyment from the natural world around you!

Copies of the first issue of *Focus on Wildlife* are still available from the Leica agency in your country.

Uli Hintner, Leica Sport Optics



"It's really all down to training yourself to look," said Killian Mullarney. Perched on a camp stool, he was deftly sketching the seabirds around North Bull Island, Dublin, pausing occasionally to check a detail through his LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 scope.

"Most people actually have the potential to draw quite well, even though they may not think so. The most important stage in producing a successful drawing is 'the looking'. Of course, problems often arise in transferring what the eye registers into corresponding marks on paper," he continued, "but if you learn to SEE what is actually there – as opposed to what you 'know' should be there – successfully getting it down on paper is largely a matter of practice."



Ian Sinclair SOUTH AFRICA "World birder in retirement."

Ian Sinclair calls himself a 'world-birder in retirement', which now allows him to be constantly on the move, visiting and re-visiting all major birdwatching hot-spots around the globe. He is a big man, born in Ireland and now settled in Cape Town, South Africa.

South Africa is well-known for its very successful conservation ethics, the country's infrastructure being similar to Europe or North America where fauna and land is well safeguarded for future generations. With the aim of bringing an awareness of the country's rich wildlife to as wide an audience as possible, the first field

Killian Mullarney

IRELAND

“The most important stage in producing a successful drawing is ‘the looking’.”



Killian should know what he is talking about as he is one of today's best-known bird artists and co-author of the Collins Bird Guide, a field-guide that took 15 years to complete which has become the birdwatchers' bible. “I shared the task with Swedish artist Dan Zetterström and our aim was to illustrate as comprehensively as possible all the birds of the Western Palearctic (Europe, North Africa and the Middle East). It really was a labour of love, but also a great privilege to do. We are now working on an updated second edition, but thankfully it is not nearly as daunting a task as it was first time round!”

One immediately warms to this charming Irishman who considers field observation of the live bird to be

guide in an African language will be available later this year and it is to be distributed to all schools.

Ian has been a birdwatcher all his life – as a young boy in Ireland his egg-collecting developed into more intensive birding. He was given his first binoculars when he was eight years old – Kershaw 8 x 30s made for the British Navy. However, he bought his first pair of Leica Binoculars at the relatively young age of 19, 10 x 40s which he recalls cost £62, complete with leather case. Today he has an Ultravid 10 x 42 BR which he has used in all kinds of conditions throughout Africa and Asia. “Every time I look through them,” he says, “I am literally overawed with their performance.”

Ian has written more than 20 books on African Birds and several more titles are in preparation. His most recent shorebird lifer was an Asian Dowitcher, which normally migrates from North-Eastern Siberia to South-

vitaly important. “When sketching in the field I find the angled eyepiece of my ‘77’ scope is perfect. I try to make myself comfortable, so that I can look at the bird and go back to my drawing almost without having to move my head. The shorter the time-lapse between looking at the bird and looking at the page, the better the chance of recording observations correctly. With Leica's superb optics I can enjoy a really close view without disturbing the birds at all.”

Killian makes it look easy as he has been drawing birds since childhood, but what tips would he give to someone just starting sketching? “It's a good idea to begin with co-operative subjects – for example resting gulls – and then perhaps with just drawing parts of the bird. It might be a detail of the head, the line of the flank where it meets the wing, or the position of the tail; concentrating on details, and sketching them correctly helps you gain an understanding of what you are seeing.

Another useful technique is to set the scope very slightly out of focus. This gives you a more impressionistic, almost abstract view which may be easier to sketch quickly, so you start-off with a good ‘framework’.”

East Asia – this was at the end of November 2004 in South Africa, and it was only there, Ian believes, because it got lost on the way!

Ian likes all sea birds, but the most interesting to him is the Wandering or Royal Albatross with its 13ft wingspan – it is believed they may well live to 100 years or more.

