

# KAHLES HELIA S 10X42

## Review

By James Morris



**MOST KIWIS WILL KNOW THE KAHLES BRAND - especially those who hunted back in the deer recovery days. Kahles were what you wanted parked on top of your Sako Vixen, and many of them are still in service.**

Kahles was founded in Vienna, Austria and has been manufacturing hunting optics since 1898, which makes them one of the oldest manufacturers of glass for hunters. In 1974, Swarovski Optik purchased Kahles, which became an independent company within the Swarovski group in 1989. In 2017, Kahles was again brought into the Swarovski advertising and sales programme. The association with Swarovski is especially relevant in this review as the Kahles Helia S 42 binos are a very close match to the Swarovski SLC 42mm range, which has been discontinued.

Fast forward to mid-2021, and Kahles released an outstanding new pair of binoculars referred to as the Helia S 42 in the choice of 8- or 10-times magnification with a 42mm objective lens.

### **FIRST LOOK AT THE HELIA S 42**

Removing the nicely presented orange and

white Kahles packaging, I found the binoculars in one compartment and another smaller box contained lens covers and a neck strap. No case is included, which at first glance was a little disappointing until I thought about the fact that I've never used a factory carry case yet - instead I have a range of bino bivies I've chosen for their functionality and quality.

My initial impression of the Kahles Helia S 42s was that they felt familiar; I've owned and used Swarovski SLCs in the past - they're obviously related and made to the same exceptionally high standard. The optics are the first thing I consciously look at, but before my eyes even met the eye cups, I was impressed. They're much more compact than my personal pair of 10x42, which is instantly appealing. The armour is a dark chocolate brown with an orange line running the length of the barrels - they're more attractive in person than I thought they'd be from the photos I saw before they turned

ABOVE:

**KAHLES HELIA S ARE AUSTRIAN DESIGNED -**

*their superb functionality and great ergonomics make for an attractive option.*



Everywhere we went, the Kahles were a superb companion; they had a nice wide field of view, crisp clear image to the outside edge and amazing light transmissibility, which allowed us to see right till the last moment of the day.

up on my desk. The rubber non-slip armour feels good – not too sticky like some other brands – and it feels as though it'll last ... time will tell! The eye cups are again familiar and, at the outer extension, fit me well.

Looking through them, the glass is superb – clear right to the edges. The dioptre mechanism is like Swarovski's, where the focuser wheel pulls out to reveal a scale; moving the wheel then adjusts the dioptre in click-stops of a quarter, which is, as I read online when I was researching them, "foolproof".

### **A CLOSER LOOK**

Kahles Helia S are more compact and lightweight than most comparable binoculars on the market. Their body is made from magnesium, which is 50% lighter than titanium and stronger than aluminium. This also makes for a comfortable bino weight in the hand.

They're covered by a rubber armouring for protection and grip. The design is a single bridge with thumb indents on the bottom of the barrels and a central slow-focusing wheel. The eyepieces are 22mm across and concave with a 16mm eye relief. They use a Schmidt-Pechan roof prism, are nitrogen purged, waterproof, dust and fog resistant, and Kahles backs them with a 10-year warranty.

### **IN THE FIELD**

I took the Kahles Helia S 42s on a few wanders. I don't like using a neck strap, so I put them into my Hunters Element Bino Defender; I have the large Defender, but these binoculars would easily fit into the smaller size carrier, which certainly has appeal!

I became quite fond of them over the month or so I had them; they're smaller than my own binos yet just as nice to look through with the only obvious downside being the lack of a built-in rangefinder. They spent a bit of time looking over North Canterbury farmland, West Coast lowland and some Canterbury High Country over the spring.

For one of these trips, my good friend Simon Gibson took the week off and travelled south



LEFT:

### **UNBOXING THE HELIA**

**S 42.** Note there's no case included, but then I don't think I've used a factory case yet, opting for a bino harness instead – a case would just be a waste.

BELOW:

### **THE HELIAS WERE GREAT**

**TO USE IN THE FIELD,** as

I found out testing in the Canterbury High Country.



to the Coast with me. We were chasing some meat and a bit of social time with some good lads we don't see nearly often enough. It was the perfect opportunity to take the Kahles Helia S binos and bounce them between Simon and myself to really get to know them.

On our first hunt, we got soaked, which tested the waterproofness nicely! We didn't see a deer, and the plan to erect the tent ready for an early start went out the window in favour of a nice warm bed at a mate's house.

The better test was the next morning, which very early in the day was clearly going to be a ripper, when we attacked a West Coast riverbed. Right on daylight, we found a mob of half a dozen deer out in the open; they were all young deer, unaware of the danger they were in right out in the middle of the riverbed. We watched them for some time through the Kahles, which gave us a superb view in the half-light, before we picked out a spiker. Simon took it cleanly at 250 yards, and it surprised us by casting both of its antlers when it hit the ground!

Over the next few days, we watched a few more riverbeds, clearings and slips in the rain and bright sunshine. We spotted a few more deer and had lunch with a who. Everywhere we went, the Kahles were a superb companion; they had a nice wide field of view, crisp clear image to the outside ►





edge and amazing light transmissibility, which allowed us to see right till the last moment of the day. Another two deer came home with us; plenty of others were seen - it seems there's no shortage of deer!

Other testing saw me take the Kahles Helia S 42s into the Canterbury High Country where I camped on the side of a river ready for an early start and a big day checking out some chamois country. It was a bright nor-west day, and although I spent many hours on the back end of the Kahles, I didn't experience any strain or headache ... nor did I get the big buck chamois I spotted!

### CONCLUSION

I'm most impressed with the Kahles Helia S 10x42s. It was a sad day when I had to post them on to the next person who wanted to have a look. They're a good choice for a top-quality pair of Austrian binoculars, and at \$2,490, represent good value for money. ■

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Eye relief 15.8mm
- Field of view 6.3 degrees/110m at 1000m
- Transmissivity 91%
- Weight 785 grams

- Length 144mm
- 10-year warranty
- RRP** 8x42 \$2,390
- 10x42 \$2,490

### MORE INFO

[www.kahles.com](http://www.kahles.com)

ABOVE:

### AFTER WATCHING A MOB OF DEER

**THROUGH THE HELIAS** for some time at first light, Simon picked out this spiker, which surprisingly cast both its antlers as it hit the ground!