

Beyond specs

THE ETHICS OF THE OPTICS INDUSTRY



A report by Ethical Consumer Research Association

December 2024

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Executive summary

This report is an update to the Shooting Wildlife series of reports, published in 2016, 2018 and 2020, which examined the links between sport optics companies and the hunting, arms, and military sectors. Feedback from the wildlife-watching community indicated that there was an interest in knowing more about the wider practices of optics companies. This report therefore expands its focus to also include assessment of companies' environmental and climate impacts, workers' rights policies and practices, tax conduct, and overall company ethos

The rebranding of the report series to "Beyond specs: the ethics of the optics industry" reflects Ethical Consumer's commitment to supplying consumers of sport optics with comparative information that goes beyond technical specifications. This buying guide encourages customers to include ethical considerations in their purchasing decisions, changing how we think about what makes a high quality pair of binoculars.

Key findings

1. **Changing marketing strategies:** There has been a noticeable shift in marketing strategies compared to those we found in our last report in 2020. Many companies have removed or toned down hunting text and imagery in favour of wildlife watching or portray hunting as a glamorous and adventurous lifestyle. This aligns with the industry's growing awareness of the need to keep non-hunting customers on board, particularly nature watchers.
2. **Hunting links:** The majority of optics companies still sell hunting-related products, with 20 companies marketing items for hunting, and 14 selling riflescopes. However, there has been a slight increase in companies distancing themselves from sport hunting, with 12 now having no links to it.

Canon, Olympus, Opticron, Viking, and Visionary received top scores as their own-brand products had no associations with hunting. Alpen, Bresser, Burris, Bushnell, Hawke, Kahles, Leica, Leupold, Minox, Steiner, Swarovski, Tasco, Vortex, and Zeiss scored zero points due to their active marketing of riflescopes and other products aimed at sports hunters, as well as links to hunting organisations and events.

3. **Arms and military links:** Since our last report the number of companies without military connections has increased from eight to ten. Burris, Bushnell, Leupold, Steiner and Tasco scored zero for marketing military products and selling to military clients, and belonging to the US National Rifle Association's Program.
4. **Environmental impact:** The optics sector largely scored poorly in our environmental practices category, with two-thirds of companies taking no meaningful actions to reduce their environmental footprint. Only Nikon takes measures across sourcing, production, and product end-of-life, while smaller company Opticron showed significant commitment relative to its size.
5. **Climate:** Overall, the sector did not report adequately on its climate impact and actions. Two-thirds of companies lacked detailed discussions on emissions reductions. Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon, and Ricoh stood out with better transparency and actions aligned with international climate agreements.
6. **Workers:** The industry scored poorly on workers' rights, with only six companies achieving a score above zero. Vanguard received the highest mark in this category for its in-house manufacturing (we consider there to be greater risk of worker exploitation when manufacturing is outsourced), while eight companies offer no protection at all for the workers in their supply chains.
7. **Tax conduct:** Ten companies scored zero in this category. The greater majority of companies owned subsidiaries based in tax havens. Eleven had no presence in tax havens.



Leupold blog, Horns of the High Desert - An Oregon Bighorn Sheep Hunt (21 July 2024)

- 8. Company ethos:** The ethos rating revealed that no companies had adopted positive practices such as employee ownership. Most large companies lost points for involvement in controversial industries and failing to disclose executive compensation.

This report finds that although marketing strategies are changing, and companies are more aware of consumer preferences, the sport optics industry is still not addressing major challenges relating to environmental responsibility and ethical practices.

We viewed the companies' websites and social media profiles between July and September 2024. As companies regularly change information on their websites and publish new sustainability reporting, some of the information in this report may not be current at the time of publication, but it was accurate at the time of research.

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Introduction



Sport optics, such as binoculars, spotting scopes and monoculars, are used by many wildlife watchers. They are also essential pieces of equipment for conservationists, hunters and military personnel, as are rifle sights and optical rangefinders.

In this report we encourage nature enthusiasts to take into account ethical considerations when buying sport optics, changing how we think about what makes a high quality pair of binoculars. Instead of recommending optics for their magnification and light-gathering power, this guide gives wildlife watchers the information they need to choose brands that are considerate of wildlife, people and our planet.

Companies reviewed

Twenty-seven optics companies representing 32 brands are covered in this report, all of which sell birding optics, among other products. They appear in the table on page 12.

The optics companies reviewed were all featured in our Shooting Wildlife series of reports, published in 2016, 2018 and 2020, and were initially selected based on industry market reports. Top-selling binocular brands on Amazon were also viewed and recommendations from birding forums, bird optics websites and product reviews were taken into account. We removed two brands included in previous reports, Bosma and Visionking, because they are not widely available for sale in the UK and are similar to many other sport optics brands from China which sell on Amazon and AliExpress.

For this research we contacted the 27 companies reviewed to request information about their ethical policies on the issues covered in this report. Only Opticron responded.

Company research

We have created a company profile for each optics company covered in this report. Profiles briefly explore the culture and history of the companies behind the optics brands and examine the types of consumer products they sell.

Where hunting accessories were found on sale, we reviewed the type of products, as well as how they were sold. In all Shooting Wildlife reports we examined product descriptions, animal species used in images, and company links to the sport hunting industry through sponsorship or memberships. In particular, the promotion of trophy, big game and driven hunting was noted.

In Shooting Wildlife III (2020) company profiles also examined companies' links to the arms industry and military, alongside their environmental and climate impact. In response to readers' feedback following the 2020 report, we have rebranded the series to "Beyond specs: the ethics of the optics industry" and extended our evaluation of companies' ethics to include their approach to workers' rights in the supply chain, tax conduct and general company ethos.

For the first time we have rated the companies using our complete Ethical Consumer rating system. This gives companies scores out of 100 for each category, which are averaged to give each company an overall Ethiscore, also out of 100. An explanation of our methodology and how the 27 sport optics companies scored is found in Part 4. In Part 5 we present a buying guide on which brands we consider **Best Buys**, which brands we recommend, and which to avoid.

Hunting definitions used for our research

We use the following terms and definitions within this report. Although we treat these terms critically, in the interest of not cluttering the text we have opted against using quotation marks when we use them.

Sport hunting: Hunting undertaken for leisure, irrespective of whether the animal is eaten. Big-game, driven and trophy hunts are all forms of sport hunting.

Big-game hunting: The hunting of large animals for a range of purposes, including for meat, a trophy, sport, and other animal by-products such as horns and antlers. Big-game animals include elephant, buffalo, lion, rhinoceros, kudu, antelope, moose, elk, whitetail deer, and bear.

Driven hunting: Animals (such as boar, red deer, and a range of birds e.g. grouse), are encouraged to move towards stationary hunters by an organised team of beaters and dogs.

Trophy hunting: When an animal is hunted and the whole animal or part of the animal is kept and usually displayed, irrespective of whether the rest of the animal was eaten. Traditional examples of trophy animals include bighorn sheep, black bear, brown bear, buffalo, caribou, elephant, elk, lion, moose, mountain lion, rhino roebuck and whitetail deer.

Changes since Shooting Wildlife III (2020)

Hunting

Links to hunting remain deeply entrenched within most optics companies. Only five companies did not sell any own-brand hunting accessories and scored 100/100 in our hunting rating: Canon, Olympus, Opticron, Viking and Visionary. In 2020 we found that Canon, Olympus and Opticron had no links to hunting, while Viking and Visionary did not market their own brand optics for hunting. However, Visionary mentioned hunting in a technical guide and Viking had a separate website on which it sold optics from other brands which feature hunting in their marketing. These findings were the same in the 2024 round of research.

Three companies – Carson, Nikon and Vanguard – had stopped selling riflescopes since publication of the previous report. Carson and Nikon had already stepped back from this product type in 2020, but were still selling existing stock at the time.

In 2024, 21 out of 27 companies marketed and/or sold at least some products for hunting. Fifteen of these had links to sport hunting through marketing their optics specifically for trophy, big-game or driven hunts, and/or selling riflescopes. This had fallen slightly since 2020, when 16 of the companies reviewed in both reports marketed their products for sport hunting and 17 sold riflescopes. The number of companies without any links to sport hunting covered in both reports increased from 10 (37%) in 2020 to 12 (44%) in 2024.

The number of companies with sponsored hunters and/or that were members of hunting organisations fell from 16 in 2020 to 14 in 2024.

A notable swing in the opposite direction was that Leica and Swarovski appear to have dropped their ethical hunting policies. Previously, Leica said it does not support nor endorse trophy hunting and condemns all illegal and unethical hunting. The company added: “Leica also opposes any hunting that threatens species or habitat sustainability.”¹ Swarovski Optik had stated it “supports hunting if it is carried out sustainably, responsibly, legally, and in harmony with nature [and] considers it to be its duty to take care of the environment, protect nature, and safeguard biodiversity”.² These statements or similar policies were not found in this round of research.

Arms and military links

The number of companies without links to the military also increased slightly from eight to ten. In Leica’s case this was due to a change in our research methodology. The Leica brand is shared by four independent companies; Leica Camera produces Leica binoculars and has no arms or military links, unlike the three other companies. Since our Ethiscore methodology rates the activity of companies, Leica Camera did not lose points for these links under Arms and Military Links.

Environmental and climate impact

Ethical Consumer’s rating methodology for environmental and climate impact has changed considerably since 2020; companies are expected to meet higher standards for their actions on climate change and environmental degradation. In 2020, carbon emissions reporting was still in its infancy, but companies have now had several years to take inventory of the emissions from their own operations and supply chains, and should be taking action to reduce both in order to limit the planet’s temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as agreed in 2016 in the Paris Agreement.³

The change in methodology makes a direct comparison difficult, but it is clear that optics companies are still falling short. In 2020, 90% of companies had poor climate reporting and 83% had poor environmental reporting. In 2024, 24 companies (89%) scored below 50/100 for our climate rating and all but one scored below 50/100 (96%) for Environmental Impact. For an industry that markets its products to nature lovers and often presents itself as a protector of biodiversity, this seems strikingly low.

1 leica-hunting-blog.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Leica-Hunting-policy.pdf, viewed on 20 November 2020 (since removed)

2 uk.swarovskioptik.com/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/SOP-GB-Site/en_US/-/GBP/SPAG_AboutSwarovskiOptik-ViewHuntingPosition, viewed on 9 November 2020 (since removed)

3 unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement

Reflections on changes

Since our first report, it is clear the industry has experienced consumer pressure to distance itself from sport hunting. Similar to our findings in 2020, most of the companies who continue to market to hunters use fewer photos of trophy animals and refer less to sport hunting in their marketing efforts.

These changes suggest a growing realisation within the optics industry that it needs to be more tactical about how it uses hunting in its marketing if it wants to retain its non-hunting customers. Many brands that choose to market to hunters have toned down the text and imagery in their product descriptions, which now focus on technical aspects, with hunting as a possible use.

In 2020, Remi Warren, a professional hunter with an extensive résumé in hunting media said: “In the past you couldn’t give hunting content to people who didn’t want it. Today, you can just be scrolling for kitten pictures and a mountain lion hunting video will pop up that you might not want to see.” He advised optics companies to change how they appeal to their hunting customers, especially on social media, since it “could be one of the most beneficial tools we have for promoting hunting. But if used poorly, it could also be something that ruins hunting for future generations.”⁴

This appears to have struck a chord with the marketing departments of companies that target sports hunters as a core customer group, such as Blaser (owner of the Minox brand), Hawke, Leica, Leupold and Swarovski. These companies sponsor social media influencers who are travel photographers as much as they are professional hunters. Their websites and social media now mostly steer away from pictures of taxidermied animal trophies and close-ups of hunters and their kills. Instead, they present hunting as a lifestyle of adventurous travel or a family-friendly way of living off the land. Their pictures of breathtaking landscapes and beautiful animals would not be out of place on any travel influencer’s Instagram profile.

This marketing choice is particularly relevant to the context of Leica and Swarovski seemingly abandoning their policies on ethical hunting.

4 Vortex, 2020 Catalogue, p. 41 [indd.adobe.com/view/ed1e20c4-597f-49c6-a455-009292b07523](https://www.adobe.com/view/ed1e20c4-597f-49c6-a455-009292b07523)

The ethics of sport optics in brief



Sport hunting

Ethical debates about hunting are complex and can quickly become heated and polarised. Arguments on both sides invoke emotive issues such as tradition, lives, and livelihoods. Hunting animals for sport or recreation, however, is increasingly opposed in the UK (particularly amongst urban dwellers), and especially when it is considered unnecessary or cruel.⁵

Hunting from an animal rights perspective

Many animal rights groups oppose hunting in all forms on the basis of an animal's 'right to life'. Killing animals in any instance – whether for sport or food – is considered unacceptable as the animal's life is not ours to take.

Hunting from an animal welfare perspective

From an animal welfare perspective, the degree of suffering caused by an action, including during hunting, can determine whether an action is deemed cruel and socially acceptable or not.

Research suggests that a high level of skill can reduce the suffering experienced when an animal is hunted.⁶ For example, red deer appear to suffer more when wounded and not killed cleanly⁷ (in a single shot), or when forced to flee in a chase compared to deer instantly killed by a quiet and skilled deer stalker. The type of weapon used, the number of shots taken to kill an animal, the time from impact until death, and how hunters deal with dependent young are all factors that can impact on perceived suffering.

For many people, whether it is deemed socially acceptable to kill an animal also appears to be dependent on the species in question and whether an animal can feel, or is perceived to feel, pain. Different societies tend to have preferred species, and in the Global North a slight preference is generally shown towards mammals, with less concern shown towards the killing of animals perceived as “pests” and “vermin” such as wasps, for example.⁸

There has been much criticism of the idea of using species' experience of pain to determine whether it is acceptable to kill them. It's a complex discussion that is beyond the scope of this guide but interested readers could start with reading *A Moral Defense of Trophy Hunting and Why It Fails* by S.P. Morris.⁹

Can hunting be ethical?

Some make the case that hunting can be ethical, for example when humane methods are used or where there is a “fair chase”; when the final product is used (eg for meat); when hunting serves a wider purpose (such as preventing a people/wildlife conflict or supporting wildlife conservation); and when hunters respect laws and regulations.

There has been a slow shift among Western hunters over the past few decades towards greater concern for animal welfare and environmental management.¹⁰

5 royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2023.1638
 6 www.researchgate.net/publication/252259835_Does_sport_hunting_benefit_conservation_assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ce456e5274a2c9a484c13/4763.pdf
 7 www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/2/222
 8 www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17511321.2020.1770847
 9 www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10871209.2020.1800145#abstract
 10 www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10871209.2020.1800145#abstract

Academic research on the impact and role hunting can play in supporting conservation efforts is complex and is discussed in detail in *Shooting Wildlife III* (2020).¹¹

Hunting impacts, both positive and negative, appear to be affected by the context in which hunting occurs.

Motivations for hunting, the financial transactions involved, the species and animals targeted, the social and ecological awareness of the hunter, and the type of weapon used can all affect the impacts of hunting. In addition, when theoretical models are used to predict the impacts of hunting, they do not always match field observations.

Arms and military links

Optics companies' links to the arms industry and military also raise difficult ethical questions for 21st century wildlife watchers and conservationists – particularly considering the military's complex and widespread environmental impacts on ecosystems and wildlife, not to mention the human deaths and human rights abuses experienced during wartime.

Armed conflicts have occurred in “more than two-thirds of the world's biodiversity hotspots over the past six decades”¹² – having implications on local wildlife populations and ecosystem health.¹³ The significance of the military's environmental impacts is perhaps best highlighted by the fact that the US Department of Defence is the world's single largest institutional consumer of oil and, as a result, one of the world's top greenhouse gas emitters and contributors to climate change.¹⁴

Academic research on the impact of the military on the environment and animal habitats is discussed in detail in *Shooting Wildlife III* (2020).¹⁵

Environmental and climate impact

In an era of climate and ecological emergency declarations, everyone needs to do their part in reducing their climate and environmental impact – optics companies included.

The production of optics, even more so those with digital capabilities, has a large environmental and climate footprint. We might not think of them as being harmful to the environment, but optics are produced through complex supply chains and produce emissions and pollution at every stage of their lifecycle: resource extraction, multiple stages of manufacture, transportation, usage, and disposal.

According to the UN, the global tech industry was responsible for 2-3% of global carbon emissions in 2021.¹⁶ Glass,¹⁷ plastics,¹⁸ rechargeable batteries,¹⁹ minerals used for anti-reflective coatings²⁰ (such as magnesium fluoride, silicon dioxide, tantalum pentoxide and aluminium oxide),²¹ and nitrogen gas used to prevent fogging²² all involve the use of highly toxic materials and production processes, and can remain in the environment long after the end of a pair of binoculars' lifecycle.

11 www.ethicalconsumer.org/sites/default/files/media-file/2020-12/Shooting%20wildlife%20III%20Final%20December%202020.pdf

12 Gaynor, K. M., Fiorella, K. J., Gregory, G. H., Kurz, D. J., Seto, K. L., Withey, L. S. and Brashares, J. S. (2016). War and wildlife: linking armed conflict to conservation. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 14(10), 533-542. esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/fee.1433?saml_referrer

13 Daskin, J, Pringle and R. M. (2022). Ecological Effects of Warfare on Wildlife. *Animals in the International Law of Armed Conflict*, 41-53. www.researchgate.net/publication/364235921_Ecological_Effects_of_Warfare_on_Wildlife

14 direct.mit.edu/books/book/5413/The-Pentagon-Climate-Change-and-WarCharting-the

15 www.ethicalconsumer.org/sites/default/files/media-file/2020-12/Shooting%20wildlife%20III%20Final%20December%202020.pdf

16 www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/new-pact-tech-companies-take-climate-change

17 www.agc-glass.eu/en/sustainability/decarbonisation/environmental-impact

18 www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/plastics

19 www.datacenterknowledge.com/sustainability/the-environmental-impact-of-lithium-ion-batteries-how-green-are-they-really-

20 www.bestbinocularsreviews.com/blog/anti-reflection-lens-coatings-on-binoculars-04/

21 www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-wmge/products/etc-wmge-reports/environmental-aspects-related-to-the-use-of-critical-raw-materials-in-priority-sectors-and-value-chains

22 www.unep.org/facts-about-nitrogen-pollution

How the companies scored



Over the series of these reports the scope of our research has expanded. Shooting Wildlife I and II examined optics companies' connections to hunting and rated them according to the strength of those links. The third report in the series also examined companies' connections to the military and actions they were taking to reduce their climate and environmental impacts.

For this report we have looked more broadly at the conduct of optics companies and used Ethical Consumer's complete rating system, which has been developed over 30 years of researching and publishing consumer product guides for the Ethical Consumer magazine.

The system assesses companies against a range of categories, each scored out of 100. A final company score, or "Ethiscore", is also out of 100, and is calculated by averaging the points a company has scored across the different categories.


In this report we have scored companies against the following categories: Hunting, Arms and Military Links, Environmental Impact, Climate, Workers' Rights (in the supply chain), Tax Conduct, and Company Ethos.


The research in this report was based on publicly available information or on information the company has shared with us.





Leica Hunting blog, Pursuing the elusive chamois (24 May 2024)

ETHISCORE
The higher the ethiscore, the better the company.


GOOD 60+ 


AVERAGE 25-59 


POOR 0-24 

















































































































ETHISCORE (OUT OF 100)	CATEGORIES The more green bars the better  *						
	CLIMATE	WORKERS	TAX CONDUCT	COMPANY ETHOS	HUNTING	ARMS & MILITARY LINKS	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

* Each category is scored out of 100. The final Ethiscore is the average of the category scores.

 **Best Buys**

 **Recommended**

 **Brands to avoid**

BRAND	ETHISCORE (OUT OF 100)	CLIMATE	WORKERS	TAX CONDUCT	COMPANY ETHOS	HUNTING	ARMS & MILITARY LINKS	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	COMPANY GROUP
 Opticron	59								Opticron
 Viking	46								Viking Optical Ltd
 Visionary	46								Optical Hardware Ltd
 Pentax	44								Ricoh Co. Ltd.
 Nikon	41								Nikon Corporation
 Barr & Stroud	40								Goldfyre Limited
 Canon	39								Canon Inc
Carson	37								Carson Optical Inc
Celestron	36								Synta Technology Corporation
Fujinon	36								FUJIFILM Holdings Corporation
 Olympus	33								Japan Industrial Partners
Hawke	31								Rockbay Capital Ltd
Alpen	30								Guangzhou Jinghua Precision Co
Barska	30								Micro World Corp
Bresser	30								Guangzhou Jinghua Precision Co
Kahles	29								Swarovski Group
Swarovski	29								Swarovski Group
Vanguard	29								Export Dragon Limited
Leica	24								Socrates Privatstiftung
Eschenbach	23								Inspeccs Group PLC
Vortex	23								Sheltered Wings Inc
Leupold	19								Leupold & Stevens Inc
Kowa	17								Kowa Company Ltd
Zeiss	17								Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung
Minox	16								L & O Holding GmbH & Co KG
Kenko	13								Kenko Tokina Co. Ltd
Sightron	13								Kenko Tokina Co. Ltd
 Meopta	10								Carlyle Group
 Bushnell	4								Vista Outdoor Inc
 Tasco	4								Vista Outdoor Inc
 Burris	1								UPIFRA SA
 Steiner	1								UPIFRA SA



Best Buys are decided by the editorial team based on the research we have undertaken, the scoring system and the unique insight into the issues that our editorial team has.

All the research behind these ratings is available for subscribers to see on the score tables on www.ethicalconsumer.org
Definitions of all the categories are at www.ethicalconsumer.org/our-ethical-ratings

Hunting

This rating considered companies' links to hunting by looking at the products they sell, the way in which their products are marketed, and whether they have any other links to the hunting world.

Products

Companies that sold riflescopes and other hunting accessories as well as binoculars got the lowest marks for their product ranges.

Companies that marketed products such as binoculars, spotting scopes and night vision cameras for hunting also lost marks for their product ranges.

Companies got top marks in this section if they didn't sell any hunting products or accessories and did not market any of their products for hunting.

Marketing to hunters

We looked at how companies marketed their products. This included wording and imagery in their catalogues, on their websites, and on their social media pages.

Companies that explicitly marketed their products for trophy, driven, or big-game hunting scored zero for their marketing. Companies also lost marks if they marketed their products not specifically for sport hunting or used images that suggested hunting such as images of animals and people wearing hunting gear.

Companies got top marks in this section if their marketing in no way referenced hunting.

Other links to hunting

Some companies have links to hunting that go beyond their products and marketing, such as organising hunting events, belonging to organisations that promote hunting, and sponsoring individual hunters, known in the industry as "pro staff". Companies that were involved in any of these activities scored zero overall.

Hunting scores

The following brands scored zero overall: Alpen, Bresser, Burris, Bushnell, Hawke, Kahles, Leica, Leupold, Minox, Steiner, Swarovski, Tasco, Vortex, and Zeiss. All of these brands sold riflescopes and marketed their products to sports hunters. For example, the Bushnell 2023 Hunt Catalogue²³ contains several images of dead elk being held or carried by a hunter and one image showed a dead elk placed alongside a rifle bearing a Bushnell riflescope.

Social media

Many of the zeroing companies had social media accounts and it was mostly here, rather than on their websites, that they most actively promoted their products for sports and trophy hunting. For example, Burris' Instagram page contains frequent images of hunters posing with dead animals. One post from July 2024 contains a photo of a staff member with a dead bear.²⁴ The staff member was quoted as describing what he loved about Burris optics.

²³ www.bushnell.com/on/demandware.static/-/Library-Sites-HuntShootAccessoriesSharedLibrary/default/v0aebf1cdc4d26c2797d091a9ab8811d5bbb7a291/bushnell/catalogs/2023_Bushnell_Catalog_LR.pdf?version=1,675,966,188,000&srsitid=AfmBOopcuixG-ThWA64jO8GmAFXg3DPQwexk88zlAuNWSsYfD5wx2req
²⁴ www.instagram.com/p/C9VArwfz_65/?img_index=1

TV

All of the zero-scoring companies had other links to hunting such as sponsoring hunters and hunting TV programmes. For example, Alpen Optics sponsored “Just Kill’n Time TV”.²⁵ The Just Kill’n Time TV Instagram page described it as: “Home grown Virginia Boys showing the world real hunting weekly on Pursuit Channel.”²⁶ It also contains images of dead animals alongside Alpen equipment. One post, from March 2024, showed a dead turkey with a pair of Alpen binoculars and the caption: “It’s about time to break out the Alpen/Bresser binos and scout out these rascals for spring!”²⁷

Lobbying and promotion

Several companies had connections with pro-hunting organisations. Swarovski Optik sponsors the Washington DC-based Safari Club International, which describes itself as “the leader in defending the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide”.²⁸ It spent half a million dollars on government lobbying in 2024²⁹ and among its lobbying priorities were opposing bans on trophy hunting and on the use of lead ammunition on public land.³⁰ Bushnell, Vista, and Vortex were listed as “partners and sponsors” of the First Hunt Foundation which provides mentoring to new hunters.³¹ In 2022, the Foundation received a donation of \$120,000 from the National Rifle Association to develop online training which its mentors could use to recruit, train, and retain hunters.³²

One company, Blaser, owner of Minox, organised trophy-hunting holidays.³³

Other companies which scored below 50 in this category also had relatively strong links to hunting, but did not lose marks in all three sections. For example, Barska, which scored 20 for Hunting, sold riflescopes and marketed its products for sports hunters but did not have links to hunting organisations.

Five companies lost no marks in this category as they had no links to hunting: Canon, Olympus, Opticron, Viking, and Visionary.

Arms and military links

In this rating companies lost marks if they sold ammunition or marketed optical products for military use; sold products to the military; or had links to the gun rights movement, such as supporting the US National Rifle Association (NRA).

The following companies scored zero in this category: Burris and Steiner (both owned by UPIFRA SA), Bushnell and Tasco (both owned by Vista Outdoor Inc), and Leupold.

These five companies all marketed their optics products for military use. For example, Leupold sold a spotting scope which it described as “trusted by countless military sniper teams”.³⁴

These five companies also sold arms and optics products to the military. For example, Steiner was one of four companies making up Beretta Defense Technologies which provides arms, ammunition and optics to the military and law enforcement around the world.³⁵ Leupold, Tasco, and Bushnell products were all available for sale on the website of North East Technologies Ltd³⁶ which is a “registered supplier and approved vendor to the Israeli Ministry of Defense, the IDF, the Israeli Police, the Israeli Prison Authority and the emergency services of the Israeli Homeland Security Office.”³⁷

25 www.google.com/url?q=www.justkillntime.com/national-sponsors/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1726742761243146&usg=AOvVaw0MYTwpDktA2Cr6VeAkCKTc

26 www.instagram.com/jkttv/?hl=en

27 www.instagram.com/p/C4LKLXP77r/?hl=en

28 safariclub.org/about-us/

29 www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2024&id=D000000757

30 safariclub.org/federal-our-legislative-priorities/

31 firsthuntfoundation.org/partners-and-sponsors

32 firsthuntfoundation.org/events-and-news-detail/nra-hlf-donates-120000-to-first-hunt-foundation

33 blaser-safaris.com/

34 www.leupold.com/shop/spotting-scopes/series/mark-4

35 www.berettadefensetechnologies.com/about-beretta-defense-technologies/

36 www.ne-tech.co.il/optics/

37 www.ne-tech.co.il/about-us/

These five companies were all, either directly or via another brand in the company group, “Industry Allies” of the NRA gun rights movement.³⁸ The NRA described the Industry Ally programme as one “that provides exclusive NRA recognition and membership discounts to businesses that assist and support the NRA in membership sales. A strong membership base is our mission and the reason why we have had considerable progress in the defense of our Second Amendment rights.”³⁹

Vortex (owned by Sheltered Wings) supplies weapon-fire control optics to the US Army,⁴⁰ while Meopta supplies optics for soldiers, armoured vehicles and air and navy forces.⁴¹

No brand scored 100 but the following brands scored 90: Alpen, Barr & Stroud, Bresser, Carson, Kahles, Leica, Olympus, Vanguard, Viking, Visionary, Swarovski, and Zeiss. These brands didn’t market their products for military use or appear to sell their products to the military, but lost out on full marks because they lacked an explicit policy on these matters.

