

Love at first Sightline



The next generation of affordable NV is here: it's the Yukon Sightline and **Chris Parkin** finds himself truly enamoured

The Yukon Photon has been a superb first step into the night vision world for more than five years, and as it evolved, its capability and packaging have improved. Its main downside has been limited windage and elevation adjustment range for zeroing, but creative use of the 30mm tube mounts made it worth the time spent getting that zero. It's pretty hard to ignore similarities in the Yukon and Pulsar ranges, with many shared functions and features, yet where they have moved the design ethos towards the 30mm tube on new units like the Thermion, Yukon have taken a different

direction, going for a boxier construction with integral Weaver mount. This is by no means a limitation, and frankly, the second you turn the Sightline on, you forget about its appearance – the image quality improvement over the previous Photon RTs is quite stunning.

Scott Country supplied me with the larger N470 unit featuring a 60mm objective lens for maximum light entry into the internal optics. The mounting system is essentially a Weaver or Picatinny rail with adjustable layback mounting bar fastening with twin claws and single recoil stop using a 9/16" socket

or screwdriver. These work nicely with a torque wrench for fast swap-overs.

Rather than 4xAA batteries in a cage, the Sightline is supplied with a rechargeable DNV power pack that, in an emergency, can be swapped out for AAs. Powering up takes about six seconds from a short press on the recessed top button to the sight being ready for use.

The 1024x768 AMOLED display is easily focused with the collar on the ocular body in front of a rubber concertina eyecup, giving a crisp rendition of what the 1280x720 CMOS sensor is receiving. Base-level optical magnification is 6x with digital zoom working up to a 24x magnification, which – Yukon suggests – permits viewing of quarry at up to 450m away, in high detail thanks to the new HD sensor. A three-stage 850nm IR illuminator is fitted to the right side of the scope

SPECIFICATIONS

- Camera resolution:** 1280x720 CMOS HD sensor
- Display resolution:** AMOLED 1024x768
- Magnification:** 6-24x
- Objective lens:** 60mm
- Zeroing range:** 1.5 metres @ 100 metres
- Mount type:** Fixed Weaver
- NV detection range:** up to 400yd
- IR wavelength:** 850nm
- Reticle styles:** 6
- Reticle colours:** 6
- Number or rifle profiles:** 3
- Number of zeroing distances:** 10
- Battery:** DNV (regular AAs will also power the unit in additional DNV battery holder)
- Battery life:** 4 hours
- Weight:** 1150g
- Dimensions:** 315x89x88mm
- Protection rating:** IPX4, -20 to +40 degrees
- Warranty:** 3 years
- Price:** £889.95
- Contact:** scottcountry.co.uk, 01556 503587



The Weaver rail with single recoil stop is fastened with twin 9/16" nuts



Screen focus is adjusted at the rear



Image focus is adjusted at the front. This is well done with a light, smooth motion easy adjusted with fingertips



A DNV battery pack is included for 4-hour runtime depending on IR intensity

powered by the onboard battery and this works quite well at air rifle and .22 rimfire ranges, but ultimately I think most users will extend the capability for centrefire use with an external illuminator fastened to the left-side picatinny mounting rail.

Image focus is handled with a light and smooth rotating collar to the rear of the objective lens. This carries deep ridges for assured fingertip adjustment in front of the squared-off body. This fits snugly and could be hard to access reaching around the illuminators, but the fact that Yukon made it fingertip light has really pleased me because it made crisp focus easy to achieve. There is a flip-up lens cap for full night-time image exposure, and it also contains a 10mm aperture for better daytime use and a longer depth of field.

A brief press on the rotary command dial atop the unit initiates the primary

menu, where you can control image brightness, contrast, distance selection, magnification (adjustable in 0.1x increments) and the stadiametric rangefinder. This knurled, rotating dial works well with tactile clicks and isn't prone to disturbance when the upper selection button is pressed. A longer hold initiates the full menu for detailed set-up.

The Sightline can be run on three rifles, with their individual settings saved to profile A, B or C. There are six reticle shape options and six colour options spanning black, white, red and green for the centre dot. The reticle is effectively second focal plane so if you use the hash marks to 'aim over', be aware that changing the magnification changes their subtension on target.



