

A record-breaking Food Rocks festival

THE Lyme Regis food festival Food Rocks has raised a record-breaking sum of £11,191 for charity this year.

The annual food and drink extravaganza, which took place on September 7 and 8 in the Dorset coastal town, attracted food lovers from all over the UK to celebrate the fantastic food and drink producers in and around Dorset.

The weekend-long event welcomed South West chefs including Mitch Tonks, Richard Bertinet and Gill Meller to host cooking demonstrations in the main tent throughout the day.



Mark Hix MBE said: "It was another great year at Food Rocks, raising the most money to date for The Fishermen's Mission and Lyme Regis RNLI. We had fantastic support from all the locals, tourists, producers and, of course, our sponsors."

Dean Lawrence of The Fishermen's Mission said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be supported once again by Mark Hix's Food Rocks festival, not only because of the incredible amount raised this year which will help us carry out our welfare and emergency services. The incredible support we receive from industry ambassadors like Mark is vital in creating awareness about our charity and the dangers of the fishing industry."

Meet the naked Aussie at next year's BSS

BRUCE, the naked Aussie behind Bruce's Shooting Academy – check it out on Facebook if you dare – will be hoping to meet and greet Pommie fans at the British Shooting Show next year.

He will be on the main stage each day sharing all he knows about shooting in his own inimitable style, meeting fans and signing autographs.

To find out more about the show, at the NEC Birmingham on February 14-16, and to buy tickets, visit www.shootingshow.co.uk

8 Product Review by Vulpes

TO be able to run an efficient fox-control business, night vision equipment is a must and I like to keep abreast of the constant changes in the equipment.

A couple of years ago Pulsar launched their Forward F155 front-mounted digital night vision scope add-on. Several attempts had already been made to produce a front-mounted unit but had only met with limited success.

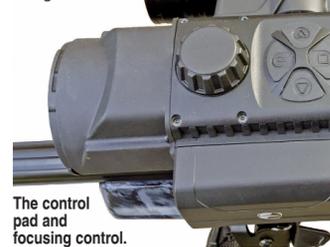
The problem was there were sighting difficulties when placing additional optics in front of a scope. There were no difficulties on rear-mounted products which didn't interfere with the scope's optics. The F155 enjoyed instant success and Pulsar found it difficult to keep pace with demand. I reviewed a F155 at the time and found it worked well enough but for fox work it was probably in need of 'tweaking'.

Move forward a couple of years and the F455 appeared on the scene, so I was interested to see how the new version matched up with the original. The arrival of the Forward F455 coincided with acquiring another rifle – a custom-built H-S Precision in .204 Ruger calibre.

The unit arrives with a selection of suitable inserts

I've had a Swarovski scope which I've hardly used and always wanted to use as a foxing scope, but with the illuminated reticle controls mounted on the eye bell of the scope, attaching an add-on night vision unit has never been possible. So when Scott Country asked if I would like to trial an F455 I jumped at the chance. When ordering an F455 you need to give the size of the objective lens and the unit then arrives with a selection of suitable inserts to enable the unit to be fitted.

Fitting was straightforward. I followed the quick-start guide (more in-depth instructions can be found online at www.pulsarvision.com) to select the appropriate insert, the bayonet fitting slides onto the scope and is clamped on by means of a lever adjusted to give the correct tension. It may sound involved but is straightforward.



The control pad and focusing control.



THE PULSAR FORWARD F455 FRONT-MOUNTED NIGHT VISION ATTACHMENT



The locking lever.

When I tested the F155 a couple of years ago I could see the potential but it was a little 'underpowered' for my fox work – that has all changed. The manufacturers claim a usable distance of 500 metres – you can certainly see that sort of distance with it but it's academic when using a rifle equipped with night vision at night as most shooting takes place much closer than that.

The first night I ventured out with the F455 mounted on my .204 the conditions were far from ideal as there was a light drizzle in the air and no night vision likes this. However, the difference between the F155 and this latest model was plain to see.