The only company to have any policy on arms was Nikon which stated that it verified that its export goods wouldn’t be used for the development of weapons.⁴² However, it only scored 60 as it had contracts to supply the US Department of Defense with optical and other equipment.⁴³

Environmental impact

This rating looked at what companies were doing to reduce their environmental impact. Companies could score points for reducing their impact during all stages of the product life cycle: sourcing of raw materials, production, and end of life.

Nearly two-thirds of companies scored zero as they were taking no meaningful action. Only Nikon was taking action in all three areas. Canon, Fujifilm, and Ricoh (Pentax) were also taking some action on production and product end-of-life.

All four of the big Japanese electronics companies had taken some steps towards circularity. For example, Canon and Pentax operated closed-loop recycling of office equipment such as toner cartridges and copiers.

The only small company to take action in more than one area was Opticron, which had a policy to minimise pollution and promote efficient and sustainable use of resources in its production. It had also taken steps to reduce the impact of its packaging. For a small company these were considered meaningful steps.

Climate

Our Climate rating looks for a credible, detailed discussion of how a company has made emissions cuts in its main areas of impact in the past and how it will make them in the future. We also look for annual reporting of CO2e emissions and targets in line with international agreements. Small companies with a turnover of under £50m are not expected to have full public reporting of emissions or future targets. Companies lose marks if they are involved in new fossil fuel projects.

The optics sector as a whole scored poorly in this category with two-thirds not meeting any of the above criteria. This is unsurprising as these companies are mostly not subject to consumer or media scrutiny for their practices. The companies that did score reasonably well were the Japanese technology giants Canon, Fujifilm, Nikon, and Ricoh (Pentax), which have been subject to that scrutiny for years.

Two companies scored zero as they were involved in fossil fuels. The Carlyle Group, owner of Meopta, is an investor in Colombian oil and gas explorer and producer SierraCol Energy.⁴⁴ Kowa sold carrier ships for the transportation of coal to thermal power plants.⁴⁵

38 nraindustryally.nra.org/become-an-ally/amazing-brands/

39 nraindustryally.nra.org/resources-support/frequently-asked-questions/

40 vortexoptics.com/featured-content

41 www.meopta.com/en/military-applications/

42 www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/governance/risk-management/enhancing-export/

43 www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=dc9203e71c8d81abb6c68fa54d8fb0da

44 sierracolenergy.com/our-leadership

45 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/business/trading/general_trading/ship.html

Workers' rights in the supply chain

This rating looks at companies' policies on workers' rights in their supply chains and awards points for good practices such as publishing supplier lists, taking action to provide living wages, manufacturing products in house, working with trade unions and good purchasing practices.

Overall, the sector scored very poorly in this category, with only six companies scoring above zero. Eight companies had no policy at all to protect the rights of workers in their supply chains.

Vanguard was the top-scorer in this category as it was a small company that manufactured all its products in house. We consider this good for workers' rights as it means the company has a direct employment relationship with the people making its products, rather than one of outsourcing which tends to create downward pressure on workers' rights.⁴⁶

Tax conduct

This rating looks at where companies are located and whether they have subsidiaries on our list of tax havens.⁴⁷ It also takes into account companies' tax policies and their disclosure of revenue/tax for each jurisdiction in which they operate. Ten companies scored 0 for tax conduct: Canon, Export Dragon Ltd (owner of Vanguard), Fujifilm, Inspecs (owner of Eschenbach), Kowa, Carlyle Group (owner of Meopta), Nikon, UPIFRA SA (owner of Burris and Steiner), Ricoh (owner of Pentax), and Zeiss.

The majority of these companies owned subsidiaries or were owned by companies based in tax havens. For example, Dorset-based company Vanguard World is owned by Export Dragon Ltd, which, according to Vanguard's 2022 annual report, is registered in the British Virgin Islands.

Company ethos

This rating looks at a company's overall ethos. Companies can score points for positive practices such as Living Wage certification, co-operative, mutual or not-for-profit company structure, or providing products that are a social or environmental alternative to the mainstream. They can also gain marks if they are not found to be involved in any particularly controversial sectors (listed below).

They can lose marks for having director pay of over £1m or not disclosing director pay, being involved in controversial sectors such as mining, fossil fuels, nuclear power, arms and military supply, and being members of political lobby groups.

No company had any of the positive practices listed above. As a result, no company scored more than 20/100 and 14 companies scored zero. Many of the large companies lost marks for director pay as the majority did not disclose it. Companies that scored 20 did so as they weren't involved in any controversial sectors.

⁴⁶ www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/confronting-root-caus-7/

⁴⁷ We use the list compiled by the Fair Tax Foundation: fairtaxmark.net/wp-content/uploads/Tax-Haven-briefing.pdf

Best Buys, recommended brands, and brands to avoid



What to buy



What to look for when buying binoculars:

- **No binoculars.** If you've already got a good pair that you use for leisure, don't be tempted by the new models. Save your money and reduce your impact.
- **Secondhand.** If you do have to buy, the best way to avoid adding to your environmental and climate impact is to buy secondhand. Good quality binoculars tend to be durable and the technology doesn't change quickly so buying a used pair can be just as good as buying new.
- **Brands taking action to reduce their climate and environmental impact.** This isn't common in the optics sector but look for companies which are at least transparent about their impact.

Best Buys

There are several Best Buys in this guide:

Opticron, Viking, and Visionary have no links to hunting and get top marks for tax conduct.

Opticron was taking steps to reduce its climate and environmental impact, and Visionary and Viking do not have any arms or military links.

Recommended buys

The following brands are recommended:

Olympus scores poorly in most areas but has no links to hunting or to arms and the military.

Canon has no links to hunting but scored zero for tax conduct.

Barr & Stroud, Nikon, and Pentax have relatively weak links to hunting, and Nikon and Pentax had taken some steps to reduce their climate and environmental impact.

None of the brands above sell riflescopes.

What not to buy



What to avoid when buying binoculars:

- **Brands with strong links to hunting.** Avoid companies that sell hunting equipment, market optics to hunters, and sponsor hunters or hunting organisations.
- **Brands with arms and military supply.** Avoid brands that supply ammunition, arms, or optical equipment for tactical military use.
- **Likely tax avoiders.** Avoid companies associated with likely tax avoidance practices through subsidiaries in tax havens. Corporate tax avoidance takes much-needed revenue away from governments and public services.

Companies to avoid

Burris, Steiner, Bushnell, Tasco, and Meopta have very strong links to hunting, including marketing their products to trophy hunters.

Each of these companies received an overall Ethiscore of only 10 or below, reflecting their poor ratings across all the categories.

Company profiles



Alpen Optics and Bresser

(Guangzhou Jinghua Precision Optics)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
30	10	0	100	10	0	90	0

Summary

Guangzhou Jinghua Precision Optics' US website www.alpenoptics.com (formerly www.bresserusa.com) had a far greater focus on hunting than the UK website (www.bresseruk.com) and its German website (www.bresser.de). It did not mention trophy hunting in the text on its websites as it had done in the past, but the profiles of its pro staff still featured pictures of recently killed trophies such as deer heads and turkey tail fans. It markets its Kodiak riflescopes for use in big-game and varmint hunting.

The UK website continued to market its spotting scopes to hunters. There were press releases on the UK website from 2022 and 2023 promoting new products and events to hunters.

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Bresser GmbH was founded by Josef Bresser in Germany in 1957 and started out as an importer and distributor of binoculars. Josef's son, Rolf Bresser, has shared ownership of the business since 2009 with the Chinese optics company Jinghua Optical & Electronics Co Ltd (JOC, also known as Guangzhou Jinghua Precision Optics Co) and Helmut Ebbert (Bresser's managing partner). Details of ownership percentages could not be found but according to corporate database D&B Hoovers, JOC appears to be the company's ultimate owner.

Another JOC subsidiary, Explore Scientific, has owned the Alpen Optics brand since 2018. The Shooting Wildlife II (2018) report found that Alpen Optics had strong connections to hunting and focused on reaching new markets, including youth hunters. The Explore Scientific website sold Bresser and Alpen Optics products.

JOC had a turnover of £143m.⁴⁸ Of this, £67m came from Bresser GmbH and £7.5m from Explore Scientific.

Previously, Bresser had sales websites in the USA, Germany and the UK. In 2024 the German and UK Bresser sites were still operating but the USA site had become www.alpenoptics.com. It sold both Bresser and Alpen Optics products and National Geographic-branded binoculars, which Bresser had a licence to make.

⁴⁸ D&B Hoovers, viewed in July 2024

Hunting

Hunting accessories

The homepage of the USA website, www.alpenoptics.com, contains the heading: “PREMIUM OPTICS BY HUNTERS FOR HUNTERS”, which was followed by the text: “State-of-the-art technology, chic design and super-functional - this is how the high-end products from ALPEN impress hunting enthusiasts with the highest demands. As practice-oriented hunters and nature observers, we know: You have to be able to rely 100% on your equipment when stalking, night hunting and the like.”

The home page contains links to sections of the website where its riflescopes, binoculars, spottings scopes and thermal vision equipment were listed. The link to the binoculars page was accompanied by an image of a man with a dog looking through binoculars and carrying a shotgun. The link to the thermal vision section was accompanied by a thermal image of a boar.

Other products sold included spotting scopes, riflescopes, night vision devices, rangefinders, magnifiers, telescopes and other outdoor products. Product text often targeted hunters:



Facebook @AlpenBresser, “When only the best will do in #africahunting #discoverthedifference #continuingthelegacy” (28 May 2024)

“Kodiak riflescopes cover a wide variety of shooting and hunting situations, including big game, varmint hunting, shotgun and slug hunting and target shooting.”⁴⁹

“Whether you are hunting predators in no-light situations or scouting for targets in dense environments thick with foliage, Alpen’s new thermal monoculars can provide an optical edge by allowing you to ‘see’ the unseeable.”⁵⁰

“Designed for fast target acquisition, a Bresser Red Dot sight can help hunters and competitive shooters respond quickly and accurately when the next shot has to count.”⁵¹

The website carried some pictures of game animals, for example, the Kodiak riflescopes page featured a picture of a bear.⁵² The Apex XP series riflescopes page carried a picture of an elk in crosshairs. The 2024 Bresser/Vixen product catalogue contains pictures of elk and bison next to riflescopes.⁵³

⁴⁹ alpenoptics.com/collections/alpen-kodiak-riflescopes

⁵⁰ alpenoptics.com/collections/alpen-thermal-imaging#

⁵¹ alpenoptics.com/collections/red-dots

⁵² alpenoptics.com/collections/alpen-kodiak-riflescopes

⁵³ cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0525/5249/files/BresserVixenCatalog_2024_v1-HRprint.pdf?v=1703797284, pages 13 and 15,

The Shooting Wildlife III (2020) report found that Bresser USA's 2020 Sport Optics Catalogue pictured a male and female deer and a bighorn sheep. The 2024 Alpen catalogue did not contain any images of animals.⁵⁴

The Alpen/Bresser Facebook page did not contain as many images of trophy animals as it did in 2020 when it hosted a monthly game camera photo competition. Its main focus was its products and sales fairs it was attending. However, some images of dead animals were found in posts from pro staff or other professional hunters. For example, a post from 28th May 2024 showed a dead antelope posed as though it was looking through Alpen binoculars. The image came from Ken Moody Safaris. A post from 14th May 2024, showed Rick White, one of Alpen Optics' pro staffers, with a dead turkey.

On the German website, www.bresser.de, products were listed under the following categories: astronomy, microscopy, sport optics, photo studio, weather & time, PULSAR thermal and night vision equipment, electronics, junior and refurbished. In the sport optics section of the website a number of Hunting accessories were sold: spotting scopes, monoculars, night vision equipment, binoculars, cameras, rangefinders and tripods. In 2020, the website had sold riflescopes and while there was still a tab for riflescopes, there were none for sale.⁵⁵ No products could be found that mentioned hunting other than Bresser's Hunter range of binoculars.

The UK Bresser website listed products under a wide range of uses (astronomy, photography, etc) and sold binoculars, monoculars, optical accessories, night vision equipment and cameras. It did not sell riflescopes. Like the German site, it sold the Hunter range of binoculars.

In 2020 it was found to sell the Pirsch spotting scopes range, which were described as "especially for the price-conscious observer and hunter." In 2024, two Pirsch spotting scopes were still described in this way⁵⁶ but one stated only "The BRESSER Pirsch Gen II spotting scopes are primarily intended for nature observers."⁵⁷ Other products were found which mentioned hunting in their descriptions; for example, the Bresser Range Pro 1300 Laser Rangefinder was described as a "Rangefinder for golf, hunting, archery and more."⁵⁸ Some thermal imaging cameras⁵⁹ and binoculars⁶⁰ were also described as for hunting use.

A new development in 2024 was the presence of several recent press releases referencing hunting on the UK Bresser website. These suggested that it had tilted its marketing towards hunters; for example, one dated 31st March 2022 stated: "ALPEN goes Europe - with top optics for hunting enthusiasts...We are pleased to be able to offer all hunters and outdoor enthusiasts the high-end optics from ALPEN now also in Europe."⁶¹ Another, dated 8th October 2023, advertised a hunting fair at "Grünau - where hunting is at home."⁶² Two further press releases from 2023 marketed new products to hunters. The first was a rangefinder⁶³ and the second was the Alpen Optics App, which the press release described as "taking a significant step to simplify the lives of hunters."⁶⁴

Other links to hunting

The Alpen Optics website had a pro-staff section with the profiles of sixteen Bresser/Alpen pro-staff team members. These profiles were previously on the www.bresserusa.com website. The page described them as "seasoned hunters and outdoor enthusiasts who have decades of in-the-field experience" and who were "ready to share their knowledge of the outdoors as well as specific Bresser/Alpen products on social media, at shows and through direct interactions." More than half of the profile pictures showed a pro-staffer with a recently killed trophy such as a deer head or turkey tail fans.⁶⁵

The Alpen Optics website featured a sponsors page. This listed producers of hunting shows that the company appeared to sponsor although the exact relationship was not made explicit. These were: Roger Raglin Outdoors, Outdoor America, and Wild Memories.

It described Roger Raglin as "a Hall of Fame Outdoorsman who is considered one of the true legends and icons in the outdoor industry. Affectionately known as 'America's Favorite Whitetail Deer Hunter', Roger's 'Wall of

54 cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0525/5249/files/AlpenCatalog_2024_email_v2.pdf?v=1708445394

55 www.bresser.de/en/Sport-Optics/Riflescopes/

56 www.bresseruk.com/BRESSER-Pirsch-25-75x100-450-Spotting-Scope/4322000

57 www.bresseruk.com/BRESSER-Pirsch-25-75x100-Spotting-Scope-Gen.-II-with-DeLuxe-10-1-Focus/4322002

58 www.bresseruk.com/BRESSER-Range-Pro-1300-Laser-Rangefinder/4025821

59 www.bresseruk.com/BRESSER-TNS3-Wi-Fi-thermal-imaging-camera/9630903

60

61 www.bresseruk.com/aktuelles/alpen-goes-europe-with-top-optics-for-hunting-enthusiasts

62 www.bresseruk.com/aktuelles/gruenau-where-hunting-is-at-home

63 www.bresseruk.com/aktuelles/alpen-optics-launches-the-new-crestone-xp-7x24-oled-rangefinder

64 www.bresseruk.com/aktuelles/smart-addition-to-thermal-vision-devices-introducing-the-brand-new-alpen-optics-app

65 alpenoptics.com/pages/prostaff-directory

Whitetails' is the greatest single collection of trophy bucks taken by an individual hunter in the country."⁶⁶ Roger Raglin had a hunting channel which advertised programmes with names such as "The Grand Slam of Deer" and "Shoot the One You Want".⁶⁷

The sponsors web page also contains a link to the section of the Outdoor America website which listed its programmes about hunting. The page contains still images from its programmes showing people holding dead pheasants, turkeys, and deer.⁶⁸

The page also contains an embedded YouTube video advertising Wild Memories TV. The video carried the Alpen Optics logo and showed a hunter using Alpen Optics products and looking through a riflescope. This was edited together with footage of a deer in the wild.⁶⁹

Although not mentioned on the Alpen Optics sponsors web page, it was also found to be a sponsor of Just Kill'n Time TV,⁷⁰ which was described by one of its outlets as follows: "Some things such as Hunting should be simple and straight forward. Join the Buck and Max each week as they prove to the entire world hunting is the original American high."⁷¹ The Just Kill'n Time TV Instagram page⁷² contains images of dead animals alongside Alpen equipment. One post dated 6th March 2024 showed a dead turkey with a pair of Alpen binoculars and the caption: "It's about time to break out the Alpen / Bresser binos and scout out these rascals for spring!"⁷³

The company had previously sponsored the Bighorn Outdoors channel but this appeared no longer to exist.

Arms and military links

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration

⁶⁶ alpenoptics.com/pages/sponsors

⁶⁷ www.rogerraglin.com/Articles.asp?ID=258

⁶⁸ www.outdooramerica.com/hunting/

⁶⁹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu_hNvkXths&t=16s

⁷⁰ www.justkillintime.com/national-sponsors/

⁷¹ www.carbontv.com/shows/just-killn-time/

⁷² www.instagram.com/jkttv/?hl=en

⁷³ www.instagram.com/p/C4LKLPXp77r/?hl=en

Barr & Stroud

(Optical Vision Ltd, Goldfyre Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
40	10	0	100	20	60	90	0

Summary

On the Optical Vision website and in its catalogue, one pair of binoculars was marketed as suitable for hunting. The Optical Vision catalogue and the Barr & Stroud website quoted or linked to reviews of their binoculars which mentioned they could be used for hunting. Otherwise, no links to hunting were found. The Shooting Wildlife I report (2016) found that Optical Vision distributed Acuter optics, and that Acuter marketed its products to hunters on its own website: acuteroptics.com. The 2018 report found that this website no longer existed.

Optical Vision does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggests it has links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. Optical Vision's ultimate parent company Goldfyre had no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Barr & Stroud Ltd was founded in Glasgow in 1913, developing rangefinders for the British Navy. Their first pair of binoculars was produced in 1919 and came to be used "almost universally in the Royal Navy during World War II." The original optics business was purchased by the French Thales Group in 2000 and renamed Thales Optronics Ltd a year later. The Barr & Stroud name was purchased by another company, Optical Distribution Services Ltd, who re-registered as Barr & Stroud Ltd in 2008.

Optical Vision distributes Barr & Stroud branded optics in the UK. Optical Vision distributes telescopes, microscopes and optics accessories under the following brands: Barr & Stroud, Sky-watcher, Helios, Acuter, Zenith and TAL.⁷⁴ The company is owned by Goldfyre Ltd, whose registered address is care of a business advisory and accountancy firm.⁷⁵ According to the company's 2022 annual report, Optical Vision Ltd had a turnover of £10.7m in 2022. Goldfyre Ltd had a turnover of £8.2m in 2023.⁷⁶

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Neither the website of Optical Vision nor Barr & Stroud had pages dedicated to hunting accessories. Products were listed under product type and included binoculars, spotting scopes, monoculars, astronomical telescopes, astronomical accessories, brass telescopes, photo-video tripods, and microscopes and meters. One pair of binoculars was marketed as "Great for Birdwatching, Hunting and General Observing."⁷⁷

In the catalogue, the profile of another pair of binoculars quoted a review from www.bestbinocularsreviews.com which mentioned that they could be used for hunting.⁷⁸ On the Barr & Stroud website, the listings for two pairs of binoculars linked to reviews by Dr Neil English⁷⁹ which mentioned they could be used for hunting.⁸⁰ The review for the Barr & Stroud Series 5, 8x42 Binocular stated: "I would highly recommend this binocular to

⁷⁴ www.opticalvision.co.uk/about_ovl.html

⁷⁵ find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/05038285

⁷⁶ D&B Hoovers, viewed in October 2024

⁷⁷ www.opticalvision.co.uk/binoculars-helios-roof_prism_binoculars/30220.html

⁷⁸ www.opticalvision.co.uk/user/Optical-Vision-Catalogue-2020.pdf p.67.

⁷⁹ neilenglish.net/

⁸⁰ [www.barrandstroud.com/user/Series%205%208x42%20\(non-ED\).pdf](http://www.barrandstroud.com/user/Series%205%208x42%20(non-ED).pdf) and www.barrandstroud.com/user/Barr%205E0%20Stroud%20Series%208%208x42%20Review.pdf

birders, hunters and other nature enthusiasts who want maximum bang for the buck.”⁸¹

No images of game animals could be found. Products were primarily targeted at birdwatchers and nature observers. Some Acuter spotting scopes were also said to be good for “Target Shooting and even Astronomy.”⁸²

Although Optical Vision Ltd still distributed Acuter Optics, Acuter no longer appeared to have links to sport hunting. The Shooting Wildlife II (2016) report noted that Acuter marketed its products to hunters on its own website, acuteroptics.com. When conducting research for this report the website no longer existed, and no new Acuter Optics website was found.

Arms and military links

The company does not have a policy against supply to the military, but no links were found with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

⁸¹ [www.barrandstroud.com/user/Series%205%208%20x%2042%20\(non-ED\).pdf](http://www.barrandstroud.com/user/Series%205%208%20x%2042%20(non-ED).pdf)

⁸² www.opticalvision.co.uk/spotting_scopes_and_monoculars-acuter-spotting_scopes/acuter_grandvista_ds100a_22-67x100_dual-speed_waterproof_spotting_scope.html

Barska

(Micro World Corp)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
30	10	0	100	20	20	60	0

Summary

Barska sold riflescopes and binoculars on its website which were marketed as suitable for hunting, including big-game hunting. No images of trophy animals were found on the company's website but there were pictures of elk in the 2024 product catalogue. The technical brochure for one of its scopes contains an image of a wolf in crosshairs.

While earlier Shooting Wildlife reports found that Barska's social media profiles featured pictures of dead animals reposted from customers, the main focus now was on rifles, other optical equipment and safes. No pictures of animals appeared to have been posted since 2020, although captions and hashtags continued to reference hunting.

Barska markets its optics for tactical use. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Although company accounts could not be found, other sources suggest that Micro World Corp is the owner of the Barska brand. The company had an estimated annual turnover of £3.3m.⁸³

Founded in 1994, Barska is based in South California. Besides optical equipment such as shooting optics, microscopes and magnifiers, Barska's products included biometric safes, firearm safes, and medicine cabinets. Barska also sold products under other brand names, including Loaded Gear (tactical vests, gear bags and pouches, and rifle cases), Winbest (metal detectors), Aus Vio (silk bedding) and Chéri Bliss (jewellery cases).

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Barska's website, www.barska.com, listed products by type rather than activity. Among the products were several types of Hunting accessories: riflescopes and spotting scopes, including mounts and tripods; laser and night vision equipment; and cases and bags for rifles, scopes and other shooting gear. The online store also sold binoculars and monoculars. These products, including the binoculars and monoculars, were marketed to hunters throughout the website⁸⁴ and the company's 2024 product catalogue.⁸⁵

The catalogue referred to different types of hunting, stating: "From the serious tactical and long-range shooter to the varmint hunter or big-game hunter and recreational target shooter, there's a BARSKA riflescope that's a perfect fit for you and your firearms."⁸⁶

The company continued to sell its Huntmaster and Huntmaster Pro riflescope ranges, stating in their product descriptions that they were "great for general purpose hunting as well as target shooting and plinking."⁸⁷ Other riflescopes mentioned their suitability for big-game hunting: "Black matte finish, 5/8" extra high rings and

⁸³ D&B Hoovers

⁸⁴ shop.barska.com/collections/binoculars?ctId=w9aaoc1718621221

⁸⁵ www.barska.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024_Catalog_LR.pdf

⁸⁶ www.barska.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024_Catalog_LR.pdf

⁸⁷ shop.barska.com/collections/rifle-scopes/products/3-12x50mm-ir-huntmaster-pro-rifle-scope-by-barska?_pos=6&_fid=3f21bb934&_ss=c

scope caps complete this big game and general hunting riflescope.”⁸⁸

While no images of dead or live game animals were found on the Barska website, the 2024 catalogue contains three pictures of elk with large antlers. The technical brochure for one of its spotting scopes contains an image of a wolf in crosshairs.⁸⁹

Other links to hunting

In 2016 and 2017 Barska had reposted images of a dead coyote and hogs on its Facebook page. The images had originally been posted by customers. No images of animals had been posted since 2018 and photos on Facebook and Instagram now mostly featured guns and binoculars, but captions and hashtags still referenced hunting.

Barska had not tweeted since March 2022. When viewed in 2016, Barska’s X (then Twitter) account contained several images of dead trophy animals including dead deer and male sheep. One post, which was retweeted by Barska, contained an image of a young girl holding a dead deer’s antlers and the statement: “we need more kids holding deer and less game controllers”. Until March 2022 its tweets continued to mention varmint hunting and hunting in general.

In a Facebook post dated 23 January 2024 the company promoted its presence at Shot Show 2024. The Shot Show website stated: “SHOT Show is all about the businesses of the shooting sports, hunting, law enforcement, and armed forces industries.” Shot Show is organised by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) which, according to its website: “leads the way in advocating for the industry and its business and jobs, keeping guns out of the wrong hands, encouraging enjoyment of recreational shooting and hunting and helping people better understand the industry’s lawful products.”

The NSSF is a membership organisation but its full list of members was not publicly available so it wasn’t possible to check whether Barska was a member.