When it comes to choosing a spot for birdwatching, Ian's favourite ‘local’ patch is the Mkuzi Game Reserve in Zululand (three hours north of Durban), which has an enormous diversity of habitat in a relatively small area, in his opinion the best in South Africa. On a world canvas he gets excited about the Congo Basin Rain Forest. Ian describes the Birdlife there as amazing.



Leica 42-series Ultravid binoculars

LEICA ULTRAVID 10 x 42 BR binoculars strike an outstanding balance between high magnification, brightness and physical size. They are comfortable to use and easy to hold steady for long distance observation, and like all full-size Ultravid models, feature a lightweight magnesium body with a titanium central shaft for strength.



For centuries the 250,000 acre Biebrza Marsh in North East Poland has provided one of the prime breeding grounds for the Aquatic Warbler, Great Snipe and Corncrake, three species which today are under threat of global extinction. This ideal habitat of open, tussocky, wet sedgefields had been created by traditional farming, hand scything and grazing, which prevented the encroachment of undergrowth without affecting the soil structure and water level, or disturbing birds in the breeding season. It was a form of natural wetland management on a vast scale.

However, massive social, political and economic changes in Poland following World War II almost eradicated the traditional way of life at Biebrza. The landscape



Marek Borkowski

POLAND

“By using horses to manage the habitat for birds, the Tarpan Horse has been given a chance of survival.”

began to decay, threatening the breeding grounds.

Enter Marek Borkowski. In the 1970s this naturalist was motivated not only by the seemingly hopeless future for the Biebrza Marsh, but also by the plight of the Tarpan Horse. “Today’s Tarpan Horses are closely related to the original wild horses of Europe,” he explained. “They still roamed wild in parts of Poland as recently as 150 years ago when a few were caught by landowners and farmers and cross-bred with domestic horses that were genetically close to the Tarpan.

“It was back in the ‘70s that I had the idea of introducing Tarpan Horses to the Biebrza Marsh. Tarpans are heavy grazers as well as being hardy animals and it seemed to me that they could be used as a natural way of controlling plant growth on the marsh, replacing farming. By using horses to manage the habitat for the birds, we would also be giving the breed a chance of survival.”

And so it has proved. The Tarpans have bred very successfully and as numbers have increased Marek has been able to reintroduce more than 20 horses to the wild

in parts of the Marsh that have now been designated a National Park.

Marek started his conservation work long before the Iron Curtain was lifted or the Biebrza National Park was created. Over the years he has been buying threatened stretches of the Marsh where he has created ‘Wildlife Poland’ offering wildlife-watching holidays on which visitors can expect to see around 170 bird species during a 10-day stay (check out www.wildlife.pl).

The best observation equipment is essential to Marek, for managing the Marsh, monitoring breeding programmes, and for helping visitors to see sights they will never forget : “The brilliance and clarity of the LEICA ULTRAVID 8 x 42 BL is remarkable – my guests are usually astonished when they take a look through these binoculars. They have to be tough too as they take quite a few knocks when I’m out and about. But the real joy comes when you show someone a Great Snipe at dusk through the LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 scope – you can hear them gasp at the quality!”

Leica Ultravid BL binoculars

The black leather-covered LEICA ULTRAVID 8 x 42 BL used by Marek Borkowski combines the optical performance of the rubber-armoured Ultravid BR models with an elegant and compact appearance, incredible lightness (less than 700g or 25oz!) and toughness which guarantees longevity.





Charlotte Uhlenbroek

ENGLAND

“The majority of Great Ape populations will be extinct in the next 10-20 years.”



Nobody who has seen Charlotte Uhlenbroek's BBC Television programmes could doubt her passion for animals, and in particular the Great Apes – Gorillas, Chimpanzees, Bonobos and Orangutans. This most engaging of presenters is genuinely surprised by her on-screen popularity: “TV is great for reaching a wide audience,” she says, “and bringing them into contact with animals that otherwise they may never get to see in the wild.” But when we caught up with her in Bristol during a break in her hectic schedule of overseas expeditions, there was a new edge of urgency and seriousness in what she told us :

“Based on the latest information scientists are predicting that the majority of great ape populations will be extinct in the next 10 to 20 years. That's no exaggeration, it's really going to happen unless serious conservation measures can be imposed effectively – and fast. Time is not on our side.”

