

# Thermal theory

The editor continues his love affair with thermal night-vision

Last month, I gave my initial thoughts about the incredible Pulsar Quantum Lite XQ23V thermal-imaging monocular. Those of you who read that article will remember that I was deeply impressed with its ability to find quarry, and keen to learn more. Those good people at Scott Country who have loaned me the unit have allowed me to keep it a little longer to get to grips with all the benefits that this technology can offer the airgun hunter.

In essence, a thermal-imaging scope reads the heat emitted by living creatures, and displays that as it contrasts with the cooler background of the countryside. With all the hot weather we've been experiencing, I wondered if the differential would be enough, and I'm here to tell you that it most definitely is! I had no problem at all finding all our typical quarry species.

## Keep it simple

The Quantum Lite is their entry-level model, so Pulsar have kept the technical features list short, and for me, that's a positive thing. Some bits of night-vision kit are so complex that they put people off, but this model was simple to understand and use.

The main controls, apart from on and off, are the rotary dial at the front that controls the brightness of the image, and the mode button that allows you to customise what you see. These two gave me all the options and control I needed. I experimented with the operating modes; city, forest and identification, expecting the 'forest' mode to be the best for my needs, but I found that the 'identification' mode suited my eye best.

Like many other night-vision units I've tried, image focus needs to be understood well to get the best from it. The depth of field, i.e. the area that's in sharp focus at any given time, is quite shallow, so it's necessary to refocus for the longest and shortest distances. Because of this, I leaned to set the eye piece for the middle ground, where I was searching most, and then make adjustments for the other ranges. Set like this, I found I was able to search quickly and efficiently.

I also learned to use the brightness control frequently, to maximise the image I viewed. This is the large roller control at



*Thermal imaging works just as well in daylight as at night*

the front of the housing that's well placed for easy and comfortable changes.

## Experience counts

Talking to our own Jerry Moss about thermal imaging gave me a useful insight from a man

who has used this technology for probably as long as anybody in the airgun business. His work requires him to eradicate any grey squirrel that encroaches into the area he protects to help our native red squirrel survive. Because this is literally a life and





*My index finger is on the brightness control*



*Refocusing is needed as range changes*

death scenario for the red squirrels, he uses any equipment and technology that makes him more efficient in the field, and he discovered long ago that thermal imaging was quite superb in that role.

Jerry has used FLIR thermal monoculars for years and knows all too well just what a huge advantage they give the airgun hunter. He's currently trialling the same Pulsar unit as I am, which made his viewpoint very useful to me. I was fascinated to learn that we had ended up selecting the same viewing options as each other, without ever discussing them. Perhaps these really are the best ones for airgun hunters.

### Too much vegetation

As I mentioned last month, this time of year is frustrating for the airgun hunter with the trees full of leaf and the grass and weeds so tall. The thermal can still



*Compact and simple, the Quantum Lite is a superb tool for the serious hunter*



*A built-in front lens cover is a great idea*

find animals through this but you cannot shoot. The good news is that the farmers where I live are beginning to take the first cut of hay, opening up the fields again and allowing me to see my quarry.

It also allows me to search for rabbits at long distance, something the Quantum does very well. Once I locate them, I check the wind direction and plan my approach, checking at regular intervals that they are still ahead, and that the noise I'm making with my feet hasn't alerted them to my approach. With so many deer on our estate it can be quite a job to work my way past without alarming them into running, which in turn, would alert the rabbits I'm after.

I also remember to work my way forward very slowly, scanning all around every 10 yards or so, to spot additional rabbits to the first ones I see. On several occasions, I accounted for an extra one here and there that I'd have walked straight past without the thermal in my hands.

I've truly come to love this piece of equipment and now have to decide whether I'm going to buy one. It's a superb addition to the technical arsenal of any night-time hunter and I know from speaking to Jerry that my productivity in culling squirrels in the bare winter woods would be hugely improved as well. Decisions, decisions ... ■

*"a useful insight from a man who has used this technology for probably as long as anybody in the airgun business"*



*It's wise to spend time to select the image style that suits your eye*



**Contact:** Scott Country  
**Tel:** 01556 503587  
**Web:** [www.scottcountry.co.uk](http://www.scottcountry.co.uk)  
**Manufacturer:** Pulsar  
**Model:** Quantum Lite XQ23V  
**Weight:** 350 grammes  
**RRP:** £1199.95