Arms and military links

No evidence was found suggesting that the company sold its products to the military; however, it sold riflescopes that could be filtered for “tactical use”. Some of these had the words “SWAT” and “Sniper” in the names.⁹⁰ The company also sold tactical belts and vests under its Loaded Gear brand.⁹¹

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

⁸⁸ shop.barska.com/products/3-12x56mm-ir-euro-30-pro-rifle-scope-by-barska

⁸⁹ www.barska.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/AD11430_mil_cross_BC156-min.pdf

⁹⁰ shop.barska.com/collections/rifle-scopes?filter.v.m.custom.binocularuses=Tactical

⁹¹ shop.barska.com/collections/all?filter.p.vendor=Loaded+Gear

Burris and Steiner

(Beretta Holding SA, UPIFRA SA)

Ethicscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impacty
1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0

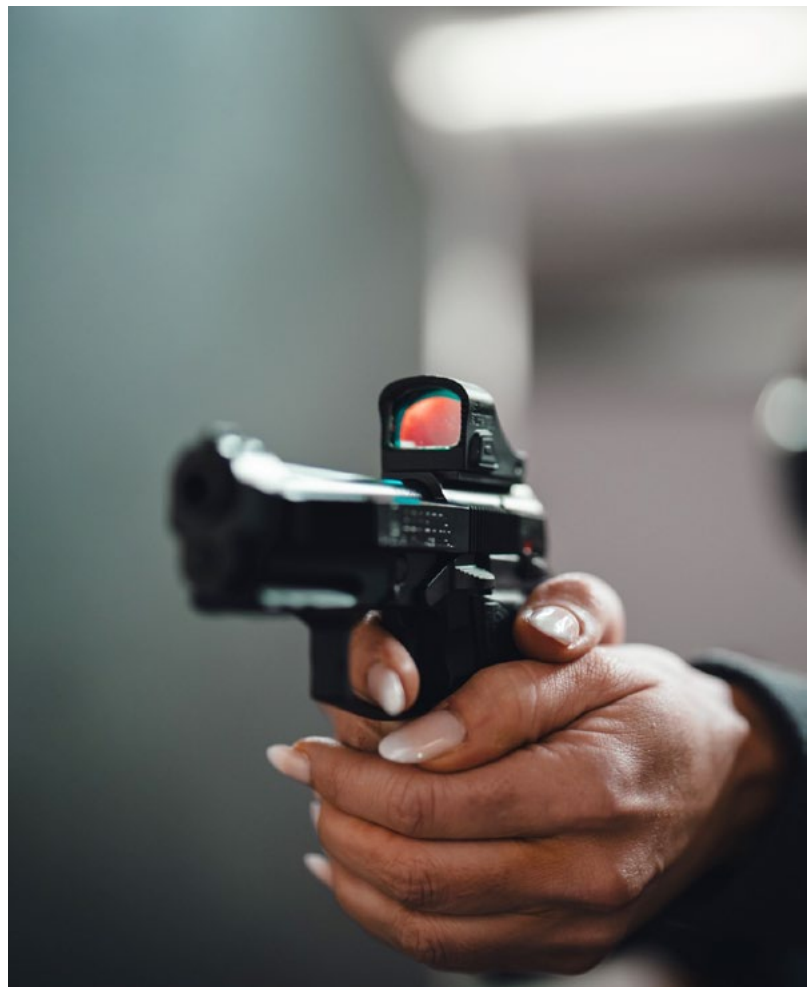
Summary

The Burris and Steiner brands, owned by Beretta Holding, continue to have strong links to hunting and the military, with images and videos referencing trophy hunting and arms throughout their websites. On the Beretta website the company describes itself as “a staple within the hunting, sporting, and defense community for centuries.” Beretta produces many types of guns, from hand weapons to machine guns, and has long-standing links to the military and the gun rights movement. Steiner Optics USA has previously published images containing imagery linked to militia and white supremacy.⁹²

The company supplies optics to the military and has links to the US gun rights movement, although it was less vocal about these than it had been during research for our 2020 report. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers’ rights in the supply chain. UPIFRA SA, the ultimate holding company behind Beretta Holding and brands Burris and Steiner, is registered in Luxembourg – a jurisdiction on Ethical Consumer’s tax havens list. It was considered likely that this corporate structure was being used to facilitate tax avoidance.

Background

Beretta Holding SA owns a number of brands, including Benelli, Burris, Franchi, SAKO, Steiner, Stoeger, Tikka, and Uberti.⁹³ The Steiner optics brand was created in Germany in 1947, while Burris was founded in 1971. Both Beretta Holding and its ultimate holding company, UPIFRA SA are registered in Luxembourg. The majority of its sales come from North America, followed by Italy, the rest of Europe, and then its sales to many other countries globally.⁹⁴ Beretta owns brands that specialise in light arms for hunting, sporting and personal defence, with hunting and defense sections on its website. Its latest reported annual turnover on its website was €250.5m (£209m) in 2021.



Burris, FastFire C Red Dot Reflex Sight (www.cabelas.com)

⁹² www.facebook.com/SteinerOpticsUSA/photos/a.378984313660/10157871462663661/

⁹³ berettaholding.com/en/ionic-brands/

⁹⁴ www.beretta.com/en-gb/company/fabbrica-d-armi-pietro-beretta/company

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Its products are primarily marketed at hunters, marine and military personnel, and wildlife watchers. Both the Burris and Steiner brands sold riflescopes, which were heavily marketed for sport hunting as well as the use of trophy hunting imagery. The Burris riflescope product range explicitly included “hunting riflescopes”⁹⁵ while Steiner optics riflescopes were marketed with: “Dominate your hunts with an optic you can trust.”⁹⁶

Other links to hunting

The Burris Instagram page featured an image of a man sitting next to a dead bear, captioned: “We always love taking a moment to put the spotlight on #TeamBurris members who outside of their hard work putting together our optics, are often avid hunters, outdoorsmen and women.”⁹⁷ It also used an image of one of its riflescopes attached to a rifle in the foreground of a dead bear on the ground next to the gun.⁹⁸ Another of its images was of a man carrying a rifle with the head of a dead moose on his shoulders.⁹⁹ It also appeared to be affiliated with a trophy hunter called Ryan Bassham, who had images on the Steiner Optics Instagram of himself standing over his trophy hunts in Africa.¹⁰⁰

Beretta Holding and its brands had links with large hunting organisations. Beretta USA had donated products to Safari Club International Auctions, including in 2024 to the SCI Convention: “The world’s largest hunting



Instagram @burrisoptics, “Backcountry hunting is equal parts physically and mentally challenging and that is so rewarding, even if you don’t bring home an animal” (12 July 2024)

auction, the SCI Convention features an incredible range of outstanding auction items. Day and night, the auctioneer gavel keeps falling on dream hunts and hunter-preferred items from around the world.”¹⁰¹ Beretta’s brands were promoted on the Safari Club website¹⁰² including in SCI blogs that had images of trophy hunting.¹⁰³ Beretta was also found to have sponsored the monocular hunting video awards in 2022,¹⁰⁴ and was listed as a bronze partner on the congressional sportsmen foundation website.¹⁰⁵

Arms and military links

Beretta started producing musket barrels in fifteenth-century Italy and is said to be one of if not the oldest firearms manufacturer in the world.¹⁰⁶ Beretta Defense Technologies is the “strategic alliance” of four Beretta Holding companies – Beretta, Benelli, Sako, and Steiner – that supply products and services to military and law enforcement around the world.¹⁰⁷ It states that it provides “services, firearms, ammunition, optics and electro-optics” to these groups. Its subsidiary Sako is described on Beretta’s website as a “world leading manufacturer of modern sniper rifles” and Steiner as “the worldwide reference for military binoculars.” In 2022 Beretta also acquired RUAG Ammotec, a Swiss ammunition manufacturer, and changed the brand’s name to Ammolux.¹⁰⁸ Steiner in particular was marketed for the military

95 www.burrisoptics.com/

96 www.steiner-optics.com/

97 www.instagram.com/p/C9VArwfz_65/?img_index=1

98 www.instagram.com/p/C2SYCM6MvNa/

99 www.instagram.com/p/C-LbP_RP4ZC/

100 www.instagram.com/p/C6rJlbtJX59/?img_index=1

101 auction.safariclub.org/auctionlist.aspx?dv=2

102 safariclub.org/look-out-the-latest-binocs-rifles-scopes-and-range-finders

103 safariclub.org/hunting-the-chinook-winds/

104 www.all4shooters.com/en/hunting/passion/beretta-the-2022-edition-of-the-monocular-hunting-video-awards/

105 congressionalsportsmen.org/get-involved/partners/

106 www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/fabbrica-d-armi-pietro-beretta-s-p-a-history/

107 www.berettadefensetechnologies.com/about-us/

108 www.edmagazine.eu/beretta-holding-adds-ammunition-to-arms-and-optics-the-ceo-view

and police and sells “military riflescopes”¹⁰⁹ while Burris’ range includes “tactical riflescopes”.¹¹⁰

Beretta was one of the few companies covered in this report that had exhibition stands in 2024 with the National Rifle Association.¹¹¹

Compared to our 2020 report Steiner Optics USA had become slightly less open about advocating for gun rights on its social media. In 2020 its Facebook page (linked from the www.steiner-optics.com website) and Instagram profile contain many posts with hashtags such as #2a, #2amendment, #gunporn, #gunsofinstagram and #igmilitia. On the 2020 US election day, Steiner Optics USA urged visitors of its Facebook and Instagram profiles to “vote – vote now... those wishing to destroy the 2nd amendment are coming for our rights. Don’t waste that precious right to vote that so many have fought and died to preserve.”¹¹² Some of its Facebook posts had since been deleted. In 2020 some of Steiner’s social media content also contains militant dog-whistle imagery, such as men wearing military attire with prominently placed patches of the Texan lone star flag¹¹³ and the Punisher’s skull,¹¹⁴ the latter having been adopted as a symbol of force by the police, military personnel and white supremacists.¹¹⁵

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

UPIFRA SA, the ultimate holding company behind Beretta Holding and brands Burris and Steiner, was registered in Luxembourg, a jurisdiction on Ethical Consumer’s tax havens list.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

¹⁰⁹ www.steiner-optics.com/military-riflescopes

¹¹⁰ www.burrisoptics.com/long-range-tactical

¹¹¹ nraam2024.mapyourshow.com/8_0/explore/exhibitor-gallery.cfm?featured=false, viewed in July 2024

¹¹² www.instagram.com/p/CHJPPW9Feet/

¹¹³ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddtmA3H7qaE

¹¹⁴ www.facebook.com/SteinerOpticsUSA/photos/a.378984313660/10157871462663661/

¹¹⁵ www.forbes.com/sites/lisettevoytko/2020/06/11/the-creator-of-the-punisher-wants-to-reclaim-the-iconic-skull-from-police-and-fringe-admirers/?sh=7b42ff1cb434

Bushnell and Tasco

(Revelyst, Vista Outdoor Inc.)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
4	10	0	20	0	0	0	0

Summary

In its 2023 ESG report Vista Outdoor Inc, owner of the Bushnell and Tasco brands, stated that it had distributed \$85,000 from its political action committee to five organisations. Among the five were three organisations which promoted hunting and fishing: the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation, the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, and the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports.¹¹⁶ Since the last Shooting Wildlife report (2020), the company has launched the Vista Outdoor Foundation¹¹⁷ which has given grants to a range of organisations including one which promotes hunting to young people.¹¹⁸

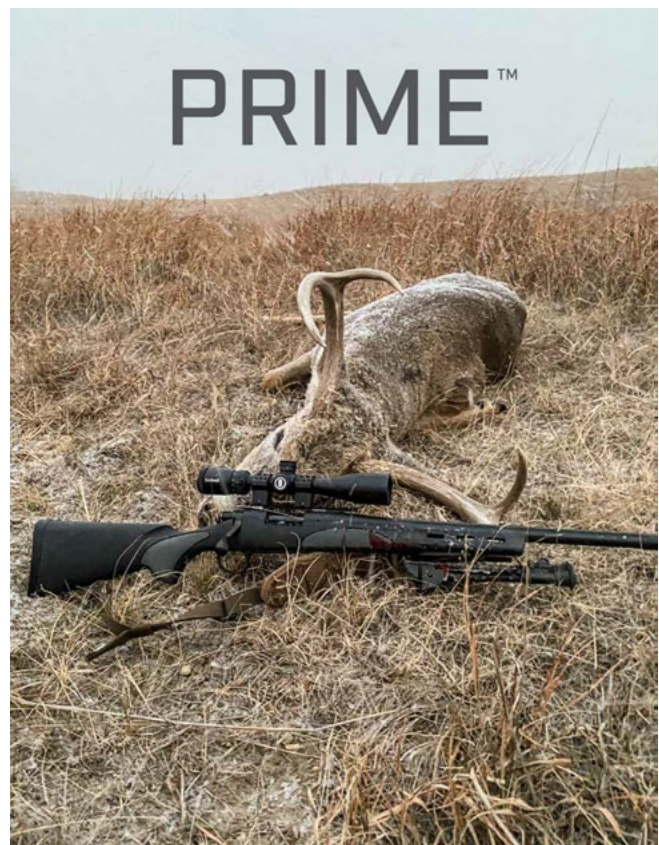
On the Bushnell and Tasco websites, products can be filtered for hunting. The Bushnell website continues to reference trophy hunting, and contains several images of live and dead animals. The 2023 Bushnell Hunt Catalogue contains similar images. Its Facebook and Instagram pages featured pictures of dead trophy animals, such as deer, elk and wolf.

In 2023, the company split its brands into an outdoor products business, Revelyst, and a sporting products business named Kinetic, which includes its ammunition brands. In July 2024, Vista Outdoor was in the process of negotiating the sale of Kinetic. It sells ammunition to the military and does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has subsidiaries in tax havens which have the potential to be used for tax avoidance. Its CEO was paid a salary of £4.2m in 2023.

Background

Bushnell is owned by Vista Outdoor Inc, a company founded in 2015 that designs, manufactures and sells sporting and outdoor products. Its products include sporting ammunition and shooting sport optics, as well as outdoor products such as hydration systems, golf rangefinders, cycling accessories and outdoor cooking equipment. It states that its customer base ranges from outdoor enthusiasts and hunters to law enforcement and military professionals.

The company's turnover was \$3.1bn (£2.4bn) in 2023.¹¹⁹ It owns 41 brands including Bushnell, Butler Creek, CamelBak, Hoppe's, Simms, Tasco, Primos Hunting, Federal Premium Ammunition and Night Optics. In May 2022, Vista Outdoor announced that it would separate its outdoor and sporting products businesses. The



Bushnell 2023 Product Catalogue

¹¹⁶ vistaoutdoor.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/23_ESGReport_Final-sm.pdf

¹¹⁷ vistaoutdoor.com/vista-outdoor-foundation-announces-2021-grant-partners/

¹¹⁸ vistaoutdoor.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2023-VOF-Recap-and-Grantee-Showcase_vF.pdf

¹¹⁹ s29.q4cdn.com/177147254/files/doc_financials/2023/ar/vista-outdoor-fy23-annual-report.pdf

outdoor products business, which includes Bushnell and Tasco, was renamed Revelyst in 2023¹²⁰ and the sporting products business, which includes ammunition brands, was renamed Kinetic.¹²¹ In July 2024, Vista Outdoor was in the process of negotiating the sale of Kinetic but it had not yet been finalised.¹²²

Hunting

Hunting accessories

The Bushnell and Tasco websites list their products by type. These include binoculars, riflescopes, range finders, red dots, spotting scopes, trail cameras and night vision technology. After selecting a product type on the Bushnell website, products can be filtered by use, one of which is hunting. Tasco products can be filtered by activities, one of which is hunting.

Bushnell has a brand of binoculars and riflescopes called Trophy. Throughout the website, products are accompanied by descriptive text, as well as technical information, which repeatedly references hunting, including trophy hunting:

“For serious hunters who won’t settle for anything less than the brightest images.”¹²³

“Count on us to keep you in the hunt.”¹²⁴

“This is the ultimate portable, all-weather spotting scope for trophy hunting and birding.”¹²⁵

“Buying hunting gear can be intimidating. We’ve chosen our favorite small game hunting products to make it easier to buy for yourself or the hunter in your life.”¹²⁶

One product has a tie-in with the onX hunting app: “Capturing and predicting Whitetail movements to create better hunts just got easier with Bushnell + onX. Simply add your Bushnell cellular trail cams to your onX hunt account, and you’ve got all your images and info from every camera location in one app.”¹²⁷

Tasco has similar text on its website; for example: “Get those well-deserved bragging rights earned from a successful hunt with our affordable selection of powerful scopes.”¹²⁸

The Bushnell website also sells Primos hunting calls for trophy animals such as deer and moose as well as duck and turkey. Buyer’s guides recommend products for bear, elk, moose, coyote, deer, turkey, duck, small game and hog hunting. The guides have banner photos of each animal.¹²⁹

The top of the Bushnell homepage features an image of two men carrying rifles and binoculars accompanied by the words “R Series Built for Whitetail”. Clicking on this takes you to a page of products with the headline: “Built specifically for whitetail hunting, the R-Series features Binoculars, Scopes and Rangefinders that provide reliable performance to meet the demands of the hunt.”¹³⁰

Further down the Bushnell homepage there was an image of a hunter with a dead elk and another of a hunter

¹²⁰ investors.vistaoutdoor.com/Investors/news/news-details/2023/Vista-Outdoor-Announces-Name-for-Outdoor-Products-Segment/default.aspx

¹²¹ investors.vistaoutdoor.com/Investors/news/news-details/2023/Vista-Outdoors-Sporting-Products-Announces-New-Name-as-Company-Separation-Nears/default.aspx

¹²² investors.vistaoutdoor.com/Investors/news/news-details/2024/Vista-Outdoor-Announces-Increased-Purchase-Price-from-CSG-for-The-Kinetic-Group-of-2.15-Billion-and-Increased-Cash-Consideration-of-24.00-Per-Share/default.aspx

¹²³ www.bushnell.com/binoculars/trophy/open-box-trophy-10x42-bone-collector-binoculars/BU-334211D.html

¹²⁴ www.bushnell.com/scopes/view-all-riflescopes/r3-3-9x40-riflescope-with-multi-x-reticle/BU-R3-3940S3.html

¹²⁵ www.bushnell.com/additional-products/view-all-spotting-scopes/trophy-xtreme-20-60x65-spotting-scope/BU-886520.html

¹²⁶ www.bushnell.com/bu-buyers-guide-small-game-hunting-gear.html

¹²⁷ www.bushnell.com/onx-hunt/

¹²⁸ tasco.com/rifle-scopes/

¹²⁹ www.bushnell.com/bu-buyers-guide-elk-hunting-gear.html

¹³⁰ www.bushnell.com/rseries.html

carrying a dead turkey. Both images were taken from Bushnell's Instagram page and in both the hunter held Bushnell products. The image of the elk was accompanied by text stating: "Congrats to @TylerJordan for shooting this monster buck last weekend out at the Milk River! Tyler had been chasing "hightower" for a while but struggled to get him within bow range. All that changed when he was able to get him with a rifle and the Banner 2. #bushnell #optics #bushnelloptics #hunting #huntingseason".¹³¹

The 2023 Bushnell Hunt Catalogue contains several images of dead elk being held or carried by a hunter. One image shows a dead elk with a rifle and Bushnell riflescope.¹³²

Other links to hunting

Bushnell's social media profiles feature many photos of dead trophy animals, including deer with large antlers.¹³³ Some of these had been reposted from customers or 'hunting influencers'. In 2023, the company began producing a podcast called Built for the Pursuit in which presenters and guests discuss hunting, shooting and the outdoors.¹³⁴ Videos of the podcast recordings are available on YouTube. The opening credits contain video images of people pulling dead deer by the antlers.¹³⁵

Bushnell's website has a section for company ambassadors, called Team Bushnell. Among these are eight hunting professionals, including Michael Waddell, host of TV programmes 'Bone Collector' and 'Realtree Road Trip', and Will and Jimmy Primos, co-hosts of 'Primos Truth about Hunting' on the Outdoor Channel.

Since the last Shooting Wildlife? report, Vista Outdoor Inc has launched the Vista Outdoor Foundation¹³⁶ which has given grants to non-profit organisations that "promote conservation, encourage youth and veteran participation in outdoor sports, and work to improve diversity and inclusion in the outdoors." One recipient was the Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation which works in schools "to introduce kids to the outdoors [and] ensures that people have the knowledge and skills to enjoy hunting, fishing and the outdoors."¹³⁷

The company's 2023 ESG report stated that following the division of the company into sporting and outdoor segments, it had closed its political action committee and distributed the remaining funds (\$85,000) to five organisations. Among the five were three organisations which promote hunting and fishing: the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, and the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports.¹³⁸

Bushnell continues to sponsor hunting shows and events including Bone Collector¹³⁹ (a big-game hunting show) and Primos' Truth About Hunting (a "100% Fun and 100% Fair Chase" US hunting show).¹⁴⁰ Another Vista Outdoor brand, Federal Premium, continues to sponsor the programme Grateful Nation (a unique and compelling outdoor adventure series that goes behind the scenes and into the hunting fields with American disabled veterans).¹⁴¹ Federal also sponsored the Boone and Crockett Club's 31st Big Game Awards, an "event that recognizes the biggest heads, horns, and antlers from North America entered into the Boone and Crockett Club's record book during the last three years."¹⁴² In 2020 Bushnell and Federal Premium were found to sponsor Shoot Like a Girl¹⁴³ and the programme 'Buckmasters'. This no longer appears to be the case.

Vista Outdoor and Bushnell are named on the "partners and sponsors" web page of the First Hunt Foundation,¹⁴⁴ "a national organisation dedicated to keeping our hunting heritage alive."¹⁴⁵ The company also has strong links to the US Firearms Industry Trade Association (NSSF). It is named as a patron member¹⁴⁶ and Jason Vanderbrink, the CEO of the company's Kinetic Group is a board member.¹⁴⁷ It has in the past contributed to campaigns organised by the association such as the "#GUNVOTE® voter registration, education

131 www.bushnell.com/

132 https://www.bushnell.com/on/demandware.static/-/Library-Sites-HuntShootAccessoriesSharedLibrary/default/v0aebf1cdc4d26c2797d091a9ab881d5bbb7a291/bushnell/catalogs/2023_Bushnell_Catalog_LR.pdf

133 www.instagram.com/p/Cw3l7Qes8ci/

134 www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8bqFNV-YDqzxd7TwtueujAw_v_BmVbIf

135 www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOHb6sInMAc&list=PL8bqFNV-YDqzxd7TwtueujAw_v_BmVbIf&index=3

136 vistaoutdoor.com/vista-outdoor-foundation-announces-2021-grant-partners/

137 vistaoutdoor.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2023-VOF-Recap-and-Grantee-Showcase_vF.pdf

138 vistaoutdoor.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/23_ESGReport_Final-sm.pdf

139 www.boncollector.com/partners/

140 www.primos.com/

141 www.outdoorchannel.com/show/gratefulnation/1538

142 www.boone-crockett.org/federal-ammunition-supports-boone-and-crockett-clubs-31st-big-game-awards-centennial-sponsor

143 shootlikeagirl.com/partners/

144 firsthuntfoundation.org/partners-and-sponsors

145 firsthuntfoundation.org/

146 www.nssf.org/membership/nssf-patron-membership/

147 www.nssf.org/about-us/nssf-board-of-governors/

and mobilization campaign”¹⁴⁸ and the Project Childsafe programme.¹⁴⁹ Jason Vanderbrink is also on the board of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation¹⁵⁰ which “[brings] the outdoor issues effecting sportsmen and women to the policymakers inside the chambers of Congress.”¹⁵¹

Arms and military links

Vista Outdoor was established as a sporting ammunition company and was originally a division of Alliant Techsystems Inc (ATK) – a US company that produced missiles, rocket boosters, satellite parts and small-calibre ammunition. In 2015 ATK spun off Vista Outdoor as an independent company.¹⁵²

In 2019 Vista Outdoor sold its rifle and shotgun manufacturer brand, Savage Arms,¹⁵³ after retailers boycotted other Vista Outdoor brands because of their association with the arms manufacturer. The boycott started in 2018, shortly after 17 people were killed and 17 injured in a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.¹⁵⁴

In 2024 the company had not completely severed all links to the firearms industry. It maintains ownership of ammunition brands Remington and Federal Premium, both of which were registered as NRA industry allies when research was conducted in July 2024.¹⁵⁵ These brands belong to the sporting products part of Vista Outdoor – now known as Kinetic – which Vista is in the process of selling.

Vista also maintains ownership of the Blackhawk brand which sells holsters, protective gear and other gun and military related accessories. It is now part of Revelyst, the outdoor sports part of Vista Outdoor, which also owned the Bushnell brand.¹⁵⁶ It markets its gun holsters for “Duty & Tactical” use.¹⁵⁷ One holster was described as “perfect for high-threat environments and tactical operations.”¹⁵⁸ Blackhawk had seven brand ambassadors, one of whom was a former Navy Seal and one a former marine.¹⁵⁹

Bushnell itself sells a range of riflescopes called Elite Tactical which it describes as “Battle-Forged, Competition-Hardened” and “purpose-built for those who demand bombproof durability and repeatability when points, records and lives are on the line.”¹⁶⁰ It also has a separate tactical catalogue¹⁶¹ and a Military VIP programme that offers discounts to active military, veterans, retirees, National Guardsmen and reservists.¹⁶²

Bushnell and Tasco optics products are available for sale on the website of North East Technologies Ltd,¹⁶³ which describes itself as a “registered supplier and approved vendor to the Israeli Ministry of Defense, the IDF, the Israeli Police, the Israeli Prison Authority and the emergency services of the Israeli Homeland Security Office.”¹⁶⁴

Vista Outdoor has many contracts to supply ammunition to the US military. The most recent contract found was dated 16 August 2023, with an end date of 30 June 2026. The awarding agency was the Department of Defence and the amount was \$22m.¹⁶⁵

¹⁴⁸ www.nssf.org/articles/bushnell-contributes-25000-to-nssfs-2020-gunvote-voter-education-campaign/

¹⁴⁹ www.nssf.org/articles/vista-outdoor-becomes-silver-sponsor-of-nssfs-project-childsafe/

¹⁵⁰ congressionalsportsmen.org/who-we-are/our-board/

¹⁵¹ congressionalsportsmen.org/what-we-do/

¹⁵² www.startribune.com/alliant-techsystems-to-name-sporting-spinoff-vista-outdoor/286884441/

¹⁵³ www.reuters.com/article/business/american-outdoor-to-spin-off-smith-wesson-firearms-business-idUSKBN1XN2QS/

¹⁵⁴ www.snewsnet.com/news/breaking-down-vista-outdoor-boycott

¹⁵⁵ nraindustryally.nra.org/become-an-ally/amazing-brands/

¹⁵⁶ vistaoutdoor.com/brands/

¹⁵⁷ www.blackhawk.com/holsters/duty-and-tactical/

¹⁵⁸ www.blackhawk.com/holsters/serpa-1/serpa-l3-tactical-holsters/409.html

¹⁵⁹ www.blackhawk.com/bh-ambassadors.html

¹⁶⁰ www.bushnell.com/bushnell-site-content/bu-elite-tactical.html

¹⁶¹ www.bushnell.com/on/demandware.static/-/Library-Sites-HuntShootAccessoriesSharedLibrary/default/dwfe46e26a/bushnell/nonProductPdf/2019-Bushnell-PNF-Catalog.pdf

¹⁶² www.bushnell.com/vip-program/

¹⁶³ www.ne-tech.co.il/optics/

¹⁶⁴ www.ne-tech.co.il/about-us/

¹⁶⁵ www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_W15QKN23F0485_9700_W15QKN22D0026_9700

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

The company had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer's list of tax havens suggesting possible tax avoidance. No explanation was found for the subsidiaries' presence in those countries.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as its director remuneration was over £1m. The highest paid director was paid \$4.2m in 2023 (base salary and sign on stock for CEO Eric Nyman).