The key problem is that the majority of Great Ape populations exist in the poorest countries. Activities such as increased hardwood logging are having a dramatic impact on the apes' habitat, while the commercial bushmeat trade has also increased significantly in Africa.

“We have to make conservation economically attractive. It's important to look at how local people can

benefit more from apes that are alive than from apes that are dead – through developing tourism for instance,” says Charlotte.

She is a strong supporter of GRASP (the Great Ape Survival Project), an initiative of United Nations Environment Programme. Despite the serious message she now carries, Charlotte retains the light touch that has enabled her to make the case for the Great Apes in a fresh and inspiring manner.

“Primates are especially fascinated by the equipment we carry and I'll never forget one occasion when a young chimp called Faustino ran off with one of our walkie-talkies. Fortunately it was switched on so the director coolly called “Faustino, Faustino, do you read me? Over.” Astonished that the box in his hand had suddenly sprung into life and started speaking to him, he instantly dropped it and never went near it again!

“The moral is, if you have a nice pair of LEICA ULTRAVID 8 x 32 binoculars like mine, NEVER put them down for a moment or they will be at the top of a tree being used by a chimp!”

For more information about GRASP, visit www.unep.org/grasp

Leica 32-series Ultravid binoculars

The LEICA ULTRAVID 8 x 32 and 10 x 32 BR are the smallest full-size binoculars in the Ultravid range and are extremely popular with birders and wildlife observers. Their compact dimensions and light weight make them ideal for situations where you need to carry the binoculars for many hours at a time. Despite the front lenses being slightly smaller at 32 mm diameter the optical quality is uncompromised with outstanding colour rendition and low light performance.





Andrea Corso ITALY

“Bird watching in Italy? Yes, yes, yes...”



Andrea Corso is a full time birdwatcher and ornithological researcher who lives in Siracusa, Sicily. He is a lively young man – always on the go and completely dedicated to his birds. Between Lectures at the 2005 International Po Delta Birdwatching Fair at Comacchio, Ferrara, he had just enough time to meet us over a large espresso, to tell us enthusiastically that things were changing in his country.

Until quite recently Italy was not on the ‘to visit’ list for Northern European birdwatchers, as this was hunting territory. There were some three million registered hunters, but according to the latest statistics the figure has now dropped to around 700,000. Instead, there are now some 48 reserves in the country which are run by LIPU (Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli – Italian League for Bird Protection), as well as marine nature reserves and National Parks. Birding tours are becoming more

and more popular, which is no surprise as it is sometimes possible to see wetland birds, seabirds, woodland birds and mountain birds, all in one day.

There are 520 bird species in Italy, of which 420 can be found in Sicily and many of Europe’s migrating birds use Italy as stop-over site for breeding or wintering. Andrea was eagerly explaining all this when he suddenly stopped, looked at his watch and declared that he should have been at a birders’ meeting five minutes before !

Andrea is clearly passionate about birding in Italy and his dedication is evidenced by his choice of observation equipment – the LEICA ULTRAVID 10 x 42 BR and the Apo-Televid 62 scope.

As regards the Po Delta Bird Fair, it was a great success, attracting over 30,000 visitors. Particularly impressive was a special programme arranged for school children and their teachers, which embraced topics such as ‘Introduction to Birdwatching’, ‘Bird Identification’, ‘Bird Gardening’, ‘Nature Photography’, ‘Wetland Ecosystems’ and many more. Most of these events were taken up with great enthusiasm by the youngsters.



Lars Svensson SWEDEN

“I always keep my Leica binoculars handy by the museum window in case an unusual bird appears.”

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” is a saying that has particular relevance for ringers, who trap live birds and put a numbered ring on their legs to help discover more about where the birds winter, how long they live, and if they return to the same patch every year.