A rotary dial operates menus with the power button recessed just behind

Ten distance values can be zeroed into the scope for each rifle and these are quickly chosen on the primary control menu after set-up. They allow for precise longer-range shots, with each click representing a 7.5mm POI shift on target at 100 metres. This is displayed using X and Y coordinates for easy recording on a notepad and given the ability to increase magnification, it's possible to increase precision. This is really good for extending the distance because with multiple distances pre-zeroed, or a simple point-blank zero set-up on fast cartridge, you have a realistic ability to make longer-distance precise shots on the high-contrast daylight image.

Zeroing uses a moving reticle procedure where a secondary reticle is moved to the point of impact on target while the original is held on point of aim. This can be repeated at any distance with a new range value, or – if you are patient and mathematically oriented – can be pre-programmed, but I will warn you it needs conversion for the units (not many ballistic solvers display in 7.5mm clicks or 0.075 mRad). Not for the faint hearted. However you go about it, be sure to check all these settings on targets before flinging bullets based on maths alone.

REVIEW: Yukon Sightline



Flipped up, the 60mm objective allows plentiful light entry to the tube's electronic HD sensor



A 10mm aperture for daytime use reduces light entering the Sightline and increases focal depth of field

Other control factors include an accelerometer giving vertical 'cant' display, settings in metres or yards, information icon brightness and picture-in-picture display. I find this to be a great assistant, but the only downside on the Sightline is that the PiP has to be turned on every time you power up the unit – I'd rather keep it on or off until I decide to change it.

A long hold on the power button counts down for full shutdown, or a brief press will turn just the screen off to save battery life. The right-side illuminator's rear button will flick through intensity settings; a long hold will shut it down. Be cautious: if left on unused, it is sucking the battery power, and you need to physically look into its front to check overall status.



The pre-selected zero range is shown on the right-hand side of the display

I can be really picky with NV and thermal gear but I will say right now that I really like the Sightline. It has all the features you need with great ergonomics, and none of the frills like video and stills recording that I fear are a little too voyeuristic for the good of shooting long-term. I don't find that thermal takes huge steps forward in image quality from model to model – it just adds more electronic accessories and better ergonomics – but a digital NV unit like this, sitting at the bottom of the price pecking order, does have a lot more room for improvement, and by heck have Yukon improved it.

I would choose this over any comparable unit I have used so

“ I cannot emphasise enough how much better the image quality is than the Photon RT ”

far, because the functionality is way better than the price point dictates. In diminishing light, it retains more image contrast on quarry out to the 250 metres I have tried it on so far. Yes, as crops sprout and grow this will diminish, but with the illuminator on, I was comfortably able to make relaxed and precise aim for head shots on rabbits at 6x magnification. Increased mag to 8 or 12x was quite nice before too much pixelation beyond 12x, but I loved it with a 4.1-degree field of view feeling naturally similar to day scopes. I used a Wicked Light illuminator set aiming high so the diamond 'bright' spot had its lower point on my reticle. I find this works best because no amount of light spilling 'low' at shorter range

or on intervening topography trips the automatic dimmer on the Sightline, and just like a lamp, quarry neither sees it or has time to react as point of aim is dipped into position and you release the shot.

The Sightline has 50mm of eye relief with a decent eye box, recoil rated up to 6000 Joules (.375 H&H, which I would avoid). On .223 or .243, the eye relief is acceptable as long as you are aware it might give you a little nudge, but no more.

I cannot emphasise enough how much better the image quality is than the Photon RT, and not just in darkness. Daytime use is less stressful and, though still black and white, shows far better contrast, making the scope more usable especially when

zeroing. The rich image is a lovely reminder of the benefits of NV, the 50Hz refresh rate showing silky smooth motion and a crisp picture to aim at. With NV, so much more of the background features and topography is seen. Yes, thicker crops and foliage will allow thermal

to highlight quarry more quickly, but I still prefer the NV picture when it comes to the precision shooting part of the job.

You can buy this, an illuminator and an Axion thermal spotter with change for the price of an XM50 Thermion. Yes, it's bulkier with an illuminator added and takes more tinkering to perfect the image, but I found a far more confidence-inspiring and informative view with no issue taking shots well beyond 300 metres if the need arose. I simply liked the Sightline, yes that big objective adds a little height but compared alongside, no more than the similar mounts of the N450 and addressing the ocular lens and eye box never felt a strain like so much digital optical kit can be. ■



Reticle options are displayed here (and are sharper than a still photo can indicate)



Six reticle colours are on offer