Canon

(Canon Inc)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
39	40	20	0	0	100	70	40

Summary

Canon continues to have no link to hunting. In 2017, it stated in response to an Ethical Consumer questionnaire: “Canon does not sell or market optics for the use of hunting, and does not include sport hunting as an activity associated within promotion of our product ranges.”¹⁶⁶ Canon did not respond to a questionnaire sent in 2024.

The company supplies office and medical optical products to the military. It reports all its carbon emissions and provides detailed information on actions it has taken in the past to reduce its climate impact. However, its think tank, the Canon Institute for Global Studies, has been accused by campaigning organisation Action Speaks Louder of “spread[ing] falsehoods about climate science, promot[ing] fossil fuels and aim[ing] to slow the transition to clean energy in Japan.” It takes some action to reduce its environmental impacts or protect workers’ rights in the supply chain.

It has subsidiaries in tax havens which have the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Tokyo-based Canon Inc was founded in 1937 and initially focused on the production of cameras. Today its products include photocopiers, printers, cameras, binoculars, projectors, lenses, semiconductor equipment, instruments used for eye examinations and photo printers. In 2024, the company’s turnover was ¥4.1tr (£22bn).¹⁶⁷

In 2008, the company became the focus of a Greenpeace campaign that tried to pressure its CEO, Fujio Mitarai, into making a public anti-whale hunting statement. Canon was targeted as the company had sponsored many wildlife advocacy groups and environmental conservation organisations, and had promoted the conservation of endangered species in adverts. Canon declined to make such a statement.¹⁶⁸

Hunting

Hunting accessories

The only sport optics sold on Canon’s UK website in July 2024 were binoculars. These were marketed for birdwatching, marine activities, stargazing, spectator sports and travel. Canon had returned an Ethical Consumer questionnaire in September 2017 that confirmed: “Canon does not sell or market optics for the use of hunting and does not include sport hunting as an activity associated within promotion of our product ranges.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Response to Ethical Consumer questionnaire – Optics, from Canon Inc., returned September 2017

¹⁶⁷ global.canon/en/ir/annual/canon-annual-report-2023-03.pdf

¹⁶⁸ www.greenpeace.org/usa/news/greenpeace-calls-on-canon-to-s/

¹⁶⁹ Response to Ethical Consumer questionnaire – Optics, from Canon Inc., returned September 2017

Other links to hunting

No other links to hunting were found.

Arms and military links

The Canon USA website had a page called Military Solutions; however, this did not explicitly mention the military. The only text it contains stated: “Canon offers a wide range educational [sic] and training resources to help professionals enhance their skills and maximize their capabilities across Canon’s many lines of imaging equipment, including cameras, lenses, and printers.”¹⁷⁰

The website www.usaspending.gov showed that Canon USA Inc and Canon Medical Systems had together been awarded more than \$1bn in US government contracts since 2008. The highest amounts had been spent by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense. The majority of contracts appeared to be for scanning, copying and medical imaging equipment.

Climate change and environmental impact

Canon published annual sustainability reports which reported on its efforts to reduce its climate and environmental impact. It fully reported on its scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions and provided detailed information about past actions it had taken to reduce those emissions, such as switching to renewable energy for manufacturing, reducing air freight, and designing more energy-efficient products.

However, its think tank, the Canon Institute for Global Studies, was criticised in 2023 by campaigning organisation Action Speaks Louder which claimed that it “spreads falsehoods about climate science, promotes fossil fuels and aims to slow the transition to clean energy in Japan.”¹⁷¹

It had taken some steps to reduce its environmental impact, in particular by operating closed-loop recycling for some of its products such as toner and ink cartridges.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

Canon had a supplier code of conduct which was publicly available and covered some fundamental labour rights such as freedom of association and a prohibition on forced and child labour. However, it did not guarantee a living wage, nor did it limit working hours adequately.¹⁷²

Tax conduct

The company had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens, suggesting possible tax avoidance. The company stated that it did not use artificial structures to transfer profits to low-tax jurisdictions but no explanation could be found for the subsidiaries’ presence in tax havens.¹⁷³

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration. Its think tank, the Canon Institute for Global Studies, was a member of the Institute of International Finance lobby group.

¹⁷⁰ www.usa.canon.com/industries/military-solutions

¹⁷¹ speakslouder.org/report/canons-climate-deception-in-the-frame/

¹⁷² global.canon/en/procurement/social.html

¹⁷³ www.canon.co.uk/about_us/our-view-on-taxes/

Carson

(Carson Optical Inc)

Ethicscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
37	10	0	100	20	40	90	0

Summary

In 2020 we found that Carson had quietly withdrawn from the riflescope market and the company's online store still did not sell riflescopes. The company also seems to have stopped featuring sport hunting in its brand promotion. Its 2019 video brand promotion included clips from a video called Hunting with Carson Products,¹⁷⁴ which showed a crossbow hunter using the company's spotting scope,¹⁷⁵ while its most recent brand video (2022) focusses on family days out and night sky observation.¹⁷⁶

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Richard Cameron, a former banker, established Carson Optical in 1990 from a basement on Long Island, USA. The business initially focused on importing and exporting products between Japan and the USA. Nowadays, Carson Optical products are also available outside the USA, through online retailers such as opticsplanet.com and amazon.com. Carson Optical Inc's annual turnover was estimated to be £19m¹⁷⁷.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Products are separated by product type on the company's website www.carson.com. Those that were recommended for hunting included one spotting scope, night vision equipment, laser range finding technology, monoculars and binoculars. Binoculars in its 3D series continued to be described as "ideal for hunting."¹⁷⁸

The website does not refer to any particular types of hunting. As in 2020, only one image of a hunter or game animal was found: the box for Carson's HookUpz adapter, which connects mobile phones to binoculars "for hunting, bird watching, nature watching, sporting events or even law enforcement surveillance", which featured a drawing of a deer with big antlers.¹⁷⁹



Facebook @Carson Optical (13 June 2024)

¹⁷⁴ www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m2YCf0w4sg

¹⁷⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=04fqNEzywyo

¹⁷⁶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAIVE0kzht4

¹⁷⁷ D&B Hoovers, viewed in June 2024

¹⁷⁸ www.carson.com/products/3d-series-td-842/

¹⁷⁹ carson.com/product/ib-700-binocular-adapter-for-smartphone/

In 2018 the website also featured riflescopes. Search of the website in October 2020 and July 2024 showed that although Carson still sold riflescope cases, the company had removed riflescopes from its product line. They were also no longer found for sale on third-party websites Optics Planet¹⁸⁰ and Scope City.¹⁸¹

Other links to hunting

Carson's social media profiles continue to market directly to hunters as one of its customer groups but seem to have stopped marketing explicitly to sports hunters. In 2019 and 2020 Facebook posts used the hashtags #bearhunting¹⁸² and #biggamehunting¹⁸³, and linked to a taxidermist¹⁸⁴ who hunted trophy animals such as zebra and pronghorn and endorsed Carson's spotting scope. But since 2019, the company hasn't posted pictures of big game animals or animals in a hunting context on its Facebook and Instagram profiles. Photos now marketed its optics for nature exploration and family days out, although Carson did still use the hashtag #hunting and promoted its LiteWave Pro Rangefinder as a Fathers day gift: "perfect for golfing, hunting, and any adventure!"¹⁸⁵

The 2020 Carson Optical brand trailer featured short clips of a hunter with a crossbow.¹⁸⁶ These were taken from a video called Hunting with Carson Products that showcased various Carson products, including its spotting scope,¹⁸⁷ while product review videos also referenced hunting. Carson's most recent brand video, from 2022, focussed on family days out and night sky observation.¹⁸⁸

Arms and military links

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

¹⁸⁰ www.opticsplanet.com

¹⁸¹ www.scopecity.com

¹⁸² www.facebook.com/carsonoptical/posts/pfbid02JcQ2E3CUunH826nTEWiDwaSGZthTXbh9e7nwyWvXu636orWsmEY5VgqDRTwqrM1hl

¹⁸³ www.facebook.com/carsonoptical/posts/pfbid0Cz5Xsgx4NgrJv5JVESudfkVvQqmU9AKt9HzH6uzmMRfkivWQ8e7PVCvUqQZDKR9rl

¹⁸⁴ www.facebook.com/carsonoptical/posts/10157231337660070

¹⁸⁵ www.instagram.com/carsonoptical/p/C8KRESlgEWF/?img_index=1

¹⁸⁶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m2YCf0w4sg

¹⁸⁷ www.youtube.com/watch?v=04fqnezywyo

¹⁸⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAIVE0kzht4

Celestron

(Synta Technology Corporation)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/ Impact	Environmental company
36	10	0	100	20	60	60	0

Summary

Celestron listed hunting as a possible use for a few products but generally did not market its products specifically to hunters. The website featured ‘Team Celestron’, a group of professionals who used the company’s products. These were mostly astronomers. The group did not include any hunters.

The company markets its binoculars for law enforcement and military personnel. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers’ rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Celestron’s roots are in the Astro-Optical Division of Valor Electronics, a company founded by Tom Johnson in the 1950s. Celestron is now owned by Taiwan-based Synta Technology, and sells its products globally through its online platforms, via international distributors and, in the US and Canada, through major retailers and speciality stores. Celestron’s turnover was estimated to be £18m.¹⁸⁹ No annual reports were found for the company.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Celestron sold binoculars, monoculars and spotting scopes, which are listed on its website as sport optics. A blog post on the company website dated 28th December 2021 and titled “The Ultimate Guide to Observing Land-Based Objects” listed target shooting and hunting as activities for which optical equipment could be used.¹⁹⁰

The website listed products by type rather than activity. Some products were marketed for hunting in the text accompanying the product:

“a good choice for bird watching, nature or wildlife observation, hunting, and enjoying scenic views.”¹⁹¹

“designed to meet the needs of every outdoor enthusiast, from birders and hunters to sports fans to travelers.”¹⁹²

“Find your tree stand for hunting.”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ D&B Hoovers, viewed in July 2024

¹⁹⁰ www.celestron.com/blogs/knowledgebase/the-ultimate-guide-to-observing-land-based-objects

¹⁹¹ www.celestron.com/products/upclose-20-60x60mm-angled-zoom-spotting-scope

¹⁹² www.celestron.com/products/outland-x-10x42mm-roof-binoculars

¹⁹³ s3.amazonaws.com/celestron-site-support-files/support_files/1305073288_retracesellshee.pdf

“Whether you’re stargazing under clear desert skies or perched in a forested hunting blind on a gray and rain soaked afternoon, the ThermoTorch 5 will provide heat, light and power to keep you going.”¹⁹⁴

“Mossy Oak Gamekeepers represent a culture who share the same underlying belief that being outdoors is just as much about hunting as it is loving the land, its wildlife, and giving back more than you take.”¹⁹⁵

Celestron also sold a guide to buying sport optics, written by Celestron former owner Alan Hale, “for prospective buyers looking for binoculars, riflescopes, or spotting scopes for use in hunting, bird watching, astronomy, nature viewing, and other hobbies.”¹⁹⁶

No images of game animals were featured on the website.

Other hunting links

Celestron’s chairman emeritus and founder, Alan Hale, was described on the company website as “an amateur astronomer...as well as an avid bird watcher and hunter.”¹⁹⁷ The company’s current CEO Corey Lee has no links to hunting.¹⁹⁸ The website featured ‘Team Celestron’, a group of professionals who use the company’s products. These were mostly astronomers, with the rest being either nature educators or specialists in other scientific disciplines. The group did not include any hunters.¹⁹⁹

Celestron’s social media accounts focused on astronomy and birdwatching.

Arms and military links

Celestron’s Cavalry binoculars series was marketed to law enforcement and military personnel, as well as hunters and boaters.²⁰⁰ It also sold a pair of binoculars called “military/camouflage”.²⁰¹ No further links to the arms industry, military or gun rights movement were found.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

¹⁹⁴ www.celestron.com/products/celestron-elements-thermotorch-5?_pos=27&_sid=2d18887b0&_ss=r

¹⁹⁵ www.celestron.com/products/gamekeeper-10x42mm-roof-binoculars?_pos=29&_sid=2d18887b0&_ss=r%2C

¹⁹⁶ www.celestron.com/products/sport-optics-by-alan-hale?_pos=20&_sid=2d18887b0&_ss=r,#specifications

¹⁹⁷ www.celestron.com/pages/executive-bios?srsId=AfmBOor1eNa27A7OMjAzZBxrmTNqu_9i8y6cVImf4O5uJu5hhjxPEplR

¹⁹⁸ www.celestron.com/pages/executive-bios

¹⁹⁹ www.celestron.com/blogs/team-celestron?view=grid

²⁰⁰ www.celestron.com/products/cavalry-7x50mm-porro-binoculars-with-gps-digital-compass-reticle

²⁰¹ www.celestron.com/products/oceana-7x50mm-porro-wp-if-and-rc-military-camouflage-binoculars

Eschenbach

(Inspecs Group)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
23	20	0	0	20	50	70	0

Summary

The company sold binoculars, spotting scopes and monoculars. It listed products by areas of use, the first of which was hunting and safari. Other areas of use included birdwatching and wildlife observation and hiking and trekking. The page of hunting and safari products began with a paragraph on “The ideal hunting binoculars”. It had a series of binoculars called ‘Trophy’.

The company supplied the US Department for Veteran Affairs with medical optical equipment. It takes limited action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, and no action to protect workers’ rights in the supply chain. It has subsidiaries in tax havens which have the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Eschenbach Optik was established by Josef Eschenbach in 1913. Its turnover was estimated to be £130m.²⁰² In 2020 the Inspecs Group acquired the Eschenbach group of companies, including Eschenbach Optik, from its previous majority owner Equistone Partners Europe.²⁰³ As well as optics products, the company sells eyewear and vision aids such as magnifiers and lights. The company owns a number of eyewear brands including Brendel, Humphrey’s, Fineline, Jos. Eschenbach, Freigeist and TITANFLEX.²⁰⁴ The Inspecs Group specialises in eyewear and produces glasses under licence for brands such as Joseph, Barbour, Ted Baker and Superdry.²⁰⁵

Hunting

Hunting accessories

On the sport optics area of its website, Eschenbach sells binoculars (which it divided into the two categories of field glasses and opera glasses), monoculars and spotting scopes. It markets its optics products by area of use, one of which was hunting and safari. The hunting and safari web page began with a paragraph titled “The ideal hunting binoculars” and went on to list products which could be used for hunting. The page’s banner contains a drawing of a deer.²⁰⁶ The company sold a range of binoculars called Trophy.²⁰⁷ Some descriptions of individual products made reference to hunting:

“At only 1,038 grams one of the lightest hunter’s binoculars on the market.”²⁰⁸

“Bright images showing every detail: Hunter’s binoculars for the discerning discoverer.”²⁰⁹

²⁰² D&B Hoovers, viewed in July 2024

²⁰³ www.inspecs.com/sites/inspecs-group-plc-v2/files/Annual%20Report%202023%20with%20links.pdf

²⁰⁴ www.eschenbach-eyewear.com/en/startpage/

²⁰⁵ docs.google.com/document/d/1OMeG9yMY6PMQJFEhnB4LwF9GT1XfEV6LG9sF3gyejHc/edit

²⁰⁶ www.eschenbach-sportoptics.com/en-GB

²⁰⁷ www.eschenbach-sportoptics.com/en-GB/products/product-overview

²⁰⁸ www.eschenbach-sportoptics.com/en-GB/products/product/sekto-d-8-x-56-compact-4251856

²⁰⁹ www.eschenbach-sportoptics.com/en-GB/products/product/trophy-d-8-x-56-ed4232856



Eschenbach Hunting and safari website (www.eschenbach-sportoptics.com)

A series of binoculars called Farlux, which was previously described as the “first choice for hunters, ornithologists and discerning nature lovers”, was described in 2024 as the “first choice for ornithologists and discerning nature lovers.”²¹⁰

Other links to hunting

The Eschenbach Facebook page featured several photos of animals, including deer, fox and polar bear, but the text accompanying the photos referred to nature observation and not hunting.²¹¹

Arms and military links

The company did not sell arms or ammunition and it did not market its optics products for military use. However, according to the website usaspending.gov, Eschenbach Optik USA had contracts to supply the US Department of Veterans Affairs with medical equipment and supplies including optical instruments.²¹² In 2022 it had a contract worth \$10,051 with the US Department of Defense to supply magnifiers.²¹³

Climate change and environmental impact

No adequate information was found that demonstrated the Inspeks Group was working to significantly reduce its environmental and climate impacts. It had taken some action to reduce the carbon emissions from its offices but not those of its manufacturing processes or supply chain, which would have had a much more meaningful impact.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

Eschenbach Optik’s parent company, Inspeks Group, had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens suggesting possible tax avoidance. No explanation could be found for the subsidiaries’ presence in those countries.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

²¹⁰ www.eschenbach-sportoptics.com/en-GB/products/product/farluxr-apo-10-x-424274142

²¹¹ www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=german+to+english

²¹² www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_VA644R90539_3600_V797P4597A_3600

²¹³ www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_HT009022FG1210013_9700_36F79720D0207_3600

Fujifilm

(Fujifilm Holding Corporation)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
36	60	10	0	10	60	70	40

Summary

In 2016 no links between Fujifilm and hunting were found, but in October 2017 the company's US website was found to sell riflescopes and to market a pair of binoculars for hunting. In 2020 the company had removed riflescopes from its online stores and product listings, but they were still sold on third-party online stores. In 2024 this remained the case, with one riflescope available on the Amazon website. The company had not announced that it had stopped producing riflescopes. In 2024 the same pair of binoculars was still marketed as "ideal for hunters" on the websites of external retailers but not on Fujifilm's own website.

The company supplies imaging equipment to the military. It reports all its carbon emissions and provides detailed information on actions it has taken in the past to reduce its climate impact. It takes some action to reduce its environmental impacts and protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has subsidiaries in tax havens which have the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Fujifilm Holdings Corporation is based in Japan. It was founded in 1934 as Fuji Photo Film Co Ltd, a company that focused on manufacturing photographic film. The company was established as part of government plans to create a domestic photographic film manufacturing industry. Fujifilm Holdings Corporation had a turnover of ¥2,950bn (£16bn) in 2023.²¹⁴ Its industries include photography and optical equipment, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, and office equipment such as printers and copy machines. The company entered the riflescope market in 2017.²¹⁵

Hunting

Hunting accessories

As in 2020, no riflescopes were found for sale on any Fuji website. A Fujinon Accurion riflescope was for sale on the Amazon website²¹⁶ and another was listed on a different retail site.²¹⁷ Walmart, which stocked Fujinon riflescopes in 2020, no longer sold them, and while riflescopes were listed on some other retail websites, they were out of stock.²¹⁸

Fujifilm's binoculars catalogue provided mainly technical details and did not reference hunting.²¹⁹ In 2020, Fujifilm had marketed its KF binocular series on its US website as "ideal for hunters, bird watchers and other outdoor activities." In 2024, the KF series was no longer available on the Fujifilm US website and none of the binoculars for sale there referred to hunting in their marketing. Fujifilm's Singapore website carried the KF series but did not directly reference hunting, stating: "Great for outdoor & leisure activities, bird watching and field sports."²²⁰ A pair of Fujifilm KF series binoculars for sale on the Amazon website still carried the description "ideal for hunters".²²¹ Other retail sites selling the KF series were also found still to carry this description.²²² No images of animals were found on the Fujifilm website.

²¹⁴ ir.fujifilm.com/en/investors/ir-materials/integrated-report/main/0113/teaserItems1/010/linkList/0/link/fh_2023_006e.pdf

²¹⁵ bulletin accurateshooter.com/2017/08/fujinon-enters-riflescope-market-with-new-accurion-scopes/

²¹⁶ www.amazon.com/Fujinon-Accurion-1-75-5x32-BDC-Reticle/dp/B073ZMC7HJ/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_pb_opt?ie=UTF8

²¹⁷ www.uniquephoto.com/product/fujifilmfujinon3510x50accurionriflescopewithbdclflatmatteblack

²¹⁸ www.focuscamera.com/fujinon-accurion-3-5-10x50-riflescope-with-bdc-reticle-with-electronic-muffs.html

²¹⁹ asset.fujifilm.com/master/global/files/2022-06/630322a04b81dac5f1ebbcdf8f5df256/2022_fujinon_catalog_ww.pdf

²²⁰ www.fujifilm.com/sg/en/consumer/binoculars/kf

²²¹ www.amazon.co.uk/Fujifilm-344547-Fujinon-KF-10x25M/dp/B0741841TL

²²² cokin.com/en/binoculars/1245-fujifilm-binoculars-kf-10x32w-rii-4547410477603.html

Other links to hunting

No other links to hunting were found.

Arms and military links

In 2020 the Fujifilm Americas website listed three series of binoculars called US Army, Defense Supply, and Foreign Military, which it supplied to the US military and other governments. In 2024, the Fujifilm Americas website no longer existed and the three series of binoculars could not be found on any Fujifilm or external retailer website. One retailer described Fujifilm's FMT series of binoculars as meeting US military specifications²²³ but Fujifilm itself did not describe them in this way.

According to the website usaspending.gov, Fujifilm had, since 2008, been awarded contracts with the US Departments of Defence and Veterans Affairs worth over \$480m. Most of these were awarded to Fujifilm Healthcare Americas Corp and were for medical equipment. According to Fujifilm news releases, the equipment was mainly imaging equipment. For example, in 2022 the company won a five year contract to supply "endoscopy solutions and equipment training to all hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers operated by the U.S. military as well as the Veteran's Health Administration, National Institutes of Health, Indian Health Service, and more."²²⁴

Climate change and environmental impact

Fujifilm published annual sustainability reports which reported on its efforts to reduce its climate and environmental impact. It fully reported on its scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions and provided detailed information about past actions it had taken to reduce those emissions, such as switching to renewable energy for manufacturing, saving energy, and switching to closed loop recycling of products. It had a net zero target of 2040 but did not provide detail about how it would reduce emissions in each of the three scopes in order to achieve this target.

It had taken some steps to reduce its environmental impact by increasing its waste recycling, reducing its water use and introducing closed-loop recycling for some of its products.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

Fujifilm had a supplier code of conduct which was publicly available and covered some fundamental labour rights such as freedom of association and a prohibition on forced and child labour. However, it did not guarantee a living wage, nor did it limit working hours adequately.²²⁵

Tax conduct

The company had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer's list of tax havens, suggesting possible tax avoidance. The company stated that it did not use tax havens for the sole purpose of obtaining tax benefits but no explanation could be found for the subsidiaries' presence in tax havens.²²⁶

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

²²³ www.optics-trade.eu/uk/binoculars/shopby/manufacturer-fujinon.html

²²⁴ www.fujifilm.com/us/en/news/fujifilm-granted-authority-to-operate-its-synapse-7x-enterprise-imaging-platform-on-us-department-of-defense-networks

²²⁵ asset.fujifilm.com/master/emea/files/2024-04/bb7dfa372e0d650246ea650aba0bc8f4/2024-03-20-The-Fujifilm-Europe-Supplier-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

²²⁶ holdings.fujifilm.com/en/about/governance/tax-policy

Hawke

(Rockbay Capital Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
31	10	0	100	20	0	70	20

Summary

Hawke Optics Ltd (previously known as Avocet Capital Ltd) is the only trading subsidiary of Rockbay Capital Limited. Previously, Hawke Optics owned Deben Group Industries Ltd, a company linked to the arms/military sector, but Deben Group Industries was dissolved in April 2024.

The Hawke website's product descriptions and catalogue feature considerably fewer images of hunted animals than in 2020 but the company's Hawke Life webpage and sponsorships still link the company firmly to sport hunting.

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry or military. It does have links to the US gun rights movement. It takes limited action to reduce its environmental impact and does not appear to be taking action to reduce its climate impact or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Hawke Optics is a family-run business established 40 years ago in the UK. It now operates in 60 counties and has offices in Indiana, USA. It sells optics under its trademarks: Airmax, Endurance, Frontier, Hawke, Sidewinder, Nature-Trek and Vantage. Its turnover in 2022 was £16.7m.²²⁷

Deben Group Industries, previously owned by Hawke Optics, was dissolved in April 2024²²⁸ and Hawke Optics was now the only trading subsidiary of ultimate parent company Rockbay Capital.²²⁹

Hawke Optics sells a range of products for shooting that include optics and air rifles. Since 2020 it has stopped selling gun cleaning equipment and ear defenders.



Instagram @hawke.life “@bleujayoutdoors recently put our Frontier 10x42 Binoculars to the test on his African Safari...” (9 July 2024)

²²⁷ Hawke Optics Limited, Full accounts made up to 31 December 2023, filed with Companies House 27 June 2024

²²⁸ Deben Group Industries, Final Gazette dissolved following liquidation, filed with Companies House 11 April 2024

²²⁹ Rockbay Capital Ltd, Group of companies' accounts made up to 31 December 2023, filed with Companies House 27 June 2024

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Hawke divided products into three key categories on its website: Sport, Nature and Marine. The Sport category contains a range of hunting gear, including riflescopes, crossbow scopes, airgun scopes, red dot sights, targeting systems, range finders, sidewheels (for improving the accuracy of scopes), and a range of other riflescope accessories. In June 2024, Hawke Optics agreed to distribute products of AirmaksArms, a Czech airgun supplier,²³⁰ in the UK.²³¹ Rifles like the Airmaks Caiman are used by hunters.²³²

Hawke no longer had a dedicated “Sport” catalogue aimed at hunters, but its website and 2024 Sidewinder catalogues continued to feature images of shooters with rifles. Product information on the website and in the catalogues was largely technical, but some references to different types of hunting were found:

“Designed for all hunting disciplines - from varmint to big game.”²³³

“The 34mm Wide View objective lens provides an extreme field of view, while the Circle Dot reticle and included Weaver/Picatinny base are perfectly suited for turkey, driven hunt and other shooting disciplines.”²³⁴

“Realtree’s newest camo pattern, Edge, will extend your hunt with the perfect camouflage, the first camo pattern that allows you to blend into your hunting environment at close range, with natural elements arranged in a way to disrupt the human form at a distance.”²³⁵

“Supreme accuracy for rifle shooting, driven and hunting applications.”²³⁶

“Vantage 30 Wide Angle models are an affordable and reliable selection for mid to long range hunting.”²³⁷

Several commercials for Hawke products featured hunting. Its most recent video ad for riflescope was titled “Hawke is Hunting. Hawke is Precision. Hawke is Tactical”, and states: “Whether you’re an avid hunter, a seasoned marksman at the range, or a competitive shooter, Hawke Optics offers a superior range of scopes tailored to meet your every need.” The extended version featured a hunter making a pheasant or turkey call and aiming at a large deer. It ended with a hunter walking up a hill, carrying a large set of antlers.²³⁸ Unlike promotion for Hawke’s Sidewinder riflescopes from 2021,²³⁹ it did not feature a dead animal.