That you can learn more, and faster, when you study birds in the hand – live or study specimens – was something that Lars Svensson understood early. As a young ringer at Ottenby and Capri in the late fifties and early sixties he felt that existing guides for identifying species,



gender and age were inadequate. “It should be possible to produce something better,” Lars thought, and so he headed for the Natural History Museum in his native Stockholm. The collection there holds an impressive 112,000 specimens.

Lars later continued his studies in several large collections, notably in Tring (UK), Paris, New York, Copenhagen and St. Petersburg. The result was his guide for ringers, Identification Guide to European Passerines, first published in 1970 and today regarded as a standard work for ringers in most European countries. It has even been translated into Chinese, and a Japanese translation is under way. The English version has been produced in four editions, and for every revised edition the book has grown in size and content. Now it has sold out again, and ringers eagerly await the fifth edition.

Ricard Gutiérrez SPAIN

“The Ultravids are killers for contrast, sharpness and colour balance.”

Our search for well-known birders who use Leica Optics took us to Catalonia, where professional birder Ricard Gutiérrez is not only famous in Spain, but also across the world for his many ornithological publications and particularly his website www.rarebirdspain.net.

41-year-old Ricard is also joint secretary of the Rarity Committee of SEO – Sociedad Espanola de Ornitologia – and works in seabird conservation as the Director of the Llobregat Delta Nature Reserve just outside Barcelona which boasts up to 370 Bird Species (you may pass over it as you fly into Barcelona).

Ricard has been Birdwatching since he was

16 years old, following a few years as a passionate astronomer. Before his stargazing years he recalls that his grandfather used to take him out when searching for mushrooms and taught him a great deal about the rich and varied wildlife around him.



“It will come,” Lars reassures, “only a little later than planned. I have already decided the colour of the cover – claret red, to honour another interest in my life!”

Lars has always maintained that the fastest way to gain a thorough knowledge of birds – especially the rarer species – is to combine field observations with the trapping of live birds and the study of skins in museums. “It can take a lifetime of travels to see a decent number of Spotted Eagles, but if you visit Tring and New York you can get close to dozens all at once. The problem is to understand what, of everything you see on a skin, will be useful to you, but sifting through the information is part of the fun.”

Bird skins may be useful, but they are no substitute for the real thing. “I always keep my Leica binoculars handy by the museum window in case an unusual bird appears,” says Lars. “They are small, convenient and powerful – just the tool to put in my briefcase. They justify me taking a break now and then from the arsenious skins !”



His grandfather encouraged him further by handing down his rather heavy Russian 7 x 50 binoculars – basic but enough to fire a lifelong interest.

Ricard’s favourite bird is the Balearic Shearwater, which, he says, is likely to become extinct in less than 40 years unless something drastic is done to preserve it. He will never forget the flock of thousands of these birds he saw in 1992 in his reserve which have now dwindled to only 1,500 or 1,800 pairs in the whole world.

Bearing in mind that Spain hosts a large European Community of overwintering birds, Ricard is pleased with the efforts now being made by the Spanish Government in conjunction with the European Union to preserve birds and wildlife, but feels that a lot more still needs to be done to make everyone aware of the problems.

Spain has two hot-spots for Birdwatching – the Doñana National Park in the south for endemics in spring and winter, and Catalonia in the north-east of the country where a record sighting of 202 species in one day was recorded. With its huge diversity of coastal wetlands, mountain ranges and steppes, this area has witnessed a large influx of international birders.

And the best tool for bird watching ? “Definitely the LEICA ULTRAVID 10 x 42 BR,” enthuses Ricard. “In the hands of any top 21st century birder these are a ‘killing machine’ in terms of the factors that matter for plumage analysis – contrast, sharpness and colour balance.”





Dick Forsman FINLAND

“To be really successful as a bird photographer you have to know bird behaviour very well.”



