

HOW WE TESTED

Giving Them a Fair Shake

Following a quick on-land look at each binocular, testers hit the water. From the deck of a 16-foot flats boat, we used each IS binocular to view a series of distant objects including a sailboat more than a mile away. A steady breeze had the bay waters whipped into choppy conditions that had our small boat bouncing around more than enough to put the image stabilization through its paces.

Next, we moved into a channel with fairly calm wave conditions. Here, one tester leaned against the steering wheel and console in an attempt to pick up some of the vibration from the idling two-stroke hanging on the transom. This proved to be a real test of each binocular to handle vibration and hand shake.

Each binocular manufacturer supplied specifications that

we've listed on the Value Guide (page 38). Ratings are based on the observations of our testers.

We gave each binocular a rating for viewability based on results achieved in daylight, at night, and from both test sites. The focusing rating includes the use of the center focus and right-eye diopter, the usefulness of the diopter adjustment, and the comfort and effectiveness of the eyecups (with and without eyeglasses). The handling rating takes into account the quality of the supplied case, comfort of the neck strap, each unit's weight, and the shape and grip of each housing.

Manufacturers' claims of waterproofness were confirmed by dunking each pair of binoculars in water, then rinsing them, followed by an examination for water intrusion. Both passed.

In the final analysis, we considered the ratings, price, and warranty of each product.