²³⁰ www.airmaksarms.com

²³¹ www.guntradenews.com/business-news/hawke-optics-adds-airmaks-arms-to-roster/

²³² www.bigdansairguns.co.uk/Airmaks-Arms.php; www.edgunwest.com/store/airmaks-arms/

²³³ uk.hawkeoptics.com/riflescopes.html

²³⁴ uk.hawkeoptics.com/reflex-sight-wide-view-circle-dot-weaver.html

²³⁵ uk.hawkeoptics.com/realtree-camo-cotton-twill-cap.html

²³⁶ uk.hawkeoptics.com/frontier-riflescopes.html

²³⁷ uk.hawkeoptics.com/vantage-30-wa-ir-riflescopes.html

²³⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQN68G38N0

²³⁹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIzA9gmBPnE



Instagram @hawke.life “Buck down... true blooded free range hunting on the South Island of New Zealand” (16 September 2024)

Other links to hunting

The Hawke.Life Instagram profile did continue to post photos of hunters with dead (trophy) animals such as deer hunted in New Zealand²⁴⁰ and a rabbit killed with an Airmaks air gun.²⁴¹ It also featured a partnership post with an impala killed during a safari in Africa by hunting influencer Blue Huxford, who posed behind the animal with Hawke binoculars.²⁴²

Hawke also has a website called Hawke Life, described as “a lifestyle hub for the outdoor enthusiast.”²⁴³ In 2020 the “Sport” section of the website had focused heavily on hunting, with several video series with professional hunters, depicting all details of hunting trips, from equipment preparation to the socialising afterwards. In 2021 Hawke Life still published many posts directed at hunters, such as a recipe for slow-braised antelope ragu,²⁴⁴ a guide to hunting with drones,²⁴⁵ deer skinning tips²⁴⁶ and an article titled “The Stigma of Women in Hunting”.²⁴⁷ Regular hunting content ended in January 2022 with a post titled “Essential Backcountry Hunting Gear”.²⁴⁸ In 2024 hunting

had made way for product advertisement²⁴⁹ and nature watching.²⁵⁰ One blog post reported Hawke’s support for a thesis project on leopard conservation at the University of Capetown, but this was presented as a conservation project only and did not mention hunting.²⁵¹

Hawke continued to partner with hunting influencers such as photographer Raven Finnegan,²⁵² who participates in hunts specifically aimed at women²⁵³ and is outspoken about second amendment gun rights,²⁵⁴ and Blue Huxford,²⁵⁵ who “like[s] to hunt and stuff like that.”²⁵⁶

Hawke stated in an Instagram post that it had “proudly been the longtime official optics sponsor of @backwoodslifetv!”²⁵⁷ – a hunting TV show. The show’s website featured images of dead trophy deer.²⁵⁸ Hawke Optics was also listed as a sponsor of hitmentv.com,²⁵⁹ which displayed images of multiple trophy animals.

Arms and military links

Between 2008 and 2015, Deben Group Industries had applied to the UK government for 266 export licences for equipment designed for military use to countries all over the world.²⁶⁰ The company was dissolved in April 2024 and no evidence was found that Rockbay Capital was involved in the sale of products to the military at the time of writing.

- 240 www.instagram.com/p/C_-ESKHoypp/?hl=en
- 241 www.instagram.com/p/C_ukR7QhB7q/?hl=en&img_index=1
- 242 www.instagram.com/p/C9Nfd2OvO4u/?hl=en
- 243 life.hawkeoptics.com/?utm_source=hawke-us
- 244 life.hawkeoptics.com/slow-braised-antelope-ragu/
- 245 life.hawkeoptics.com/your-quick-guide-to-hunting-with-drones/
- 246 life.hawkeoptics.com/deer-skinning-tips/
- 247 life.hawkeoptics.com/the-stigma-of-women-in-hunting/
- 248 life.hawkeoptics.com/essential-backcountry-hunting-gear/
- 249 life.hawkeoptics.com/hawke-frontier-3-18x50-34mm-ffp-riflescope/
- 250 life.hawkeoptics.com/hawk-owl-trust-peregrines-live-from-norwich-cathedral/
- 251 life.hawkeoptics.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Robi-Leopard-report.pdf
- 252 www.instagram.com/p/C8us3zDpbC6/?hl=en&img_index=1
- 253 www.instagram.com/p/C6PH7mqpXBA/?hl=en
- 254 www.instagram.com/p/C08LASyF2PK/?hl=en&img_index=1
- 255 www.instagram.com/p/C9Nfd2OvO4u/?hl=en
- 256 www.instagram.com/bleujayoutdoors/?hl=en
- 257 www.instagram.com/hawke.life/p/C1CzzBILiKi/?locale=pt_PT&img_index=1
- 258 www.backwoodslife.com/partners/
- 259 hitmentv.com/sponsors/
- 260 caat.org.uk/resources/company-export-licence-application-data-from-2008-2015/

Hawke did not market its products for military use, although its products were sold in online stores for military goods. It used the word “tactical” in its marketing, but defined this on its website as: “Made for any shooting situation, Hawke’s tactical optics are designed to help you hit your target, in any conditions. From competitive shooting to pest control, they will help you perform at your best.”

Hawke Optics LLC, which holds the Hawke brand in the US, was one of the few companies covered in this report that had 2024 exhibition stands with the National Rifle Association.²⁶¹

Climate and environmental impact

The only sustainability information on the Hawke website was a section on recycling, which stated that Hawke recycles customers’ old products for free when they buy a new one. It warned against throwing electrical equipment in the bin and encouraged recycling to save natural resources and prevent hazardous substances from leaking into the environment, “harming wildlife and also human health”. The company also offered a take-back scheme for all portable waste batteries.²⁶²

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

²⁶¹ nraam2024.mapyourshow.com/8_0/explore/exhibitor-gallery.cfm?featured=false, viewed in July 2024

²⁶² uk.hawkeoptics.com/recycling.html

Kahles and Swarovski

(Swarovski Group)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
29	40	0	60	10	0	90	0

Summary

Swarovski references both driven and big-game hunts on its website. It has its own hunting YouTube channel and its TV show, Swarovski Optik Quests,²⁶³ has featured water buffalo and axis deer hunts. Sport hunting features prominently in its social media content.

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but, unlike the previous time we conducted this research (2020), no information was found that suggested it supplied to the military. It takes some action to reduce its climate action, but minimal action to limit its environmental impact or to protect workers' rights in its supply chain. It had one subsidiary in a tax haven that has the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Swarovski Optik was founded in 1949 in Austria and is part of the bigger Swarovski group, a family-owned company founded in 1895.²⁶⁴ The Swarovski group works across a range of different industries including jewellery and other luxury items like chandeliers, perfumes, optics, gemstones, concrete sawing and drilling equipment (through the Tyrolit brand), entertainment, and road-safety products (through Swareflex). The Swarovski group also owns the brand and company Kahles.

The Swarovski group had a turnover of €1.8bn (£1.5bn) in 2023.²⁶⁵ Swarovski Optik produces long-range optics for hunting, nature observation, and birding as well as travel and leisure. It also publishes a magazine called Closer, which is now marketed as an "Outdoor and Birding magazine"²⁶⁶ instead of a hunting magazine, as it was in 2020. Its website previously featured a policy on hunting;²⁶⁷ however, the link now redirected viewers to www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en/birding and no policy was found.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Swarovski Optik's UK website, www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en, arranges products by product type. At the time of writing our last report in 2020, its UK website listed products also by activity, with activities including hunting, birding and outdoor. Under hunting, its products included riflescopes, spotting scopes, binoculars and accessories for them. Its UK website sold a large range of riflescopes²⁶⁸ marketed for hunting, which was similar for its US website.²⁶⁹

Swarovski's marketing is explicitly directed at sports hunters for trophy, driven and big-game hunts. For example, it stated: "Life is too short and hunting is too important to go into it ill-prepared. Why should we waste our fleeting opportunities? We may never get another chance at that big buck or bull."²⁷⁰

²⁶³ www.outdoorchannel.com/show/swarovski-optik-quests/1639

²⁶⁴ www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en/hunting/about-us/quality-and-innovation/facts-and-figures

²⁶⁵ profly-prod.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/landing_page_image/image/543525/84e9484d9de61cf8302ee144860b4697.pdf

²⁶⁶ www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en/outdoor/products/gear/branded-articles-all/print/magazine-birding

²⁶⁷ uk.swarovskioptik.com/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/SOP-GB-Site/en_US/-/GBP/SPAG_AboutSwarovskiOptik-ViewHuntingPosition

²⁶⁸ www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en/hunting/products/rifle-scopes

²⁶⁹ www.swarovskioptik.com/us/en/hunting/products/rifle-scopes/z8-i

²⁷⁰ www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en/hunting/stories/call-the-taxidermist-and-maybe-next-year

Kahles also sells a range of sport riflescopes²⁷¹ and has a dedicated hunting Instagram profile,²⁷² which features a post with a photograph of a woman sitting over a dead roe deer holding a rifle and riflescope.²⁷³

Other links to hunting

Swarovski has its own hunting YouTube channel²⁷⁴ which features a video about hunting riflescopes with the hashtag #drivenbyhunting with a woman taking aim at wild boar, with images of taking aim at the animals with a gun and the animals running away.²⁷⁵ Its Facebook profile features a photo of a gun and riflescope with the large horns of a dead sheep.²⁷⁶ Another post featured a photograph of a man sitting over a dead springbuck, captioned: “This was a special milestone for me. After many African species, this was my first springbuck.”²⁷⁷

Swarovski Optik is listed as a Safari Club International Sponsor on their website²⁷⁸ and it has donated products to Safari Club International Auctions, including to the 2024 SCI Convention.²⁷⁹ The SCI Convention describes itself as: “The world’s largest hunting auction, [and] features an incredible range of outstanding auction items. Day and night, the auctioneer gavel keeps falling on dream hunts and hunter-preferred items from around the world.” Swarovski’s products are widely promoted in multiple blogs across SCI website, and it specifically advocates the use of Swarovski products for hunting.²⁸⁰ Swarovski also featured in a 2020 post on the Safari Club website about luxury trips with a “Swarovski optics package” that involved the hunting of black bears.²⁸¹

It was unclear whether Swarovski still sponsors the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation. The hunting show, Swarovski Optik Quests, continues to air on the Outdoor Channel,²⁸² and has the following description: “SWAROVSKI OPTIK Quests tests the most high powered hunting equipment in extreme places around the planet, as host Dean Capuano travels the globe in search of trophies that are on every hunter’s bucket list.” Dean Capuano, as described on his Instagram, is “Hunter and Director of Communications for SWAROVSKI Optik”.²⁸³

Arms and military links

While our previous 2020 report found some evidence that Swarovski optics were used by militaries, in 2024 we could not find any evidence of links to the arms sector, the military or the gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

Swarovski published a 2022 sustainability report on its website, which was the latest report available at the time of our research.²⁸⁴ What was formerly Swarovski group’s website, www.swarovskigroup.com, now redirected to www.swarovski.com.

No information was found on its optics products in its sustainability reporting and it only discussed product materials and sourcing for its crystals. It states: “By 2030, we will source all our metals from responsibly managed and recycled sources”, although it does not state what it means by “responsibly managed”. It also states that all of its Asian manufacturing was now using renewable energy. Swarovski did not appear to publicly report annually on its full and location-based scope 1, 2 and 3 climate emissions. At the group level Swarovski did have targets to reduce its emissions in line with international agreements, and these were approved by the Science Based Targets initiative.

²⁷¹ www.kahles.at/en/sport/riflescopes

²⁷² www.instagram.com/kahles.hunting/

²⁷³ www.instagram.com/p/C-CXo04tZie/

²⁷⁴ www.youtube.com/@SWAROVSKIOPTIKHunting

²⁷⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATTZI6izS04

²⁷⁶ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1009077391220857&set=t.100064605225021&type=3

²⁷⁷ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=900061918800000&set=t.100064605225021&type=3

²⁷⁸ safariclub.org/sponsorships-and-licensing

²⁷⁹ convention.safariclub.org/

²⁸⁰ safariclub.org/a-look-into-optics-technology/

²⁸¹ auction.safariclub.org/6-day-Luxury-Yacht-Alaska-Black-Bear-Hunt-Swarovski-Optics-Stone-Glacier-Gear-and-Ruger-Firearm-Pa_i35311830

²⁸² www.outdoorchannel.com/show/swarovski-optik-quests/1639

²⁸³ www.instagram.com/deancapuano/

²⁸⁴ asset.swarovski.com/raw/upload/v1698332378/2022_Swarovski_Sustainability_Report.pdf?_ics=1721383376693&irclidid=~51YPXVKGCFCvwqlpsuBHYopme~45ZPLCIBxmndec962ZRKIBrj9

We also looked at the Swarovski Optik website, which has a sustainability section but lacks sufficient detail.²⁸⁵ On its Environmental Footprint page it states: “Our ambitious goal: By 2028, 95 percent of our total energy consumption should be free of fossil fuels.”

Swarovski subsidiary Tyrolit provides grinding, cutting and sawing tools for the automotive, aviation and construction industries,²⁸⁶ which all have a high climate impact.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

Swarovski has an anti-modern slavery policy²⁸⁷ which references a supplier code of conduct; however, no document was found. It only states that it conducts audits “by means of a third party audit (such as Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (‘SMETA’) and Social Accountability International’s SA8000 standards), or our own internal labour assessment (based on the SMETA standard)”. Although it references the SA8000 standard for part of its supply chain, this is not considered to be a detailed supply chain policy.

Tax conduct

It has one subsidiary company, Swarovski Optik Hong Kong Limited, that was in a jurisdiction on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens and was considered a possible vehicle for tax avoidance.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

²⁸⁵ www.swarovskioptik.com/gb/en/hunting/about-us/sustainability-at-swarovski-optik

²⁸⁶ www.tyrolit.group/en

²⁸⁷ www.swarovski.com/en_GB-GB/s-transparencystatement

Kenko and Sightron

(Kenko Tokina Co Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environ-Impact
13	10	0	20	0	30	30	0

Summary

The Kenko brand continues to stay away from marketing for hunting, but the other optics brand owned by Kenko Tokina, Sightron, continues to produce riflescopes and market to hunters. It is no longer marketing specifically to trophy hunters, though. Instead of featuring trophy animals such as an antelope²⁸⁸ and elk²⁸⁹ killed by customers in 2016, it now promoted the hunting of deer²⁹⁰ for making jerky.²⁹¹ It still seems that Kenko Tokina deliberately keeps its ownership of Sightron hidden from its English marketing on kenkoglobal.com and sightron.com.

The company supplies optics to the military. It previously had links to the US National Rifle Association, but only a potential link to the US gun rights movement was found this time. It takes limited action to reduce its environmental impact and does not appear to be taking actions to reduce its climate impact or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has subsidiaries in tax havens that has the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Kenko Tokina Co Ltd, established in 1957, is headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. The company specialises in optical products that include binoculars, microscopes, filters, and photographic and optical accessories. It also makes other electronics and health care products.²⁹² The company had a turnover of £74m.²⁹³

Kenko Tokina owns two distinct optics brands: Kenko and Sightron. Kenko Optics Inc sells binoculars, spotting scopes and stargazing equipment.²⁹⁴ Sightron Japan Inc produces riflescopes, red dot sights, spotting scopes and binoculars.²⁹⁵

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Although the Kenko brand sold binoculars and spotting scopes, no product could be found that was specifically marketed at hunters. Most binoculars and scopes were recommended for bird watching. No images of “game” animals were displayed, and no further links to sport hunting were found.

Sightron, however, produced riflescopes and electronic sighting devices as well as binoculars and spotting scopes. While its Japanese website, sightron.co.jp, gave mostly technical product descriptions, its English website sightron.com had a dedicated “Hunting” section, which markets Sightron optics to hunters. The product description of its S1 1.75-5x32 G2 riflescope, for example, states: “NEW Optical Design for Close Range Hunting”.²⁹⁶

²⁸⁸ www.instagram.com/p/BHMshahmde/

²⁸⁹ www.instagram.com/p/BFPPbu_MoVk/

²⁹⁰ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=595931962534451&set=pb.100063529571762.-2207520000&type=3

²⁹¹ www.facebook.com/sightroninc/posts/pfbid02PGcx8u4fjaXWtdEnV4dGLVzxceem5rbLE5oobuJByV6cYESwtoYqt3mXDF2Kaucl

²⁹² www.kenko-tokina.co.jp/about/

²⁹³ D&B Hoovers, viewed in June 2024

²⁹⁴ kenkoglobal.com/

²⁹⁵ sightron.com/; www.sightron.co.jp/

²⁹⁶ sightron.com/collections/s1-hunting-riflescopes/products/s1-1-75-5x32-g2-duplex

Other links to hunting

Pictures of trophy animals (moose, elk, fox and a family of brown bear) that had featured heavily in the descriptions of its riflescopes in 2020 were no longer found on the Sightron websites or in its catalogue and it was therefore no longer considered to promote sport hunting.

Its social media continued to feature general hunting content, since several of the company's Facebook posts from the past five years explicitly promoted the use of its optics for hunting deer. One from 2022 showed a picture of a rifle on top of a dead deer with the hashtags: #deerseason #deerhunter #deerhunting #sightron #sightronoptics #hunter #hunting #riflescope #onsale #hunterxhunter #hunters #hunting #huntinglife.²⁹⁷ Another picture from 2023 of a rifle and ammunition had the caption "How many deer y'all got out there? I'm trying to get some Jerky! #sightron #sightronoptics #deerseason #jerky #hunt #instahunt."²⁹⁸

The company had not taken down two photos of dead trophy animals from 2016 found in earlier reports: an antelope²⁹⁹ and elk,³⁰⁰ killed by customers

Arms and military links

Sightron continued to market its optics for military use and supplied optics to the military. On its Japanese website, its TAC series of binoculars were labelled as "military binoculars"³⁰¹ and the company stated: "We do business with the defence forces nationwide, as well as police and government agencies."³⁰² It had a Sightron Japan Catalog for Government Agencies, which was "for government agencies only and contain[ed] many items that cannot be sold to individuals or businesses",³⁰³ and was also a distributor of the Beretta firearms brand.³⁰⁴

Sightron Inc, which carried the Sightron brand in the US, had a booth at the (cancelled) 2020 National Rifle Association exhibition, but not at the one held in 2024. It did not appear to have direct links to the gun rights movement at the time of writing, but had announced a video cooperation with Frontline Defense USA³⁰⁵ in July 2024, which had not been posted yet in September 2024. Frontline Defense USA is a veteran-owned business that encourages "responsible, active firearm ownership in our community" and is a partner with the NRA and NRA Business Alliance.³⁰⁶ Since Sightron's cooperation with Frontline Defense USA had not materialised yet at the time of writing, Sightron did not lose marks for this announcement.

Kenko described one pair of binoculars as "compact military binoculars", but these had been discontinued.³⁰⁷

Climate change and environmental impact

No evidence of sustainability reporting could be found on any of the Kenko Tokina, Kenko or Sightron websites. The only information related to its environmental impact was a statement on the English website of Sightron, which says that it would repair or replace products covered by its "Limited Lifetime USA Warranty". The warranty only covered Sightron products sold and shipped within the United States, and was not considered to demonstrate sufficient action to give the company any points.³⁰⁸

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

²⁹⁷ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=595931962534451&set=pb.100063529571762.-2207520000&type=3

²⁹⁸ www.facebook.com/sightroninc/posts/pfbid02PGcx8u4fjjaXWTdEnV4dGLVzxceem5rblE5oobuJBYv6cYESwtoYqt3mXDF2Kauc/

²⁹⁹ www.facebook.com/sightroninc/photos/962857320500517

³⁰⁰ www.facebook.com/sightroninc/photos/933738930079023

³⁰¹ www.sightron.co.jp/product/tac.html

³⁰² www.sightron.co.jp/contact_us.html#a01

³⁰³ www.sightron.co.jp/catalog.html

³⁰⁴ www.sightron.co.jp/index.html#brands

³⁰⁵ www.facebook.com/sightroninc/posts/pfbid02B2HMGE8wXfzHU9rzAk6FtMjB6o7xiRRY6Bhgn7nQsr3FY6vogySTcAAEpMann3UI, viewed 23 August 2024

³⁰⁶ www.frontlinedefenseusa.com/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZWQCMATAAR18ZLuuvq6eukhFlr6p7lQ9jBkeESZHpSz7zx-kZ8_E7aSBW3QsVKOPFv5s_aem_2vq4diu8ShWSpbO1ptHOHQ

³⁰⁷ kenkoglobal.com/product/m_model_7x50m_if/

³⁰⁸ sightron.com/pages/warranty

Tax conduct

Kenko Tokina had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer's list of tax havens suggesting possible tax avoidance. No explanation could be found for the subsidiaries' presence in those countries.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

Kowa

(Kowa Company Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
17	0	0	0	0	60	60	0

Summary

In October 2020, Kowa confirmed in an email to Ethical Consumer that it still followed the same ethical policies and practices as it did in 2017, meaning that none of its products contain reticles (used for targeting), and that it did not sponsor any shooting organisations or events. No information was received from the company in 2024 and no evidence was found that the company had abandoned its policy on reticles, but it had sponsored an event that promoted bowhunting of elk and deer. The company's US website had removed its one mention of hunting found in 2020, but its EU-based website had added hunters to its intended users of its spotting scopes. The company was considered to still have a weak link to hunting.

The company markets its optical products for military and police operations, and border control. It was involved in thermal coal, a commodity with a particularly high carbon impact, and took little action to reduce its climate and other environmental impacts. It had very limited protection of workers' rights in the supply chain and had subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Kowa was founded in 1894 in Japan and initially started out as a wholesaler of cotton fabrics. The company began producing non-fabric items in 1945 and now manufactures a broad range of products that includes textiles, pharmaceuticals and container ships. Kowa also sells specialty chemicals, food additives, cosmetics ingredients and building materials, and provides commodities transport and hospitality services.³⁰⁹ Kowa started producing sport optics in 1952.³¹⁰ The group had a turnover of ¥574bn (approximately £3bn) in the financial year that ended in 2024.³¹¹

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Kowa's European and US websites, www.kowaoptic.com and kowaoptics.com, both organise products by category. Optics products include spotting scopes, binoculars, digiscoping, eyepieces and accessories such as spotting scope cases.³¹² No dedicated hunting section was present on either website. In October 2020 the company confirmed in an email to Ethical Consumer that it still followed the same ethical policies and practices as it had in 2017 and did not make products containing reticles (used for targeting). No information was received from the company in 2024, but no evidence was found that the company had abandoned this policy.

In 2020 the European website had not marketed to hunters at all, but in 2024 it said of Kowa's spotting scopes: "Designed for nature enthusiasts, outdoor lovers, birders and hunters, our scopes embody precision and clarity."³¹³ And while in 2020 the US site had marketed one spotting scope for hunting and had used images of trophy animals, it no longer referred to hunting in 2024 and no hunting imagery was found on either website.

³⁰⁹ www.kowa.co.jp

³¹⁰ www.kowa.eu

³¹¹ www.kowa.co.jp/eng/company/

³¹² www.kowaoptic.com; kowaoptics.com

³¹³ www.kowaoptic.com/Optics-Accessories/Spotting-scopes/

Other links to hunting

The Kowa Sporting Optics Facebook profile featured pictures of birds and mammals that could be considered trophy animals, but none of the imagery and accompanying text suggested a hunting context. It did still have a few references from 2012 and 2013 to hunting.³¹⁴

Kowa's ambassador programme did not include hunters, and sponsors mostly birders and organisers of wildlife watching tours.³¹⁵ But although the company had told Ethical Consumer in 2017 that it did not sponsor shooting events, it had donated a pair of binoculars to a prize draw organised by the non-profit Pope & Young Club, which described itself as "North America's leading voice and supporter of bowhunting and related conservation issues and projects."³¹⁶ Hashtags promoting the event included: #conservation #bowhunting #hunting #elkhunting #elk101 #deerhunting #deerseason.³¹⁷ Kowa also presented the organisation's National Field Judging Championship in 2024.³¹⁸

Arms and military links

The company markets its optical products for military use. The Kowa Lenses website had a section dedicated to Industrial and Safety Applications, with subsections for CCTV/Security and Border Control.³¹⁹ It sold motorised zoom lenses, motorzooms optimised for seeing through mist or materials and night-time shooting, and low-light cameras, which were marketed for military and policy operations, border security and surveillance. Its zoom lenses for video monitoring systems "can detect small details from a distance of several kilometers and help many countries to secure their borders "[to] prevent illegal border crossings [and] the smuggling of illegal goods such as drugs or weapons". Kowa offered on-site support for installing these systems and assisted in field tests.³²⁰

The company did not have an ethical policy against supplying to the military, but no evidence was found that the company sold products to the military. Its optical products marketed for border security are, however, could be used by military clients.

Climate and environmental impact

Kowa's Japanese website featured a section on Sustainability,³²¹ with subsections titled Environmental Management, Climate Change, Biodiversity and Resource Recycling.³²² It acknowledged the need to address climate change and other environmental issues, but provided little evidence of concrete actions.

In January 2024 it had announced the intention to reduce greenhouse gas emission by "at least 46% as compared with FY2013 by FY2030" and to become carbon neutral by FY2050, but it was not clear how the company planned to achieve these goals other than through "climate change countermeasures across the organization to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." The company's Carbon Neutrality Declaration was not found on its website and it did not report its carbon emissions. The only three environmental projects discussed in some detail were the same as in 2020: organic cotton production in part of its textile production, production and installation of LED lighting, and engagement in renewable energy generation.³²³

The company's involvement with thermal coal was particularly concerning. Kowa produced bulk-carrier ships made for coal transport to thermal power plants and its subsidiary Kowa India Pvt. was involved in building up the Mundra Special Economic Zone in Gujarat State,³²⁴ which stated it was the country's largest coal importing terminal.

Kowa also had a sole agency agreement for the sale of phosphoric acid in Japan with Hubei Xingfa Chemicals Group – one of the few manufacturers with mining rights for phosphate ore and a leader in the production

314 www.facebook.com/kowaoptics/posts/pfbid02D5U11rgcUSdnfsoPzZxig29vBcije97phRaCts8egydkPV6M7iYv7SF5yCXqhPkkl;www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=506049302758457&set=a.1656559771040732;www.facebook.com/kowaoptics/posts/pfbid02zcpdXahk2Djxp9N6NEVXhaBJf7vMvNQSVLj5Wgz57eGAFefc6Z3UJkflCQ3rPDQl

315 www.kowaoptic.com/Ambassadors?distance=500&order=distance; kowaoptics.com/blogs/ambassadors?page=1

316 www.pope-young.org/blog/13872/Mark-Your-Calendars-for-the-34th-Biennial-Pope-and-Young-Convention

317 www.facebook.com/PopeAndYoungClub/posts/pfbid02i2Togucq4yp1amrPuMNzCe6Pax4dH7hv86W4vSJyy6wiWo89TKHyjEfBu9uPvK8tl

318 www.pope-young.org/blog/13872/Mark-Your-Calendars-for-the-34th-Biennial-Pope-and-Young-Convention

319 www.kowa-lenses.com/en/lenses-for-machine-vision-and-cctv

320 www.kowa-lenses.com/en/lenses-for-border-control?srsltid=AfmBOoqIEaskuafMFbjMYIIyGcImD24b2rzXE_HiV8ADVJ2wWqqXB46

321 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/

322 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/environment/index.html

323 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/environment/index.html

324 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/business/trading/general_trading/ship.html

of phosphoric acid in China.³²⁵ Phosphate mining and phosphoric acid have been linked to the release of potentially toxic and radioactive chemicals into the environment and have a negative impact on water and air quality.³²⁶

Other Kowa business units handled a wide variety of materials with a large environmental impact such as cotton, pharmaceutical ingredients, ingredients for cosmetics, monomers and speciality chemicals, oil and fats, food additives, iodine and their compounds, lithium and their compounds, activated carbon and coal, marine products and natural stone or exterior products.³²⁷ No actions to limit the environmental impact of most of these materials were found.