Dick Forsman is not only a leading authority on raptors all over the world, but he is also a bird artist of some repute and a highly acclaimed bird photographer. In fact, many of the photographs in this issue of *Focus on Wildlife* were taken by Dick.

His most successful book is *The Raptors of Europe and the Middle East* published by AC Black. He has just finished a book on Finnish Butterflies, for which he has again undertaken a large proportion of the photography.

When asked if he had some useful tips for successful Bird Photography, Dick said: “With modern digital equipment it’s not too difficult to take good photographs. These days many people do just that, which means that a professional’s work has to be exceptional in every way, particularly when it comes to location and the position of the bird. To be really successful, you have to know bird behaviour very well to allow you to get as close as possible to take that one ‘different’ shot !”

Photography of birds in flight is Dick’s speciality. For this he uses a digital SLR fitted with a 500 mm stabilised lens. Because of the need to move fast Dick always uses

his camera hand-held unless he is working from a hide, but the lens stabilisation system allows slower shutter speeds – and consequently smaller apertures – to be set in order to obtain maximum depth of field. Sometimes, of course, an extremely fast shutter speed is called for to ‘freeze’ a Bird in flight. The important thing in flight photography is to follow the bird smoothly at a constant speed. “This technique should result in at least one picture with an interesting wing position,” says Dick.

Dick recalls that when he photographed raptors for his book, he carefully mapped out a shooting script to cover all the various plumages. He might then take up to 1,300 pictures a day, in a wide variety of lighting conditions, to make sure that he had exactly what he wanted.

So, why don’t you give it a go – write down what you want to photograph and don’t be afraid to take as many pictures as you need. For more inspiration and examples of his stunning Bird Photography, visit Dick’s website www.dickforsman.com .

Dick uses a Leica Apo-Televid 77 and an Ultravid 7 x 42 BR for all his Birdwatching because, he says, “I get top performance from Leica products and I know they won’t let me down wherever I am !” Dick also carries an Ultravid 8 x 20 compact binocular in his pocket when he is out looking for butterflies because he would hate to miss the unexpected moment...



LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 scopes

The LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 is the ultimate spotting scope in the Leica range. With its front lens diameter of 77 mm (over 3 inches) and special fluorite glass elements it is unmatched for sharpness, brilliance and freedom from aberrations. The unique dual focusing wheels provide extremely rapid and accurate coarse and fine focusing, while the ergonomic, aluminium housing is also watertight. A range of wide-angle and zoom eyepieces is available.





Bill Oddie ENGLAND

“The most satisfying aspect of recent filming has been making programmes that look at all aspects of wildlife, not just birds.”

Over the last ten years a remarkable thing has happened for Bill Oddie. Through a growing number of birding and then wildlife programmes made for BBC Television, work has become pleasure, and pleasure has become work. While this happy state of affairs has resulted in the blossoming of a second TV career (Bill first became known to many of us as a member of *The Goodies* comic trio), it harks back to an interest he has had all his life : birds – the feathered variety !

Bill's first bird experience came in the mid-1940s when, as a small child in Rochdale, Lancashire, he found a Dunnock's nest in a privet hedge with a Cuckoo's egg in the clutch. “I have never seen another Cuckoo's egg since !” he proclaims. Nevertheless, it was enough to start the lifelong passion and, having moved to Birmingham in 1947 he developed great skill at finding nests and – “alas”, he says – collecting eggs.

Aged eight Bill acquired the *Observer's Book of Birds* and at 12 he had his first pair of binoculars for Christmas – Barr Stroud 8 x 30s. Thus equipped he became an obsessional watcher of Bartley Reservoir, famous for its lack of birds and therefore other bird watchers. Undeterred, he soon began spending his holidays at bird

observatories where he improved his skills and trained as a ‘ringer’, as well as purchasing his first scope, a big brass affair which had to be pulled out to use and steadied by lying down and propping it on one's knees. “Very painful,” he remembers.