As the rain set in I packed up but a couple of nights later the weather improved and once more I was waiting out for a fox. In decent conditions the F455 was brilliant! I tried it first with its own infrared which has several power levels and was certainly better than the majority of 'built-in' infrared illuminators I've come across.

It was certainly good enough to give a good picture out to more than 200 yards and had the benefit of being invisible to animals. Knowing how critical infrared is to all night vision devices, I tried a couple of my own infrared torches. Both the PBR and the Starlight Dragonfly improved the picture clarity considerably, making the F455 a pleasure to use.

Vastly improved from the original

The unit was a doddle to fit to the scope once the correct shim and the lever tension had been sorted, taking mere seconds. The turn-on time was vastly improved from the original model with pretty well instantaneous start-up, which is just what you want when out after foxes.

I wondered how the thin crosshairs of the Swarovski would show up but needn't have worried as I could see them plainly and, with the tiny centre illuminated red dot, the reticle worked perfectly.

As regular readers will know, I'm not a great fan of all the bells and whistles that come as standard with modern digital night vision equipment as I just don't see the point of some of them! When I'm out after a fox I need to get the rifle on it as soon as possible and not be sorting out various buttons to allow me to film, take pictures or sort out menus.

Efficient, effective and problem-free

Fortunately the F455, although having a good selection of options for those who want to play with them, is easy to set up and just use, apart from perhaps some fine focusing which is simple enough.

I have, in the past, experienced some night vision gear which wouldn't perform that well with high-end scopes; this is due to the quality of the coatings applied to the lens of the scope during manufacture. This problem was certainly not apparent when using the F455 with the Swarovski, perhaps due to the fact it's front mounted.

The unit itself is fully waterproof (ideal these days) and you can take videos or still pictures if you wish and the controls for this are simple to use. The menu is straightforward and you can just set it up for your own use and leave it alone.

Among the functions on offer is the Sum light feature which when switched on allows extended use as the light fades; you do get a little extra pixilation when using this feature but under certain circumstances it can be a real asset.



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The stream vision app allows you to stream the image via Wi-Fi to a smartphone or tablet. I don't use this function but I know many who do.

Some night vision equipment has suffered from recoil when used with a centrefire rifle but there's no such problem with this one! The makers claim it can be used with no problems on calibres up to the .375 Holland & Holland Magnum – so that takes care of the majority of rifles used in this country!

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The bayonet fitting and shims.

When fully charged the lithium-ion battery should give approaching nine hours of use and a green flashing indicator tells you when it's fully charged.

Of course, as with most things, there can be a downside and when reviewing things I try to see both the good and the not-so-good. About the only thing I could level any criticism at was the weight. When equipped with its own infrared the Forward F455 weighs just under 2lb, more if you attach your own torch.

While not a huge weight remember, it's mounted on the front of the scope so it tends to make the rifle front heavy. When scoped up, my .204 is a bit of a lump, as are many modern rifles, but as I invariably shoot from the pick-up or off my Rekon rest, it isn't a problem. However, I wouldn't like to carry it around all night!

The best I've used

The F455 works well when in use and is by far and away the best front-mounted night vision I've used. Forward-mounted night vision has had problems in the past but as far as I can tell the Forward F455 has solved them.

Pulsar have produced an efficient, effective and problem-free item which allows you to fit night vision to the front of your day scope without causing eye relief difficulties and without affecting zero settings which have caused problems in the past.

At £1,199 the Forward F455 offers excellent value for money and would give newcomers and experienced night shooters the ability to shoot after dark with a front-mounted unit which works really well.

Despite pretty foul weather I've been out with my new foxing set-up several times and it's turning out to be very effective and has already accounted for several problem foxes. My thanks to night vision specialists Scott Country for the chance to try out the Pulsar Forward F455.

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For more information about the Pulsar Forward F455 front-mounted night-vision scope attachment please contact: **Scott Country** INTERNATIONAL

Scott Country on 01556 503587 or visit www.scottcountry.co.uk

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