Kowa stated that in 2003 it was the first brand in Japan to receive an international organic cotton certification and supported a programme to produce Peace Cotton,³²⁸ but not all the cotton used in its products was organic. Its subsidiary, Kowabo Company Ltd, had received FSC certification in 2021, but timber used by other subsidiaries did not appear to be certified.³²⁹

The company was found to take minimal action to address the impacts of its production processes, such as waste and use of water, and no action on the impacts of its products during use and/or at end of life. It stated it would “make efforts to save resources by promoting effective use of finite resources, for example, reuse of waste generated in plants as raw materials for new products”, but did not discuss specific actions taken or planned.³³⁰

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

Although Kowa had a human rights policy and a supplier code of conduct³³¹ which contain some core labour rights such as freedom of association and zero tolerance of discrimination, it lacked details on other principles such as its elimination of child labour and payment of a living wage.

Tax conduct

Kowa had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens suggesting possible tax avoidance. No explanation could be found for the subsidiaries’ presence in those countries.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

325 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/business/trading/general_trading/chemicals.html

326 www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/phosphate_mining/

327 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/business/trading/general_trading/index.html

328 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/environment/organic_cotton/index.html

329 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/environment/index.html

330 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/environment/index.html

331 www.kowa.co.jp/eng/sustainability/social/index.html

Leica

(Leica Camera AG, Socrates Privatstiftung)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
24	10	0	60	10	0	90	0

Summary

In 2020 we found that the company was slowly removing the more graphic references to hunting from its social media content and this trend has continued into 2024, although the company seemed less reticent about openly promoting sport hunting. It had removed its global hunting policy from its website. Images of elephants and male lions in a post that referenced hunting were posted on the Leica Sport Optics Hunting Facebook profile in 2012, and were still there in 2024. Although product information on the company's website was largely technical, it made occasional references to driven hunts. Leica was considered to have a strong connection to sport hunting.

Leica Camera does not have links to the arms industry, military or gun rights movement, but other companies with which it shares the Leica brand supply the US military with navigational and laboratory equipment. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact beyond basic repair services, nor action to protect workers' rights in its supply chain. It had one subsidiary had the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Four independent companies shared the Leica brand: Leica Camera, Leica Microsystems, Leica Biosystems and Leica Geosystems.³³² These produced a diverse array of products including microscopes, cameras, sport optics and laboratory equipment.

Leica Hunting blog, Chamois success in deep snow (6 February 2024)



332 www.leica.com/

Around 96.3% of shares in Leica Camera AG were owned by the Austrian holding company ACM Projektentwicklung, a subsidiary of its ultimate parent company: Socrates Private Foundation.³³³ Leica Camera offered a range of cameras, lenses, projectors, binoculars and photographic accessories, and had a turnover of £264m.³³⁴

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Leica's UK website markets sport optics by the following uses: experience nature, hunting, and lifestyle and leisure. The hunting section listed riflescopes, rangefinders, thermal imaging cameras, binoculars and spotting scopes. Its riflescope product finder categorised its riflescopes under stalking, mountain hunt, driven hunting, shooting from high seats and long-range target shooting.³³⁵

The website also offered the Leica Hunting App, which allows hunters to connect rangefinders to their smartphone and calculate and save personal ballistic curve data.³³⁶

Although product descriptions were largely technical, Leica referred to hunting in several places, and included references to sports hunts:

“the right solution for all hunt types – from driven hunts to long-range hunting.”³³⁷

“a reliable companion in any hunting situation – for precision and flexibility when it counts.”³³⁸

“With the Leica Calonox thermal cameras, hunting becomes dynamic and exciting, especially at night.”

In its marketing, Leica emphasised the technological features of its riflescopes, rangefinders and thermal devices, claiming that their accuracy enabled “ethical” and “contemporary and appropriate hunting.” For example:

“Leica riflescopes stand for passionate hunting and perfect technology. With the riflescope series, we have developed target optics that offer the hunter detailed visual experiences – and enable a safe, ethically-placed shot ... Intuitively operable, systems of lasting value support ethical hunting ... The wide-angle field of view of the Leica riflescopes offers hunters the greatest possible overview for a safe and ethical shot.”³³⁹

“With the riflescope series, we have developed target optics that offer the hunter detailed visual experiences – and enable a safe, ethically-placed shot.”³⁴⁰

³³³ www.acm-projekt.at/httpdocs/daten/Schlussmeldung.pdf; app.dnbhoovers.com/company/5db79dbb-64d5-3481-9c71-6c8a799cbdd0, viewed 1 October 2024

³³⁴ D&B Hoovers, viewed in October 2024

³³⁵ leica-camera.com/en-GB/leica-riflescopes-product-finder#

³³⁶ ballistictool.leica-camera.com

³³⁷ leica-camera.com/en-GB/leica-magnus-i#

³³⁸ leica-camera.com/en-GB/leica-amplus-6#

³³⁹ leica-camera.com/en-GB/sport-optics/hunting/riflescopes#

³⁴⁰ leica-camera.com/en-GB/sport-optics/hunting/riflescopes#

“Leica Calonox thermal imaging cameras for contemporary and appropriate hunting.”

The product pages featured images of a boar,³⁴¹ deer³⁴² and springbok.³⁴³

Other links to hunting

In 2018 Leica had published a global hunting policy that stated it “does not support nor endorse trophy hunting and condemns all illegal and unethical hunting. Leica also opposes any hunting that threatens species or habitat sustainability.”³⁴⁴ After publication it was criticised for continuing to promote hunting trips, and in 2024 this policy was not found referenced on any of the Leica websites visited for this report.



Leica Hunting blog, Tahr Hunt in the Southern Alps (9 April 2024)

Leica had a significant social media presence, with separate profiles on all major platforms for Leica Camera, Leica Birding and Leica Hunting, and a dedicated Leica Hunting Blog. The 2020

report found that the company was slowly removing the more graphic references to hunting from its social media content on hunting and this trend had continued into 2024, although the company seemed less reticent about openly promoting sport hunting.

Images of elephants and male lions were posted on the Leica Sport Optics Hunting Facebook profile in 2012, and were still there in 2024, with testimonials from Ivan Carter, presenter of the US hunting show Tracks Across Africa, stating:

“We had been tracking these lions in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe for several hours. They had killed a kudu bull. As we neared the kill, the dominant male saw us and came right in”³⁴⁵

“This was on a hunt in Zimbabwe, we had been following a group of twelve [elephant] bulls and caught up to them as they reached the water.”³⁴⁶

Our 2020 report found that towards the end of the period researched, posts on the Leica Hunting Blog became more life-style oriented, featuring hunters, hunting dogs, landscapes and communities local to the area. Earlier articles were about hunting numerous specific species, with pictures of animals, dead or alive. This sanitising trend continued into 2024, with travel blogs about a family hunting trip in Namibia by a family who hunt oryx, kudu and warthog,³⁴⁷ and a trip to hunt for chamois in the New Zealand Alps.³⁴⁸ The stories focussed on the hunters’ holiday experience and if it were not for the rifles they carried, most pictures could be from any other glamorous travel blog. The blogs appeared to be paid promotions, because they included Leica product placements of riflescopes, thermal cameras and spotting scopes.

³⁴¹ leica-camera.com/en-GB/leica-magnus-i#

³⁴² leica-camera.com/en-GB/sport-optics/hunting/binoculars/leica-noctivid#

³⁴³ leica-camera.com/en-int/sport-optics/hunting/spotting-scopes/leica-eyepiece#

³⁴⁴ leica-hunting-blog.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Leica-Hunting-policy.pdf, viewed on 20 November 2020

³⁴⁵ www.facebook.com/LeicaHunting/photos/a.382339611821771.92118.139399686115766/385858584803207/?type=3&theater

³⁴⁶ www.facebook.com/LeicaHunting/photos/a.371023742953358.89636.139399686115766/371027212953011/?type=3&theater%2C

³⁴⁷ leica-hunting-blog.com/africa-in-our-hearts/

³⁴⁸ leica-hunting-blog.com/hunting-chamois-in-new-zealands-alps/



Leica Hunting blog, Africa in our hearts (22 February 2024)

The company's Facebook page, Leica Sport Optics Hunting, was a bit more explicit and continued to post stories about, and images of, hunted animals such as a bighorn sheep³⁴⁹ and chamois.³⁵⁰

None of the brand's current sport optics ambassadors were linked to hunting (some of them were well-known naturalist broadcasters and wildlife photographers)³⁵¹ and by 2020 Leica had stopped listing corporate hunting and sport partnerships on its website.

But news reports and other websites showed that it continued to sponsor hunting organisations, such as: Leica's Diamond Corporate Sponsorship of the 2024 Dallas Safari Club Convention³⁵² and a donation of Leica products to Safari Club International (SCI) auctions, including a donation to the 2024 SCI Convention, which was billed as "The world's largest hunting auction, ... all to fuel SCI's hunter advocacy and wildlife conservation efforts".³⁵³ Leica products were also promoted through the SCI website and blogs.³⁵⁴

Leica's logo was displayed on the website of Magic Safari Lodges,³⁵⁵ suggesting some form of partnership, and Leica was one of the named "our brands" on the Field Sports Channel website.³⁵⁶

Arms and military links

Socrates Privatstiftung and Leica Camera did not have links to the arms industry or military supply, but two other holders of the Leica brand, Leica Geosystems and Leica Microsystems, had signed multiple US army and navy contracts for the supply of equipment such as detection and navigational instruments³⁵⁷ and laboratory equipment³⁵⁸ in the past five years.

³⁴⁹ www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=850593297110414&set=a.631834645652948

³⁵⁰ www.facebook.com/LeicaHunting/posts/pfbid0fAeWwxjYzd5sX5o6n4QfmjdybW38EAMNEQ8Teh25Yfw8UYsP2uEJK6K4YavYBuFl

³⁵¹ leica-camera.com/en-GB/leica-sport-optics-ambassadors#

³⁵² www.huntingwire.com/releases/91e6a825-e3c8-4b25-92b0-f0fcc224cd6d

³⁵³ auction.safariclub.org/Leica-Amplus-6-1-6X24i-Riflescope_i51401320; auction.safariclub.org/2024-SCI-CONVENTION_as95972

³⁵⁴ safariclub.org/look-out-the-latest-binocs-rifles-scopes-and-range-finders; safariclub.org/precision-shooting-at-ftw-ranch/

³⁵⁵ magicsafarilodges.com/#

³⁵⁶ www.fieldsportschannel.tv/our-brands/

³⁵⁷ www.fpds.gov/common/jsp/LaunchWebPage.jsp?command=execute&requestid=216010268&version=1.5

³⁵⁸ www.fpds.gov/common/jsp/LaunchWebPage.jsp?command=execute&requestid=216009169&version=1.5

Climate change and environmental impact

No policies were found in which the company addressed climate change, or the impact of its raw materials and production processes. It took minimal action on the impacts of its products during use with a repair service which kept “a wide selection of spare parts”. It also offered “two free sensor cleans per calendar year for cameras under warranty”, after which sensor cleaning became a paid-for service.³⁵⁹

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

Socrates Privatstiftung had two subsidiaries in Switzerland, a jurisdiction on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens. Perrot Image had its headquarters and a store in the country and was not considered to be a tax avoidance risk, but Leica Camera AG was registered in Switzerland³⁶⁰ while its headquarters was in Germany, which suggested it could be used for possible tax avoidance.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

Leica Hunting blog, Pursuing the elusive chamois (24 May 2024)



³⁵⁹ store.leica-camera.com/uk/customer-care?scopReturnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fleica-camera.com%2Fen-GB

³⁶⁰ app.dnbhoovers.com/company/c8274413-1ba2-3dd0-85dc-b2bc90e2d88c#report/company_summary; perrot-image.ch/de/content/4-uber-uns

Leupold

(Leupold & Stevens Inc)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
19	10	0	100	0	0	0	20

Summary

Compared to previous reports, fewer pictures of trophy animals were found on Leupold’s Facebook page, but they still featured on the company’s social media channels. The company still had multiple hunters among its pro staff, as well as connections to many hunting organisations. The company history section on its website continued to emphasise its background in hunting products and featured multiple images of traditional trophy animals. Product text also referenced trophy hunts.

The company supplies optics to the military and supports the US gun rights movement. Its partnership with its hometown basketball team, the Portland Blazers, was ended in 2019, quite possibly because it supplied spotting scopes to the Israeli military. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact beyond offering a repair service, nor did it appear to be protecting workers’ rights in the supply chain. It had no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

The Leupold brand is owned by Leupold & Stevens Inc, a family-owned business founded in 1907 in Portland, Oregon, USA. The company was set up by Markus Friedrich (Fred) Leupold, a German immigrant, and his brother-in-law Adam Volpel. The company, initially called Leupold & Volpel, invented, manufactured and sold



Leupold blog, Horns of the High Desert - An Oregon Bighorn Sheep Hunt (21 July 2024)

surveying equipment. After the second world war the company made its first ‘fog-proof’ riflescope in 1947.

Since 1947 the company has gone on to manufacture a wide range of sport optics aimed at golfers, wildlife watchers, hunters, shooters and the military. Leupold & Stevens started supplying the US military with optics products in 1985 and continues to supply them to this day. The company has an estimated turnover of £81m.³⁶¹

The company’s website states: “The future of hunting is in all of our hands. While we have a right to enjoy wildlife and wild places, it’s our responsibility to protect it. This is why Leupold supports so many organizations whose mission it is to conserve wildlife, as well as protect, enhance, and grow the habitat it depends on.”³⁶² Several of its listed partners supported sport hunting as well as game control.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

On its website, www.leupold.com, the company sold riflescopes, red dots, spotting scopes, rangefinders, binoculars, reticles, scope mounts, apparel and optics accessories. These were arranged by product type rather than activity. Binoculars, spotting scopes and rangefinders could be filtered by use for “hunting” and riflescopes for “open country long range hunting” and “close range hunting”.³⁶³

The product descriptions frequently referred to hunting, and sometimes to specific types, including trophy and dangerous game hunts:

“The RX-5000 TBR/W is the rangefinder for the modern hunter. With an impressive 5,000-yard ranging capability, this optic ensures precise shots every time.”³⁶⁴

“The VX®-3i 1.5-5x20mm is one of the most popular dangerous game/safari scopes in the world. From tight brush to open savannahs, the 1.5-5x magnification range is ideal for shooting at a variety of distances.”³⁶⁵

“The RX-1500i TBR/W is also equipped with our Trophy Scale™ feature, allowing you to estimate the rack height and width of any animal in the field. This feature will help you stay above board and out of trouble if you hunt where antler size is a big deal.”³⁶⁶

“Find everything from steel targets to far-off trophies with the BX-4 Pro Guide HD Gen 2 12x50mm binocular.”³⁶⁷

The company history page on Leupold’s website still featured photos and drawings of trophy deer and bear seen through a scope viewfinder, reticle or using night vision equipment.³⁶⁸

Other links to hunting

Despite its continued commitment to sport hunting, Leupold had toned down the content used to promote its products. The Leupold Optics Facebook profile featured less images of dead animals and trophy heads than

³⁶¹ D&B Hoovers, viewed in October 2024

³⁶² www.leupold.com/leupold-dna/partners

³⁶³ www.leupold.com/

³⁶⁴ www.leupold.com/rx-5000-tbr-w-rangefinder

³⁶⁵ www.leupold.com/vx-3i-15-5x20-duplex-riflescope

³⁶⁶ www.leupold.com/blog/post/introducing-the-rx-1500-rangefinder

³⁶⁷ www.leupold.com/bx-4-pro-guide-hd-gen-2-12x50mm

³⁶⁸ www.leupold.com/a-living-history



Leupold blog, Horns of the High Desert - An Oregon Bighorn Sheep Hunt (21 July 2024)

were found in the previous report, although there still were some, such as an elk,³⁶⁹ wild sheep,³⁷⁰ white-tailed deer³⁷¹ and bear.³⁷²

The sections titled #Leupold, where the company reposted customer photos found on each product page, had been removed by 2020, but customers could still submit their photos to the company's website via the #Leupoldcore page, which in October 2024 featured two photos of dead turkeys and a brown bear killed in Alaska.³⁷³ Also part of what it called "the Leupold Core Communities" was its extensive pro team which consisted of mostly hunters,³⁷⁴ including big-game hunter and hunting advocate Randy Newberg, "the voice of the public land hunter in America",³⁷⁵ and "professional big game outfitter" Jim Shockey.³⁷⁶

An active blog with sponsored hunting films by pro staff, videos with hunting tips and product reviews was full of lifestyle imagery of hunters in the US,³⁷⁷ such as a story on Tim Lesser, vice president of product & marketing at Leupold & Stevens on a "once-in-a-lifetime Bighorn Sheep hunt as he and his crew rall[ied] together to conquer the remote wilderness of Oregon's Steens Mountain".³⁷⁸

Some of Leupold's promotional hunting activities were now organised by or via other organisations. It no longer held a weekly competition on its Facebook profile but did donate optics to social media giveaways of "American-made gear"³⁷⁹ and a prize package that included an elk hunt³⁸⁰. Leupold's "Optics Academy", which was found to offer classes on the use of hunting optics in 2018, had been removed from the Leupold website by 2020, but its courses were still running, according to articles on third-party websites such as Outdoor Class³⁸¹ and Ultimate Reloader.³⁸²

Leupold's website stated it was proud to support a number of organisations, including: the Dallas Safari Club, Boon and Crockett Club, Ducks Unlimited, Mule Deer Foundation, National Rifle Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, Orgena Hunters Association. Many of these were linked to advocacy for hunters rights and involved in trophy hunting.³⁸³

³⁶⁹ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=950621097109610&set=pb.100064851845949.-2207520000&type=3&locale=en_GB

³⁷⁰ www.facebook.com/LeupoldOptics/photos/pb.100064851845949.-2207520000/10159692173867968/?type=3&locale=en_GB

³⁷¹ www.facebook.com/LeupoldOptics/photos/pb.100064851845949.-2207520000/10158830064712968/?type=3&locale=en_GB

³⁷² www.facebook.com/LeupoldOptics/photos/pb.100064851845949.-2207520000/10158500430457968/?type=3&locale=en_GB

³⁷³ www.leupold.com/leupoldcore

³⁷⁴ www.leupold.com/learn/core-communities/pro-team

³⁷⁵ www.leupold.com/randey-newberg

³⁷⁶ www.leupold.com/jim-shockey

³⁷⁷ www.leupold.com/blog

³⁷⁸ www.leupold.com/blog/post/horns-of-the-high-desert-an-oregon-bighorn-sheep-hunt

³⁷⁹ www.facebook.com/LeupoldOptics/posts/pfbid035WzXgDUjPcZuqJpUQnSq8Zw6cyMFoUuCHBL2gEdwLEfGdMg2MnQHxu64KP45o3sJl?locale=en_GB

³⁸⁰ worldwidetrophyadventures.com/elk-hunt-giveaway/?utm_source=Leupold&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Leupold_marketing&fbclid=IwY2xjawFqTC9leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHTymU9d007DkRO8xqEPlwBepMyrpwTLrOtR07hEF80Q_3omUj9GOKUYCMg_aem_5xWvQUspej_OTJ0QznkQ5g

³⁸¹ outdoorclass.com/instructors/leupold-optics/

³⁸² ultimatereloader.com/2024/05/24/what-is-the-leupold-optics-academy/

³⁸³ www.leupold.com/partnerships

Leupold was listed as a “Titanium” partner on the website of the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation (CSF), a pro-hunting lobby organisation.³⁸⁴ In 2019 Leupold CEO, Bruce Pettet, joined the board of the CSF,³⁸⁵ where he still appeared to have a place.³⁸⁶ His profile on the CSF website states that Pettet also served on the board of governors for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, board of directors of Honored American Veterans Afild and the board of directors of Stimson Lumber Company.³⁸⁷

Leupold also organised the Project Hunt contest, “which offers hunters across the United States the chance to have their next hunt filmed by a professional and shared across Leupold’s digital media platforms.”³⁸⁸

The company was listed as a sponsor on the Safari Club International website.³⁸⁹ It had donated products to Safari Club International Auctions, including in 2024 to the 2024 SCI Convention, “the world’s largest hunting auction ... to fuel SCI’s hunter advocacy and wildlife conservation efforts”,³⁹⁰ and Leupold products were promoted in blogs depicting (trophy) hunting.³⁹¹ Leupold’s logo was also displayed on the Magic Safari Lodges website,³⁹² suggesting some form of sponsorship or partnership. Details of the actual relationship were not found.

Arms and military links

Leupold entered the “tactical optics” market in 1985.³⁹³ Together with the military, it developed scopes specifically designed for the battlefield.³⁹⁴

Leupold markets its optical products for military or tactical use but did not sell arms or ammunition. Riflescopes could be sorted for “long range tactical” and “short range tactical” use and the company stated that its Mark 4[®] Tactical spotting scope was trusted by “countless military sniper teams.”³⁹⁵ The company also had brand dealers in Abu Dhabi, Belgium, Israel and Spain that specialised in military supply.³⁹⁶ It stated: “Certain customer contracts for Military and Law Enforcement entities may specify a product warranty that supersedes the [usual] consumer warranty. International customers may be affected by embargoes and other trade restrictions. Please contact us if you are an international warranty customer prior to sending your scope to us for repair.”³⁹⁷

The company supplied optics to the military. According to the Federal Procurement Database system it had closed several “small arms, ordnance, and ordnance accessories manufacturing” contracts with the US Department of the Navy in 2023 and 2024.³⁹⁸ In 2020, the US army chose the Leupold riflescope Mark 5HD for sniper use.³⁹⁹

In 2017 it supplied spotting scopes to the Israeli military.⁴⁰⁰ In September 2019 basketball team Portland Trail Blazers ended a partnership with the company after protests from Members of the Portland Democratic Socialists of America, Lutherans for Justice in the Holy Land, Portland’s Resistance, and Jewish Voice for Peace. They objected to Leupold supplying sniper riflescopes to Israel’s military ground arm.⁴⁰¹ Although the team later issued a statement that the decision had not been made because of the protests,⁴⁰² the Blazers’ initial explanation suggested it was at least one of the reasons.

³⁸⁴ congressionalsportsmen.org/get-involved/partners/

³⁸⁵ board.congressionalsportsmen.org/news/congressional-sportsmens-foundation-adds-conservation-leaders-to-board/

³⁸⁶ congressionalsportsmen.org/who-we-are/our-board/

³⁸⁷ congressionalsportsmen.org/who-we-are/our-board/#member-modal-22

³⁸⁸ www.americanhunter.org/content/leupold-announces-the-return-of-project-hunt/

³⁸⁹ safariclub.org/sponsorships-and-licensing/

³⁹⁰ auction.safariclub.org/2024-SCI-CONVENTION_as95972SCI

³⁹¹ safariclub.org/guns-of-sci-member-terry-bj/; safariclub.org/the-venezuelan-connection/; safariclub.org/new-rifle/; safariclub.org/the-best-new-cartridges-for-africa/; safariclub.org/blue-skies-white-rams/; safariclub.org/super-stalks-2/; safariclub.org/hunt-with-c-j-mcelroys-personal-rifle-at-sam-fejes-tsiu-river-lodge-and-help-sci-while-doing-it/

³⁹² magicsafarilodges.com/#

³⁹³ www.leupold.com/learn/about-us/a-living-history

³⁹⁴ www.leupold.com/leupold-core/stories/30-years-of-service,

³⁹⁵ www.leupold.com/shop/spotting-scopes/series/mark-4

³⁹⁶ www.leupold.com/international-dealers

³⁹⁷ www.leupold.com/lifetime-guarantee

³⁹⁸ www.fpbs.gov/ezsearch/fpbsportal?q=leupold+%26+stevens&s=FPDS.GOV&templateName=1.5.3&indexName=awardfull&x=0&y=0&sortBy=SIGNED_DATE&desc=Y

³⁹⁹ www.americanrifleman.org/content/u-s-army-chooses-leupold-mark-5hd-for-sniper-use/

⁴⁰⁰ sadejournal.com/shaping-the-fight-in-israel/; www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/36279

⁴⁰¹ www.oregonlive.com/blazers/2019/09/portland-trail-blazers-no-longer-partnering-with-scope-manufacturer-leupold-and-stevens.html

⁴⁰² www.oregonlive.com/blazers/2019/10/portland-trail-blazers-say-scope-manufacturer-leupold-stevens-did-not-renew-sponsorship-with-team-for-business-reasons.html

Meopta

(Carlyle Group)

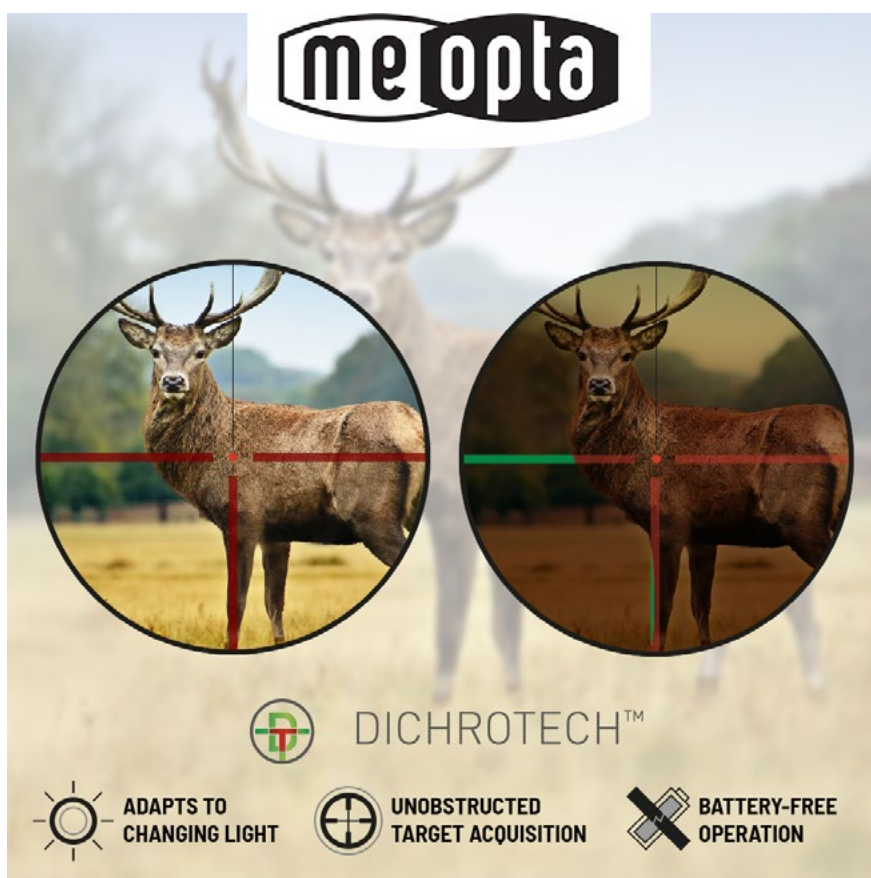
Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
10	0	0	0	0	20	30	20

Summary

The European Meopta company was bought by giant private equity investor Carlyle Group in 2023. The US Meopta company changed its name to Global Photonics, but continued to be the sole distributor of Meopta sport optics in the US.