While studying English at Cambridge University Bill began a period of optical experimentation, but the move to Leica came much later after trying a pair of Trinovids belonging to a friend. “It was the eyecup design that attracted me first, but then I was amazed by the optical quality and I have never wanted anything else since. I also got a Leica scope – when at last they started making one !”

“Arguably the most satisfying aspect of recent filming has been making programmes that look at all aspects of wildlife, not just birds,” says Bill. “I now use my binoculars to study dragonflies, bees, bats and even to search for flowers, so portability, light-gathering qualities and close-focus have all become much more important factors than they used to be. I currently use the LEICA ULTRAVID 8 x 32 for general observation, occasionally switching to the Ultravid 10 x 42 for longer distance observation such as seabirds and visible migration. As far



as scopes are concerned the LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 is a serious beauty, but the little one (the Apo-Televid 62) is my friend.”

Bill's TV exploits go from strength to strength, the most recent and phenomenally popular series, *Springwatch*, having been broadcast almost daily over three weeks in May and June. “Happily, I have TV projects planned for the next couple of years and my ambitions go well beyond that,” he says.

We say well done Bill... As the doyen of British bird watchers and now having brought wildlife to a huge general audience, we can't get enough of you !

LEICA TELEVID 62 scopes

The Leica compact Televid 62 and Apo-Televid 62 scopes measure 300 mm and weigh just over 35 oz (1,080 g). Optical performance is as impressive as the larger Televid 77 scopes, while the 62 series shares the same precise dual-focusing system and range of eyepieces as their big brothers.



Arnoud van den Berg HOLLAND

“When monitoring birds in detail a sound recording is as good as fingerprinting.”

“Over the past 25 years, recording the sounds of birds has been a passion for me. It started with expeditions to rainforests of Latin America and south-eastern Asia ; at that time, the only way to reach an acceptable standard of quality was by carrying cumbersome equipment into the field. Apart from a good microphone, this included a heavy, metal-cased Nagra recorder and piles of 20-minute magnetic tapes. Nowadays one can get recordings of the same quality by carrying just a microphone with one little computer as a recorder.

Since 2000, working with a handful of friends, I have been privileged to be part of an ambitious team, The Sound Approach, which decided to go out and

record the sounds of all the species and subspecies of the Western Palearctic in a new, methodical way. This project, carried out in digital stereo, has been a great learning experience for me.

Knowing bird sounds will help you identify which birds are present

even when they can't be seen. Making recordings yourself is one of the best ways to learn those sounds. In my experience, a good sound recording can evoke a situation much more powerfully than a photograph. Unlike sounds, a picture often just presents a detail out of context of its surrounding landscape.

When monitoring birds in detail, a sound-recording is as good as fingerprinting, making it possible to identify species or even individuals with certainty.

To speed up the learning process you can use cheap devices such as a dictaphone, although for serious recording you will need a directional microphone or even a parabolic reflector.

And, to keep an eye on the subject of all these efforts, to follow its behaviour and to be certain about its identification, my dependable high-quality Leica optics are of prime importance...”



Jean-Yves Frémont FRANCE

“Birdwatching in France is on the up !”

“Birdwatching in France is on the up – there is no doubt about it,” says Jean-Yves Frémont, the man who holds the record in France for having seen most bird species in the country, 447 to be exact, out of the country’s total of 547 species.

As in many other European Countries, interest in the environment, wildlife and particularly birds is increasing, although I do have to admit we still have a long way to go before birdwatching gains anything like the popularity it has in Northern Europe and the UK. But there are many younger people who are taking up the hobby thanks to the internet, the excellent work done by the LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux) and various useful specialist magazines.”

The LPO, which was founded in 1912, now has some 35,000 members and has been the official French Representative at BirdLife International since 1993. The two magazines in France which are the most popular are *L’oiseau*, mainly directed to new birdwatchers and dealing with general birdwatching topics, and *Ornithos*, the Specialist’s magazine to which more than 19,000

people subscribe.