Images on the Meopta website continued to show trophy animals, but its text no longer mentioned big-game or trophy hunting. Optics, including riflescopes, were grouped by activity: hunting, nature and tactical. On Facebook the “Meopta sport optics - Trophy Room” page encouraged customers to show how Meopta products helped make their “outdoor experience” better and included many photos of dead animals. Although its general marketing had become less clearly aimed at sports hunters, Meopta continued to have links to sport hunting through its social media.

Meopta produces complex optics and optical components for the military, including for weapon systems produced by BAE Systems. Carlyle Group had been severely criticised for its growing investments in the fossil fuel industry and how it tried to downplay the carbon emissions from its investments in its climate reporting. It does not appear to be taking steps to protect workers’ rights in the supply chain and has several subsidiaries in tax havens. It had been criticised for investing in a controversial call centre that was repeatedly accused of union busting and unfair working practices, and for paying executives in such a way that Carlyle Group had to pay less in taxes and to shareholders.



Facebook @MeoptaUS (16 December 2022)

Background

Meopta-optika s.r.o. was established in 1933, under the name Optikotechna, and initially produced darkroom equipment such as enlargers and lenses. The company’s focus changed over time and in response to changing political climates. Nowadays it offers optical products for a diverse customer base: wildlife watchers, hunters, scientists, and medical and military personnel. Its products included binoculars, spotting scopes, riflescopes,

night vision equipment, industrial optical and mechanical components, image intensifiers for X-ray imaging devices and optical systems for military applications.

The company is based in the Czech Republic. In 2023 it was bought by Carlyle Group,⁴⁰⁶ a private equity investor with assets under management of \$435bn.⁴⁰⁷ As part of the acquisition, Meopta s.r.o. became the core company of the Meopta group.⁴⁰⁸ It owned two other key companies: MeoMed s.r.o., which trades in medical devices, and Meopta Systems s.r.o. which trades in complex military optics.⁴⁰⁹ Its sister company Meopta U.S.A. Inc changed its name to Global Photonics in March 2024⁴¹⁰ and apparently was not included in the Carlyle Group buy-out.⁴¹¹ It remained the sole distributor of Meopta sport optics in the US.⁴¹²

Carlyle Group has a turnover of £2.38bn.⁴¹³ In 2020 Meopta had reported a turnover of £94m⁴¹⁴ and stated that hunters were its “largest group of users”.⁴¹⁵

Hunting

Hunting accessories

The brand now has four websites for sport optics (www.meoptasportsoptics.eu, www.meoptasportsoptics.com/usa, www.meoptasportsoptics.cz and www.meoptasportsoptics.de), which were all separated into sections titled: hunting, nature and tactical. On the global website the hunting section linked to the company's sports optic catalogue, which promoted riflescopes, spotting scopes, binoculars and red dot sites and night vision riflescopes, and recommended many products for hunting. The MeoStar B1 Plus was specifically recommended for “twilight boar hunting”.⁴¹⁶ This website did not link to an e-shop and no longer featured individual products or a ballistic turret and calculator. At the time of writing, all products on the e-shop linked from the company's Czech website appeared to be unavailable⁴¹⁷ and the company's US e-shop was said to be opening soon.⁴¹⁸

Text references to trophy and big-game hunting were no longer found on the company's global website, nor in its catalogue, but they did still contain images of trophy animals such as an elk,⁴¹⁹ mountain goat and bighorn sheep and silhouettes of deer in the viewfinder of a reticle.⁴²⁰

Other links to hunting

The Meopta Hunting Facebook page was no longer found and social media linked from its global website did not appear to promote hunting. The company's Facebook page was not accessible at the time of writing;⁴²¹ the latest post on its Instagram page was from May 2020;⁴²² and its YouTube channel had no hunting content.⁴²³

Its US social media, however, does contain several pictures of sport hunting. For example, on 22 January 2024, it posted a picture of a dead goat with large horns with the caption: “It's always great getting praise and seeing the fruits of hard hunting. One of our hunters, Kadeja, was nice enough to share some pics of her goat hunt in New S. Wales where she used a Meopta scope and binos.”⁴²⁴ Meopta sport optics USA also managed a Facebook group called “Meopta sport optics - Trophy Room”, which encouraged customers to show how Meopta helped make their “outdoor experience” better and included many photos of dead animals. A post from 31 January 2024, for example, featured a picture of a dead mule deer shot in Sonora, Mexico.⁴²⁵

⁴⁰⁶ www.meopta.com/en/; www.meopta.com/en/news/carlyle-to-acquire-meopta/

⁴⁰⁷ www.carlyle.com/our-firm

⁴⁰⁸ www.meopta.com/en/news/merger-of-the-companies-meopta-optika,-s-r-o-and-meopta-s-r-o/

⁴⁰⁹ app.dnbhoovers.com/company/5907a63e-93ef-37e2-bde3-98f685c0d5e7

⁴¹⁰ www.linkedin.com/posts/reinhardseipp_as-of-march-1-2024-meopta-usa-will-be-activity-7166911596915585025-S2mR/

⁴¹¹ www.globalphotonics.com/about

⁴¹² www.globalphotonics.com/markets

⁴¹³ D&B Hoovers, viewed in October 2024

⁴¹⁴ D&B Hoovers, viewed in November 2020

⁴¹⁵ www.meopta.com/en/social-responsibility-and-sponsoring/, viewed on 1 November 2020 (since removed)

⁴¹⁶ www.meoptasportsoptics.eu/files/EN_2024.pdf

⁴¹⁷ eshop.meopta.cz

⁴¹⁸ meopta.store

⁴¹⁹ www.meoptasportsoptics.eu/?interestTopic=2

⁴²⁰ www.meoptasportsoptics.eu/files/EN_2024.pdf

⁴²¹ www.facebook.com/Meopta/

⁴²² www.instagram.com/meoptasportoptics/

⁴²³ www.youtube.com/channel/UC6fmWYZzX1HSNtIZ7RBMQFQ

⁴²⁴ www.facebook.com/MeoptaUS/posts/pfbid0263YpqVAMRtYyRCPdN8M5pnU2ABoA4gomf8i3vthxiYuQcEuvMN9QD6AzPNA6aRvI

⁴²⁵ www.facebook.com/groups/283388112128385/posts/1796358774164637/

Meopta continues to sponsor the Czech-Moravian Hunting Union,⁴²⁶ but does not appear to have a pro-staff programme. The only brand ambassador found was Jirí Lipták, Olympic trap shooter and “an active hunter”, but no evidence was found of him promoting the company’s products for hunting.⁴²⁷

Arms and military links

Meopta Systems s.r.o., a subsidiary of Meopta-optika, trades in complex military optics⁴²⁸ that include soldiers’ personal optical systems⁴²⁹ and optical systems and components for armoured vehicles.⁴³⁰ It is an “elite manufacturer of optics and OEM [original equipment manufacturer] products for some of the most prestigious high-end brands in the industry, including the largest global military contractors.”⁴³¹

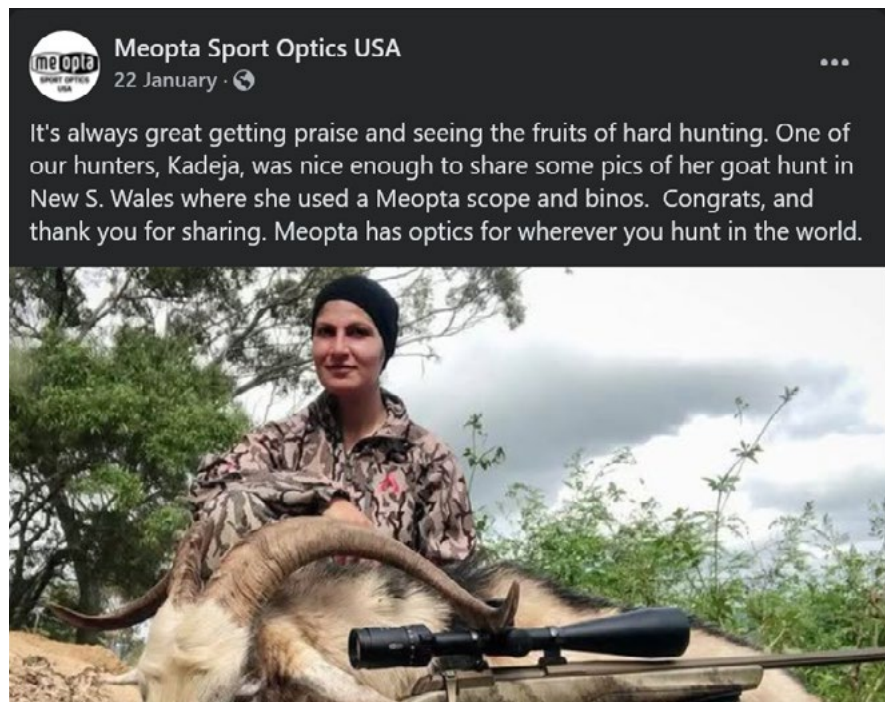
According to press releases from 2017, it is “a traditional supplier to the Czech Armed Forces and many other NATO armies [and was] responsible for the production of the unique UTAAS (Universal Tank and Anti-Aircraft Fire Control System) targeting technology” used by BAE Systems in its CV90 infantry fighting vehicles.⁴³²

Meopta’s sport optics websites have a dedicated “Tactical” section, which no longer marketed a specific range of tactical riflescopes, spotting scopes and binoculars. Instead, it linked to the company’s general sport optics catalogue, which only promoted one red dot sight specifically for tactical use.⁴³³

Climate change and environmental impact

Meopta was found to have minimal action on the impacts of its raw materials. It stated: “We use greener, less harmful materials”, but did not explain which. It took no action on the impacts of its products during use and/or at end of life.

It took some action on the main areas of impact of its production processes, such as “reducing emissions of volatile organic compounds into the atmosphere by using catalytic oxidation units”; “recycling of materials and raw materials during the production”; “regeneration of solvents in our own distillation plant and their reuse in the production process”; “consistent waste sorting in all company operations”; and “using suitable optical glass waste (prisms and lenses) as teaching aids in schools.”⁴³⁴



Facebook @MeoptaUS (22 January 2024)

⁴²⁶ www.cmmj.cz/

⁴²⁷ www.meoptasportsoptics.eu/files/EN_2024.pdf

⁴²⁸ www.meopta.com/AspService/download.asp?url=71532/download/catalogues/2024/meopta-industrial-applications.pdf

⁴²⁹ www.meopta.com/en/soldiers-personal-systems/

⁴³⁰ www.meopta.com/en/armored-vehicles-optical-systems/

⁴³¹ www.meopta.com/en/optical-systems-for-defense-applications/

⁴³² www.meopta.com/en/news/meopta-to-participate-in-the-supply-and-operation-of-cv90-combat-vehicles/; www.baesystems.com/en/article/czech-optical-provider-to-support-line-of-sight-technology-for-bae-systems--cv90

⁴³³ www.meoptasportsoptics.eu/files/EN_2024.pdf

⁴³⁴ www.meopta.com/en/environment/

Meopt did not have any information on its climate change impact, but its parent company Carlyle Group published an annual ESG Report, which included its Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures Report.⁴³⁵

In its 2024 ESG Report⁴³⁶ Carlyle Group discussed actions to incentivise decarbonisation through a financing programme, engagement with the finance industry on climate change and increasing the renewable energy capacity of its energy investments. But although the company seemed to engage thoroughly with its portfolio companies on reduction of carbon emissions, it did not give an overview of specific actions it was taking to reduce their carbon impact. Most concerningly, it did not appear to exclude the acquisition of companies that heavily contributed to carbon emissions and appeared to prepare for a continuing use of fossil fuels alongside renewable energy by its fossil fuel exploration investments Neptune Energy⁴³⁷ and SierraCol Energy.⁴³⁸

The company claimed that in June 2024 the emissions from production and energy purchases of 75% of its majority-owned corporate private equity, power, and energy portfolio companies were covered by “Paris-Aligned Climate Goals”. But it measured this by assessing portfolio companies’ emissions intensity, low-carbon innovation, displacement of higher carbon assets, grid stability and annual reporting of GHG CO2e emissions data; instead of their absolute CO2 emissions. No targets to reduce the absolute emissions were found for the company or its investments, and the company purchased carbon credits to neutralise a large part of its emissions instead of actually reducing them.

Carlyle Group had been severely criticised for the carbon emissions of its investments and how it has downplayed them. In April 2023 Private Equity Climate Risks published a report The Carlyle group’s Hidden Climate Impact: Exposing a decade of fossil fuel investments, which found that Carlyle’s total emissions had grown 95% per year from 2011 to 2021, and that it had “benefited from the current loophole-riddled regulatory framework for private equity firms to largely avoid public backlash and to continue raising capital from institutional investors, even as investors increasingly commit to exit or curb financing of fossil fuels.”⁴³⁹

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain. Carlyle Group had been criticised for being the lead investor in a call centre company with a long history of accusations of union busting and settling cases of unfair labour practices.⁴⁴⁰

Tax conduct: Carlyle Group had several subsidiaries based in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s tax havens list. It had a tax policy,⁴⁴¹ but this did not cover all of its investments nor explain the presence of its subsidiaries in tax havens. The company had been subject to a “HMRC crackdown” in 2024 for possibly misclassifying members of its partnership as self-employed to lower the taxes it needed to pay.⁴⁴² And in 2022 Pittsburgh Comprehensive Municipal Pension Trust Fund filed a lawsuit that accused several current and former executives of Carlyle Group of taking millions in personal profits, depriving income to shareholders and shielding the executives from paying certain taxes.⁴⁴³

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration. It was a member of two lobby groups: the World Economic Forum and the Business Roundtable.

⁴³⁵ www.carlyle.com/sites/default/files/2024-06/Carlyle-ESG-Report-2024.pdf?utm_source=sustainable-pathways-page&utm_medium=web&utm_id=esg-report-2024

⁴³⁶ www.carlyle.com/sites/default/files/2024-06/Carlyle-ESG-Report-2024.pdf?utm_source=sustainable-pathways-page&utm_medium=web&utm_id=esg-report-2024

⁴³⁷ www.carlyle.com/impact/neptune-energy

⁴³⁸ sierracolenergy.com/about-us

⁴³⁹ globalenergymonitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/PECR_Report_Carlyles-Hidden-Climate-Impact_April2023-1.pdf

⁴⁴⁰ pestakeholder.org/news/are-private-equity-owned-companies-receiving-federal-funds-union-busting/

⁴⁴¹ www.carlyle.com/sites/default/files/2022-01/Carlyle_UK_Tax_Strategy_2022.pdf

⁴⁴² www.ft.com/content/0021f962-c262-4835-8558-0b4de8884809

⁴⁴³ www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/08/11/lawsuit-youngkin-carlyle-taxes-virginia/

Minox

(Blaser Group, L&O Holding GmbH & Co KG)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
16	10	0	60	0	0	40	0

Summary

Hunters remains the main target audience for Minox and other Blaser Group brands. Minox product text consistently refers to hunting and references driven hunts as well as game. The marketing of its riflescopes features images of trophy animals such as elk and boar. Other Blaser Group brands sell rifles and trophy hunting holidays, where travellers can hunt animals such as elephants, giraffes and leopards. Minox (and other Blaser brands) sponsor organisations with links to sport hunting.

Blaser Group owns several firearms brands. It takes minimal action to limit its environmental and climate impacts, and does not appear to be taking action to protect workers' rights in its supply chain. L&O Holding GmbH & Co KG has one subsidiary in a tax haven which has the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Minox GmbH is a German company originally known for its photography products. It now offers a range of sport optics and compact digital cameras that are aimed at wildlife watchers, hunters, water sport enthusiasts and security forces. The company was briefly owned by Leica between 1996 and 2001. It became independent for several years after a management buyout but has been part of the Blaser Group since 2013. Blaser Group is ultimately owned by L&O Holding GmbH & Co KG.

Blaser is a leading manufacturer in the hunting and outdoor industry: “Our products go far beyond just hunting rifles: It is our goal to provide you with premium, fit for purpose hunting gear that is perfectly in tune with your preferences – from optics and accessories to the latest in functional and technical hunting lifestyle apparel.” Blaser brands produce firearms and optics, including riflescopes and target optics, for hunting, sports, and the military.⁴⁴⁴ The company also organised “unforgettable hunting adventures”.⁴⁴⁵ The group owned the firearm brands Blaser, Mauser, Sauer & Sohn and Rigby, and Liemke Thermal Optics.



Blaser Safari, travel catalogues “Experience unforgettable hunting adventures” (blaser-safaris.com)

444 www.blaser-group.com/uk/

445 www.blaser.de/en/company/blaser-safaris

Blaser Group had an estimated annual turnover of £166m.⁴⁴⁶

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Minox had a dedicated hunting website.⁴⁴⁷ Products were arranged into hunting, outdoor, birding, nautic and shooting sports. Under hunting, Minox sold riflescopes, binoculars, spotting scopes, trail cameras, night vision equipment, and accessories for these products.

The product text repeatedly referred to hunting, specifically driven hunts. It referred to animals as game, but did not reference trophy hunting or specific types of prey other than boar:

“This saves you the hassle of having to focus and avoids unnecessary movements, for which you don’t have time for when identifying game at the crucial moment.”⁴⁴⁸

“The open comfort bridge ensures convenient operation and decisive game identification with one hand: an invaluable advantage while stalking and hunting, but also when in a raised hide.”⁴⁴⁹

“For friends who love hunting wild boar on driven hunts, MINOX has the perfect companion: The new RV 1 - a compact, enclosed red dot sight with 1x magnification.”⁴⁵⁰

“MINOX RS-4 1-4x24: The perfect companion for driven hunts and night hunting in combination with clip-on optics.”⁴⁵¹

“The X-range, RAPID, X-lite, X-active and X-HD binocular lines are all perfectly tailored to meet the various needs and fields of use - whether for hunting, for outdoor sports, wildlife and nature observations, while at sea or for the opera and theater.”⁴⁵²

In 2018 no images of animals were found on Minox’s website, but in 2020 and 2024 many product descriptions featured pictures of trophy and other game animals, including elk, deer, boar⁴⁵³ and a fox.⁴⁵⁴

The Minox frontpage had a social media section which allowed customers to “Shop The Look”. An Instagram post promoted Minox X-range binoculars⁴⁵⁵ superimposed on a picture of a Slovenian hunting influencer (wildoutdoors_ewiee) showing off her first hunted marmot.⁴⁵⁶

Blaser markets its firearms brands specifically to hunters, from Rigby’s Shikari rifle, a recreation of “the late nineteenth century... Rigby boxlock double... a stalwart companion for colonial game wardens and Professional Hunters”⁴⁵⁷ to a range of big-game rifles made in partnership by Mauser and Rigby.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁴⁶ D&B Hoovers, viewed in September 2024

⁴⁴⁷ www.minox.com/uk/

⁴⁴⁸ www.minox.com/media/19/f7/e7/1630473735/Minox_productinformation_binocular_RAPID.pdf

⁴⁴⁹ www.minox.com/uk/MINOX-Binocular-X-active-10x44/80407336

⁴⁵⁰ www.minox.com/uk/MINOX-Red-Dot-Sight-RV-1/80224005

⁴⁵¹ www.minox.com/en/MINOX-RS-4-1-4x24/80413876

⁴⁵² www.minox.com/en/Products/Binoculars/

⁴⁵³ www.minox.com/en/Products/Riflescope/

⁴⁵⁴ www.minox.com/en/Products/Binoculars/

⁴⁵⁵ www.minox.com/en/

⁴⁵⁶ www.instagram.com/p/CTcm5QQsUrp/

⁴⁵⁷ www.johnrigbyandco.com/guns/the-shikari-rifle/

⁴⁵⁸ www.johnrigbyandco.com/guns/the-big-game/

Other links to hunting

Minox's social media is primarily aimed at hunters. The Minox Optics' Facebook profile featured one picture of a dead animal since our previous report, a fox from 2022,⁴⁵⁹ and Minox USA's Facebook profile showed killed animals regularly, such as pictures of rifles laid on top of an unidentified hooved animal with the caption: "Another successful hunt in the books!"⁴⁶⁰ and an impala shot in South Africa, both from 2024.⁴⁶¹

Minox is listed as a sponsor of Team HuntInMotion, a multimedia "Hunter, Globetrotter, Author, Lecturer and Film Crew".⁴⁶² Blaser's logo and those of several of its brands were displayed on the website of Magic Safari Lodges, suggesting some form of sponsorship or partnership.⁴⁶³ Details of the actual relationship could not be found. Blaser had donated several Sauer rifles to the Safariclub 2024 auction.⁴⁶⁴ In a blog from 2023 Safariclub dubbed Blaser and its brands Mauser and Sauer the "Teutonic Triumverate" of "Europe's best-known repeating rifles."⁴⁶⁵

Blaser Safaris organises hunting trips, which it advertised with: "Realize your hunting dreams with us, choose from 83 wild species and 51 hunting areas worldwide!"⁴⁶⁶ 2024 travel brochures for Namibia⁴⁶⁷ and Zimbabwe⁴⁶⁸ listed trophy and daily hunt guidance fees for animals such as crocodiles, elephants, giraffes, hippos and leopards; and recommended equipment, next to general travel information. The "Package Leopard – 14 days" in another catalogue broke down the cost of shooting a leopard (€11,000 in hunting fees, €9,000 in trophy fees and €550 for a non-refundable hunting permit).⁴⁶⁹

A promo video for its safaris in Sney Rivier, Namibia,⁴⁷⁰ showed footage of a wide variety of animals, including giraffes and zebras. In close-up, it featured the killing of an antelope.⁴⁷¹ The video did not make clear whether other animals would be hunted during the trip, but a quick succession of shots of the lodges where travellers would be staying featured a taxidermied rhinoceros head, panthers and several antlered animals on the wall.⁴⁷²

According to its Facebook page the company uses "ethical hunting as one of the management tools of our reserve. Hunting the oldest, lone animals to ensure the sustainability of our animal population."⁴⁷³ The killing shots in the promotional video were followed by a similar statement over footage of a hunter "rescuing" a tortoise from being run over by his jeep. The animal killed in the video appeared healthy.

Blaser published a free hunting magazine called Passion for its customers. The English version was online only and had not been updated since July 2023.⁴⁷⁴

Arms and military links

Minox did not market its optics for military or tactical use, but the Blaser Group owns several arms brands: Blaser rifles and ammunition, Mauser rifles, John Rigby & Co rifles, and J.P Sauer & Sohn rifles, shotguns and ammunition. Its Blaser Tactical 2 Sniper Rifle is used by the Australian military,⁴⁷⁵ although it appears to no longer be in production. Blaser's tactical rifles have reportedly been used by police and special forces groups around the world.⁴⁷⁶

Climate change and environmental impact

The company took minimal action to reduce its environmental and climate impacts. Blaser's Code of Conduct stated that, "Protection of the environment, the use of renewable raw materials and climate protection are ongoing objectives and part of our daily business activities. In the manufacture and transportation of our

⁴⁵⁹ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=844409609883871&

⁴⁶⁰ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=799284755689207&

⁴⁶¹ www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=754541746830175&

⁴⁶² huntinmotion.com/sponsors/

⁴⁶³ magicsafarilodges.com/

⁴⁶⁴ auction.safariclub.org/2024-SCI-CONVENTION_as95972

⁴⁶⁵ safariclub.org/teutonic-triumvirate/

⁴⁶⁶ blaser-safaris.com/en

⁴⁶⁷ blaser-safaris.com/wp-content/uploads/namibia-caprivi-en-2.pdf

⁴⁶⁸ blaser-safaris.com/wp-content/uploads/zimbabwe-matetsi-en.pdf

⁴⁶⁹ blaser-safaris.com/wp-content/uploads/namibia-en-4.pdf

⁴⁷⁰ www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4EkFEMPGDA

⁴⁷¹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4EkFEMPGDA, from 2:43

⁴⁷² www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4EkFEMPGDA, from 1:15

⁴⁷³ www.facebook.com/blasersafaris/posts/pfbid0zBfhXy15j7djZSN46A3KQ2Kw715LD4LnGUDHWQDZgx3hkNgK65bf9KcSyEuhDAad!locale=en_GB

⁴⁷⁴ www.passion-magazin.de/en/about-us/

⁴⁷⁵ www.army.gov.au/equipment/small-arms/blaser-tactical-2

⁴⁷⁶ www.militaryfactory.com/smallarms/detail.php?smallarms_id=1010

products we avoid damage to our environment as far as possible. We are as sparing as possible in our use of resources and the sustainable and climate-sensitive production of our products assumes a high priority in our business activities.”⁴⁷⁷ No specific actions were found.

Minox had a repair service, but this did not appear to extend beyond regular paid repairs for products under warranty/guarantee. It was unable to offer repairs for older Minox cameras and referred customers to a repair shop in London for this service.⁴⁷⁸

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

L&O Holding GmbH & Co KG had one subsidiary in a jurisdiction on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens, suggesting possible tax avoidance. No explanation could be found for the subsidiary’s presence in the country.


Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

PACKAGE LEOPARD – 14 DAYS

On request – permit needed. On availability of tag & approved by MFT; incl transfer, costs of hunt & accommodation, 12 days hunt, hunt guidance 1:1

	Price (€)
Hunting costs on leopard	11,000.–
Trophy fee Leopard	9,000.–
Bait – Plains game	According to list
Permit Leopard (non-refundable)	550.–



18 - PACKAGE LEOPARD – 14 DAYS PACKAGE LEOPARD – 14 DAYS - 19

Blaser Safari, 2024 Namibia Sney Rivier Lodge catalogue (blaser-safaris.com)

⁴⁷⁷ www.blaser-group.com/wp-content/uploads/Blaser_Group_Code_of_Conduct_EN_210x297mm_2023.pdf, viewed 21 August 2024

⁴⁷⁸ www.minox.com/en/Support/Technical-Service/, viewed 21 August 2024

Nikon

(Nikon Corporation)

Ethicscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
41	80	10	0	0	80	60	60

Summary

At the end of 2019 Nikon USA let its dealers know that it was stopping production of its riflescopes. The company removed references to trophy hunting from much of its website and social media profiles, and ended its sponsorship of all but one of its corporate partners with links to sport hunting. At the time of our last 2020 report Nikon Sport Optics still sold riflescopes, but this no longer appeared to be the case. Its sport optics range did not include riflescopes⁴⁷⁹ and it did not market its products for hunting.