When we asked Jean-Yves where he would recommend foreigners to go in France to see the most interesting bird life, he hesitated and pointed out that France is a very big country with many different habitats. “But,” he added, “people coming from England won’t have to go far ! Try Northern France, in autumn to watch the migration of seabirds at Cap Gris-Nez, or go to Finisterre in Brittany during October to observe the thousands of Waders and Gulls.”

Again he hesitated and suggested with a wry smile that visitors from England may want to combine birdwatching with ‘experiencing’ some ‘nice’ food ! “Go to La Vendee (Atlantic Coast north of La Rochelle) to see the Waders, Gulls and Harriers (Montague’s Harriers), and then try some delicious jambon avec herricot blanc or fresh fish and enjoy the local wine, before walking it all off on the long sandy beaches of the Atlantic Coast...”

Jean-Yves loves his LEICA ULTRAVID 10 x 42 BR binocular, which he says has taken his birdwatching to another level !



Wolfgang Dreyer GERMANY

“The two magnifications of the Duovid enable me to react quickly to sighting alerts from my students.”

Dr. Wolfgang Dreyer, Lecturer and Director of the Zoological Museum at the University of Kiel, Northern Germany, believes he has the best job there is !

Apart from researching historic zoological material going back centuries, he also teaches young university students how to experience and appreciate the many facets of nature in such a way that they are instilled into the subconscious forever !



How does he do it ?

This is what he said: “Neuro Physiologists have discovered that our brain can take in 250 Million ‘bits’ of information per second. However, further tests have shown that only 50 bits are processed to the small part of the brain where they stay for longer-term memory use. Any additional information can only be processed and remembered if divided into small and simple ‘parcels’ which are linked by association. For example, if

you establish a link in your memory between the simple trill of a bird song, the location where you saw the bird – a lake or tree, perhaps – add the visual outline of the bird to this and perhaps the time of day – morning, midday, evening – and you will always be reminded of your first encounter with that bird !”

Wolfgang also applies this theory out in the field with his binoculars. “When scanning and studying a 180 degree view in portions (usually one scans from left

to right), your memory will store these ‘frames’ as one panoramic image. For this procedure my Leica Ultravid is ideal as the focusing is so very quick,” he says.

The Museum, one of the first Zoological Museums in the world with origins going back to 1660, is a beautiful old building that holds many preserved animals brought back to Kiel from expeditions all over the world. For instance, a collection of Paradise Birds was brought back from New Guinea by the Danish King’s ship Galathea around 1845. These Birds are in perfect condition and have proved invaluable for comparison purposes by scientists. Also of scientific importance is a collection of bird bones, which were discovered around the open fireplaces of the Vikings; from these, archaeological Researchers can determine what the typical Viking diet was.

Besides his Leica Ultravid, Wolfgang also uses the dual magnification Duovid, which he finds extremely useful when he is lecturing in the field. “It is important for me to react quickly to the many calls from my students, confirming their sightings of anything from Dragon Flies to distant Buzzards. For this, the two magnifications are a great help,” he adds.



Leica Duovid binocular

The LEICA DUOVID 8 +12 x 42 and 10 +15 x 50 are NOT zoom binoculars, but ones that offer a choice of two magnifications, each with an imaging performance comparable to Leica’s fixed magnification binoculars. The change in magnification is achieved in moments by turning two rings – one on each tube.



“Fantastic !” Ian Sinclair – now settled in Cape Town, South Africa – has been a bird watcher all his life. He was given his first binoculars when he was eight years old, but today he has a pair of LEICA ULTRAVID 10 x 42 BR binoculars which he has used in all kinds of conditions while visiting bird watching hot-spots around the globe. “Everytime I look through them,” he says, “I am literally overawed with their performance.” Ian Sinclair, bird watcher and author

For your nearest Leica dealer contact :

Leica Camera AG / Oskar-Barnack-Straße 11 / D-35606 Solms / Telefon +49 (0) 6442-208-111 / www.leica-camera.com



LEICA TELEVID 77



LEICA ULTRAVID 10 x 42 BR