Nikon has a policy to verify that its exported goods would not be used for the development of weapons of mass destruction or conventional weapons, but still supplied the US military with optics. It takes extensive action to reduce its environmental and climate impact but limited steps to protect workers' rights in its supply chain. It has several subsidiaries in tax havens which have the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Founded in Japan in 1917 the Nikon Corporation has grown into a well-known global optics business with a turnover of £8.85bn in 2023.⁴⁸⁰

Best known for its cameras and binoculars, Nikon has developed its products over the years to offer a wider range of items, including photographic equipment, sport optics, photolithography steppers (machines used to create integrated circuit parts), surveying instruments, microscopes, measuring instruments, ophthalmic lenses (lenses used in reading glasses, for example), optical equipment and thin film coatings.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Nikon quietly announced that it was stopping its production of riflescopes at the end of 2019. Nikon USA told dealers that they could sell through their current inventories but should not expect them to be replenished.⁴⁸¹ Nikon's 2024 USA sport optics catalogue consisted of binoculars, range finders and fieldscopes and no riflescopes,⁴⁸² with no riflescopes found in its UK sport optics range either.⁴⁸³ Its website, www.nikonsportoptics.com, which previously sold a Prostaff rifle scope range released in 2019, no longer appeared to exist or be functional.⁴⁸⁴

One senior figure in the industry thought that, "The Nikon contraction is completely about internal politics rather than consumer preference. They are trying to expand binocular sales in Europe and association with guns causes problems in some types of shops over there."⁴⁸⁵

An internet search for "Nikon riflescopes" produced a number of results for secondhand items, and one UK website which listed them for sale,⁴⁸⁶ although when they were added to the check-out basket it said they were

⁴⁷⁹ www.nikonusa.com/c/sport-optics

⁴⁸⁰ D&B Hoovers

⁴⁸¹ www.outdoorlife.com/story/gear/nikon-will-no-longer-make-riflescopes/

⁴⁸² www.nikonusa.com/c/sport-optics

⁴⁸³ www.nikon.co.uk/en_GB/products/sport-optics

⁴⁸⁴ www.tactical-life.com/gear/optics/nikon-releases-prostaff-p3-riflescopes/

⁴⁸⁵ www.outdoorlife.com/story/gear/nikon-will-no-longer-make-riflescopes/

⁴⁸⁶ www.microglobe.co.uk/nikon-rifle-scopes-c-148_1114_1116.html

currently unavailable and that the company was waiting for stock. This was not considered to be evidence that Nikon was still manufacturing and selling riflescopes in 2024.

The section of Nikon's website for sport optics no longer listed products by activity, and it made no references to hunting. Our 2020 report found that Nikon appeared to be selling hunting accessories and it had been criticised for hypocrisy regarding its marketing of both wildlife watching and hunting animals.⁴⁸⁷ Since then, its imagery, marketing and product range has changed and it no longer appears to sell hunting accessories and it wasn't found to use hunting imagery. The product pages on the website did not feature pictures of animals. The 2024 catalogue did not mention hunting and largely focused on the technical capabilities of the products.

Other links to hunting

The company's YouTube channel, Nikon Sport Optics US, did not feature videos with advice on using Nikon products for hunting, and its latest video was posted four years ago.⁴⁸⁸ The company's Instagram profile did not have any content⁴⁸⁹ but it promoted the hashtag #nikonsportsoptics in its description, which people used to post photos of hunting gear and dead animals including deer and big horned sheep, although these photos were dated from a number of years ago.

In Shooting Wildlife II (2018) Nikon was listed as a sponsor for a number of organisations linked to sport hunting; however, at the time of writing its only current sponsorship was of McCrea Outdoors, which organises hunting trips including "exotic hunts" for trophy animals including axis deer, aoudad rams and blackbuck antelope.⁴⁹⁰

Arms and military links

Nippon Kogaku K.K., Nikon's predecessor, manufactured equipment for the Japanese military during the second world war, like many other Japanese optics companies.⁴⁹¹ After the war the company, one of the largest in the industry, decided to concentrate on manufacturing cameras.

No current links to the arms industry were found. The company had an ethical export policy regarding arms: "Even if the goods are not controlled goods by law, we verify that the goods will not be used for the development of weapons of mass destruction or conventional weapons."⁴⁹² It did, however, have military links. When the website www.usaspending.gov was viewed in August 2024, we found that Nikon had contracts with the US Department of Defence for optical equipment.

Climate and environmental impacts

Nikon had an extensive sustainability section on its website, which includes a considerable section on environmental management and its 2023 sustainability report.⁴⁹³

For its products, it had criteria for its assessment of future product development including "ease of disassembly and repair" and "reduce materials and number of parts." It discussed the refurbishment of its semiconductor lithography systems and battery recycling in its electronics, reducing waste, resource efficiency, reducing the amount of resources and materials used in its products, and reducing freshwater consumption during product manufacturing, with a detailed breakdown of its use and its future targets. It also had a target to use 30% renewable energy by 2030, and discussed energy use at its manufacturing facilities. It had detailed reporting on use of its products, product development and packaging, and plastic reduction in its products.

The company reported its Scope 1 and 2 emissions for 2022. It also reported a Scope 3 figure; however, this did not appear to be its full scope 3 reporting as its graphic for emissions only included 3 out of 11 categories.

Nikon's target was "to reduce absolute scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions 71% by FY2030 from a FY2013 base year. Nikon Corporation also commits to reduce absolute scope 3 GHG emissions from purchased goods and services, upstream transportation & distribution and use of sold products 31% by FY 2030 from a FY 2013 base

⁴⁸⁷ www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/the-wrong-kind-of-photo-shoot-nikon-in-the-line-of-fire-over-rifle-sights-for-big-game-hunting-8556123.html

⁴⁸⁸ www.youtube.com/@NikonSportOpticsUS/videos

⁴⁸⁹ www.instagram.com/nikonsportsoptics/

⁴⁹⁰ mccreaoutdoors.com/sponsors/

⁴⁹¹ imaging.nikon.com/imaging/information/chronicle/rhnc09s-e/

⁴⁹² www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/governance/risk-management/enhancing-export/

⁴⁹³ www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/report/2023/sr2023_all.pdf

year.” Its targets were approved by the Science Based Targets initiative, meaning that they were in line with international agreements on climate change.

It was found to have some action on the main areas of impact of its raw materials. On hazardous substances it stated that it was lead-free, arsenic-free, chromium-free, and stated that it was investigating alternatives to PFAS. It added: “We eliminated nearly all HFCs, and we are taking measures against HFCs, which are greenhouse gases, and dichloromethane, which is believed to be carcinogenic.” It detailed a number of other substances. It had a target to abolish all hazardous substance use based on its Hazardous Chemical Substances Guideline and stated that it had achieved 65% elimination so far. It stated that it was assessing the use of plastic in its products, but did not provide detail.

Nikon produced mainly electronics, which often contain plastics and fire retardants that have a significant negative environmental impact when released after disposal. Although Nikon’s target was to have zero hazardous chemical substances in manufacturing processes and products, it no longer discussed its use of phthalates (a substance used in plastics that poses significant risks to human health) in its policies on sustainability reporting, whereas its 2019 report mentioned its use in some of its cameras.⁴⁹⁴

Nikon had some action on the main areas of impact of its production processes, such as waste and use of water. It stated that it was reusing “abrasive sludge” for polishing optical products which accounted for 19% of its waste, which resulted in a 45% overall reduction of the waste associated with sludge. It had a target to reduce waste by 10% by 2030. It outlined its water usage in detail and had a target to reduce its freshwater consumption by 5% by 2030 and stated it was currently at 2%. It only briefly mentioned its wastewater.

It was also taking action in some areas of its main impacts during the use and/or end of life of its products. Its website had a section on repair which stated: “As of the end of March, 2023, we have an organization that can provide consistent service quality to more than 200 repair service facilities and direct contact points (customer service counters) in 70 countries and regions around the world.” Its UK website offered a repair service with free return service for the device. It also discussed its recycling at the end of life stage, and its recycling of end of life rechargeable batteries in Japan.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

Although Nikon had a human rights policy⁴⁹⁵ and modern slavery statement⁴⁹⁶ which contains some core labour rights such as freedom of association and zero tolerance of discrimination, it lacked detail on other principles such as its elimination of child labour and payment of a living wage.

Tax conduct

In its 2024 code of conduct⁴⁹⁷ Nikon stated: “As a responsible tax payer in all countries and regions in which it operates, Nikon will pay all taxes due in accordance with the laws of each country and region. Nikon will also cooperate with regular audits carried out by tax authorities.” However, it had holding companies in the Netherlands and Hong Kong, which were jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens and suggest likely tax avoidance, and no explanation could be found of the purpose of these subsidiaries.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

⁴⁹⁴ www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/report/2019/sr2019_all.pdf

⁴⁹⁵ www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/society-labor/human-rights/human_rights_policy.pdf

⁴⁹⁶ www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/society-labor/human-rights/uk-modern-slavery2023.pdf

⁴⁹⁷ www.nikon.com/company/sustainability/management/codeofconduct/code_of_conduct_EN.pdf

Olympus

(OM Digital Solutions, Japan Industrial Partners)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
33	10	0	20	10	100	90	0

Summary

During the research Shooting Wildlife III (2020) Olympus Corporation was in the process of divesting from its consumer imaging business. Since 2021 Olympus cameras, audio recorders and binoculars are no longer owned or controlled by Olympus Corporation and are marketed, sold and distributed by OM Digital Solutions.⁴⁹⁸ OM Digital Solutions is wholly owned by Japan Industrial Partners.

After the change in ownership and selling its subsidiary Olympus Scientific Solutions, Olympus no longer has arms or military links. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has two subsidiaries in tax havens, but these were not considered high risk for tax avoidance.

Background

OM Digital Solutions has practically no reporting on its website.⁴⁹⁹ Since taking over some of the portfolio of Olympus, it sells cameras, lenses, audio equipment, and binoculars. The website of its parent, Japan Industrial Partners, similarly has very little information.⁵⁰⁰ OM Digital Solutions had a turnover of £161m.⁵⁰¹

Hunting

Hunting accessories

On its website, its binoculars are described as being “for nature lovers”⁵⁰² while its Facebook primarily featured photos of birds.

Other hunting links

No other links to hunting were found.

Arms and military links

The former links to defense and the military associated with Olympus Corporation are no longer present since the change in ownership – not only the move from the Olympus brand to OM Digital Solutions but also the acquisition of one of its subsidiaries by a private equity firm. What was formerly known as Olympus Scientific Solutions, which had security and defense contracts,⁵⁰³ is now Evident Corporation.⁵⁰⁴ Evident was acquired by Bain Capital in 2023 from Olympus Corporation.⁵⁰⁵

No current links were found between the company and the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

⁴⁹⁸ www.om-digitalsolutions.com/en/company/business/

⁴⁹⁹ www.om-digitalsolutions.com/en/company/business/

⁵⁰⁰ jipinc.com/en/

⁵⁰¹ D&B Hoovers, viewed in October 2024

⁵⁰² explore.omsystem.com/gb/en/10x42-pro

⁵⁰³ www.olympus-ims.com/en/solutions/security-defense/

⁵⁰⁴ www.olympus-ims.com/en/solutions/

⁵⁰⁵ www.evidentscientific.com/en/press-release/evident-baincapital/

Climate and environmental impacts

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

The company had two subsidiaries on Ethical Consumer's list of tax havens. Although these subsidiaries weren't considered high risk company types, the company still lost some marks because it did not explain the purpose of these and it did not appear to have a publicly available policy to not engage in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

Opticron

(Opticron)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
59	40	50	100	20	100	60	40

Summary

Opticron states that it does not sell riflescopes, does not market any products to hunters and will “not sponsor or endorse individuals or organisations involved in trophy hunting or similar activities.”⁵⁰⁶ Several products are marketed for wildlife management but none for sport hunting and the company’s social media profiles do not have any links to hunting either.

It markets its optics to security and emergency services, but does not sell directly to the military. It takes some action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, and protect workers’ rights in its supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Opticron is a small family-run optics business, founded in the UK in 1970. The company’s products are targeted at “wildlife enthusiasts” and include spotting scopes, binoculars, monoculars, telescopes, digiscoping, tripods and mounts, rangefinders, magnifiers, and accessories such as waterproof cases.

The company returned a questionnaire in August 2024, stating that it had a turnover of under £50m. The company is estimated to have a turnover of £181,800.⁵⁰⁷ No further information was found as no publicly available annual accounts were published.

Opticron was contacted in October 2015 asking for further information about the company. A representative responded stating: “Opticron is a private partnership so you won’t find any financial information about us at Companies House. The company was founded in 1970 by my parents and specialises in the design and marketing of consumer optics (binoculars, monoculars, spotting scopes and accessories) to wildlife watchers the world over. The instruments are made under contract in Japan, Taiwan and China. We employ 20 people in the UK and USA.”

Hunting

Hunting accessories

The company sells binoculars, rangefinders, accessories such as tripods and cases, eyepieces, and spotting scopes marketed as “travel scopes” or “field scopes.” Products are arranged by product type as well as activity. Wildlife Management, an activity linked under Fieldsports, lists spotting scopes, binoculars and rangefinders and features a picture of a deer with large antlers.⁵⁰⁸

Products can also be filtered by categories including: Target Shooting & Archery, Wildlife Holidays and Wildlife Management. Under Fieldsports, Opticron states: “An important part of wildlife conservation, particularly with invasive or introduced species, is the monitoring and management of population. Making important decisions about management relies on accurate identification and optics can be crucial for determining, for example, animal age or for rapid but accurate estimation of the number of birds in a flock.”⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁶ Opticron questionnaire, received September 2017

⁵⁰⁷ app.dnbhoovers.com/company/d75a2735-8763-3be1-81bb-45c5745b51fa

⁵⁰⁸ www.opticron.co.uk/our-products/fieldsports/wildlife-management

⁵⁰⁹ www.opticron.co.uk/our-products/fieldsports

In December 2017 the company sent an email stating that it had removed all mention of hunting from its website, “partly as a result of the ongoing work we are doing with conservation organisations. It was also because we did get feedback after the publication of the first version of the [Shooting Wildlife] report that customers had chosen Opticron products because the brand is not supportive of trophy and other sport hunting.”⁵¹⁰

In August 2024 Opticron confirmed that it still does not promote its products for sport hunting and “did not directly support sport hunting.”⁵¹¹ It also stated it did not sponsor any groups, organisations, media or events involved in the promotion of hunting.

The company responded to an Ethical Consumer questionnaire in September 2017, stating: “Where appropriate we would support the management of wildlife populations for conservation purposes but not for commercial purposes such as driven bird shoots. Our support for conservation is illustrated by the fact that we work closely with Birdlife International partners around the world and in the UK we are the exclusive optics supplier to The Wildlife Trusts.”⁵¹²

The company also emailed in December 2017, stating: “As you will be well aware, binoculars can be used for hunting regardless of whether or not a brand supports that activity. And there are some types of ‘hunting’ such as deer population management which are necessary, in that case due to the lack of top predators in the UK for example. Optics are an essential part of making sure any such cull is done properly.”

Other links to hunting

The company’s Facebook, Instagram and YouTube pages are dedicated to birding, wildlife watching and product descriptions. A few posts feature larger mammals, such as a lynx,⁵¹³ seals⁵¹⁴ and roebuck,⁵¹⁵ but none of these promote hunting.

Opticron seeks out conservation partnerships. It sponsors and supports events, projects and publications, and makes individual donations of equipment for volunteers involved in particular programmes – presumably to people who, like Opticron, are “committed to promoting wildlife and nature observation and conservation in all the countries it serves.”⁵¹⁶

Opticron’s social media brand ambassadors include birders, ecologists, wildlife photographers and an eco tour guide.⁵¹⁷ The company collaborated with zoologist Billy Heaney for its YouTube series Five Minute Road Trips,⁵¹⁸ and with videographer Saxon Bosworth and Georgian conservationist Nika Kerdikoshvili.⁵¹⁹

Arms and military links

On the Opticron website, scopes, binoculars and rangefinders can be filtered for use by “Security and Emergency Services”.⁵²⁰ Opticron products are no longer sold in the webshop of the National Small-bore Rifle Association.⁵²¹

No ethical policy on supply to the military was found, but neither was evidence of any government contracts. In its response to an Ethical Consumer questionnaire, received in November 2020, Opticron stated that it did not sell directly to the arms industry or military but that as a wholesaler, it did not have control over the final destination and application of any of its products.⁵²²

When the company’s website was first visited for this research, pictures accompanying the section Security and Emergency Services featured a picture of an armed police officer with a “thin blue line” badge on their police uniform. The badge was created as a “mark of remembrance and respect” for officers who have died while working.⁵²³

⁵¹⁰ Opticron questionnaire, received September 2017

⁵¹¹ Opticron questionnaire, received August 2024

⁵¹² Opticron questionnaire, received September 2017

⁵¹³ www.instagram.com/p/CtV2J-1tO29/

⁵¹⁴ www.instagram.com/p/Clq94Jdq2xI/

⁵¹⁵ www.instagram.com/p/C1hgCWbvJy-/?img_index=1

⁵¹⁶ www.opticron.co.uk/partnerships-programmes

⁵¹⁷ www.opticron.co.uk/partnerships-programmes/social-media-ambassadors

⁵¹⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=07uAn3zH0dQ&list=PLaQ4shpKeQR_-jrviYFCUGcCTfy8VQjXp

⁵¹⁹ www.instagram.com/p/Cj46itYsQlS/

⁵²⁰ www.opticron.co.uk/our-products/professional

⁵²¹ www.nsrashop.co.uk

⁵²² Opticron questionnaire, received November 2020

⁵²³ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-66109073

According to an article in the Guardian from October 2023, Metropolitan police officers had “openly defied] orders” to not wear the “thin blue line” badge during Pride celebrations and while policing a stand-off between LGBTQ+ rights supporters and a rightwing group. The force’s chief was said to have banned the badges because the US equivalent had been used by “hard-right groups”. Then home secretary, Suella Braverman, questioned the banning of the badge and praised firearms police, describing them as “the thin blue line”. One officer wearing the badge at the protest was said to be pictured next to rightwing activist Laurence Fox days after he made misogynistic remarks about the political journalist Ava Evans.⁵²⁴ The Met police website stated that the force had not banned the badge, but that it only allowed officers to wear a few specific badges and the “thin blue line” was not one of them.⁵²⁵

After Ethical Consumer alerted the company of the meaning of the badge, it cropped the picture to remove the badge from the image. Since the photo was a stock photo that had been used in other articles on the Met police force and the problematic badge had been removed, the initial use of the image was not considered evidence that the company expressed support for hate groups.

Climate change and environmental impact

The company says on its website that it could be contacted to discuss any of its policies relating to the environment, ethical trading, modern slavery, equality, anti-corruption or health & safety.⁵²⁶ In August 2024 it sent Ethical Consumer its Diversity and Sustainability Statement, Ethical Trade Policy and Packaging and Waste Policy, which address its climate and environmental impacts.

The company provides a credible but not detailed discussion of future actions to cut carbon emissions from its main areas of impact, since it takes measures to promote “an efficient and sustainable use of resources, including energy and water and minimising greenhouse gas emissions in production and transport.”

The company takes some action on the main areas of impact of its raw materials and production processes. It states: “Opticron ensures that non-toxic and non-polluting materials are used as far as possible in the manufacture of its products. No heavy metals are used in the production of the products.” It also states: “Measures to minimise adverse impacts on human health and the environment shall be taken throughout the value chain. This includes minimising pollution, promoting an efficient and sustainable use of resources, including energy and water, [and the] local environment at the production site shall not be exploited or degraded”. It says it uses “environmentally-friendly technologies where practical” and that “production and the use of natural resources shall not contribute to the destruction and/or degradation of the resources and income base for marginalised populations, such as in claiming large land areas, use of water or other natural resources on which these populations are dependent”.

The company has taken several measures to reduce packaging waste. All cardboard cartons and wrappers are made from recycled material, single use plastic packaging has been removed within a range of its binocular product boxes, and packaging received from suppliers is re-used.

The company also states: “Customers may request independent social, environment and ethical trade compliance audits of factory premises and/or the supply process.”

The company was considered to be taking minimal action on the impacts of its products during use and/or at end of life. It offered a repair service but this does not appear to extend beyond products under guarantee.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

The company has an Ethical Trade Policy, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, which comprise a comprehensive policy for workers’ rights in the supply chain, including all parts of the Ethical Trading Initiative base code.

It requires that its suppliers meet recognised certified management systems such as ISO 9000 and prospective suppliers are signed up to the Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) programme. Suppliers are required to document compliance with the company’s code of conduct at Opticron’s request and are obliged to name and

⁵²⁴ www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/oct/14/london-police-defy-ban-on-badges-linked-to-far-right-and-white-supremacy

⁵²⁵ www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2023/november-2023/thin-blue-line-badges-complaints/

⁵²⁶ www.opticron.co.uk/ethics-sustainability-diversity

provide contact information for any sub-supplier that Opticron wishes to inspect. It requires suppliers to have a management system to implement the code of conduct and to obtain Opticron's consent prior to outsourcing production or parts of production to a sub-supplier/contractor.

The company stated that it regularly reviews agreements with the people and organisations in its supply chain to ensure compliance with its modern slavery statement and provides training to employees to ensure a high level of understanding of the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking in its supply chains and business. It also requires its business partners to provide training to staff, suppliers and providers.

The company avoids suppliers in countries subject to international boycott by the United Nations and/or UK authorities. Its products were made in Hungary, Germany, UK, Japan, China, Taiwan and Italy.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

Pentax

(Ricoh Group)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
44	70	40	0	10	80	70	40

Summary

Ricoh Imaging markets its range of spotting scopes for hunting on its Japanese website. Neither its EU nor US websites contain any references to hunting. Pentax riflescopes are for sale on the website of one third-party retailer but research suggested that the company had stopped manufacturing these when Ricoh bought the Pentax brand in 2011.

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it sells optics or arms to the military. It does supply other goods, such as IT and office equipment. It takes extensive action to reduce its climate impact, and some to reduce its environmental impact and to protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has several subsidiaries in tax havens that have the potential to be used for tax avoidance.

Background

Pentax was founded in Tokyo in 1919 and started out making lenses for eyeglasses. Its product range has expanded to include photographic lenses, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Ricoh Imaging Company Ltd, part of the Japanese Ricoh Group, bought the Pentax brand and camera business from the Hoya Corporation in 2011. The Ricoh Group was founded in Japan by Kiyoshi Ichimura in 1936 and started out manufacturing sensitised paper and cameras. The company's product range now includes printers, scanners, thermal media, electronic components, digital cameras, binoculars, CCTV and machine-vision lenses. It also provides IT and other corporate communication services. The Ricoh Group had a turnover of ¥2,349bn (£12.5bn) in 2023.⁵²⁷

Hunting

Hunting accessories

The company sells binoculars, spotting scopes, eyepieces and accessories for these products. Neither on the EU website, www.ricoh-imaging.eu, nor on the US website, www.us.ricoh-imaging, are any products marketed to hunters and no images of trophy animals were found. However, Ricoh Imaging's Japanese website, www.ricoh-imaging.co.jp, markets spotting scopes for hunting, stating: "Birders and hunters: we think you'll find exactly what you're looking for."⁵²⁸ The company's sport optics brochure, which includes spotting scopes, does not mention hunting.⁵²⁹ The company's social media profiles are dedicated to nature photography and photography products.

None of the company's own websites sell riflescopes; however, Pentax riflescopes were found for sale on one retail site, www.microglobe.co.uk.⁵³⁰ Some other retail sites have listings for Pentax riflescopes but all of them say the products were no longer available⁵³¹ or have been discontinued.⁵³² While no reliable information from

⁵²⁷ www.ricoh.com/-/Media/Ricoh/Sites/com/IR/financial_data/financial_result/data/36/q4_report.pdf

⁵²⁸ www.ricoh-imaging.co.jp/english/products/binoculars/

⁵²⁹ us.ricoh-imaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PENTAX_catalog_en-web.pdf

⁵³⁰ www.microglobe.co.uk/pentax-rifle-scopes-c-148_1114_1117.html

⁵³¹ www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/441557-REG/Pentax_89715_1_5_6x40_Gameseeker_Riflescope_with.html

⁵³² www.opticsplanet.com/pentax-gameseeker-30-3-10x40mm-matte-riflescope-pp.html

the company was found, hunting chat forums suggested that Pentax riflescopes had been discontinued when Ricoh bought the brand.⁵³³

Arms and military links

Ricoh USA Inc and Ricoh Americas Corporation have since 2008 signed contracts with the US Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs which are collectively worth over \$500m.⁵³⁴ These are mainly for the provision of office and IT equipment.

Ricoh actively recruits army veterans. In 2019 it signed an armed forces covenant, a UK government scheme that “supports members of the Armed Forces by helping them into the workforce and easing their transition into civilian life.”⁵³⁵ Ricoh USA had a web page titled: “Ricoh helps veterans find their career path” which stated: “Our goal is to help veterans use their valuable military skills as a springboard to a successful career.”⁵³⁶

Climate change and environmental impact

Ricoh Company publishes information about its sustainability practices on its website and in its annual report. It fully reports its scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions and has credible and detailed discussions of past and future actions to reduce its GHG emissions. It discusses switching manufacturing sites to renewable energy and plans to work with its suppliers to reduce its scope 3 emissions by improving recycling rates of products components and materials, extending product lifespan, and encouraging customers to use energy-saving settings. It has a target to reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions by 63% by 2030 from a 2015 base year. It has a scope 3 reduction target of 40% within the same timeframe but this only covers some scope 3 categories.⁵³⁷ It has taken some steps to reduce its environmental impact by reducing waste and water use and collecting and reusing products at end-of-life.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

Ricoh has a supplier code of conduct which is publicly available and covers some fundamental labour rights such as freedom of association and a prohibition on forced and child labour. However, it does not guarantee a living wage, nor does it limit working hours adequately.⁵³⁸ The company gains marks for showing a preference for long-term supplier relationships and discussing the impact on suppliers of its purchasing practices.⁵³⁹

Tax conduct

The company had subsidiaries in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s list of tax havens suggesting possible tax avoidance. The company states that it did not shift profits to tax havens or lightly taxed countries but no explanation was found for the subsidiaries’ presence in tax havens.⁵⁴⁰

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

⁵³³ www.700rifle.com/threads/did-pentax-quit-the-riflescope-business.8010/

⁵³⁴ www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=177b981dc41c8d47c89ee296f4c5c2fb

⁵³⁵ insights.ricoh.co.uk/empowering-people/armed-forces-covenant-get-back-into-the-workplace-2

⁵³⁶ www.ricoh-usa.com/en/veterans

⁵³⁷ www.ricoh.com/-/Media/Ricoh/Sites/com/sustainability/environment/management/tcfd/pdf/TCFD_report_web.pdf?1031

⁵³⁸ www.ricoh.com/-/Media/Ricoh/Sites/com/csr/pdf/supplier_code.pdf

⁵³⁹ www.ricoh.com/sustainability/society/fair

⁵⁴⁰ www.ricoh.com/-/Media/Ricoh/Sites/com/governance/pdf/tax_policy.pdf?20230727

Vanguard

(Vanguard World UK, Export Dragon Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
29	10	60	0	20	20	90	0

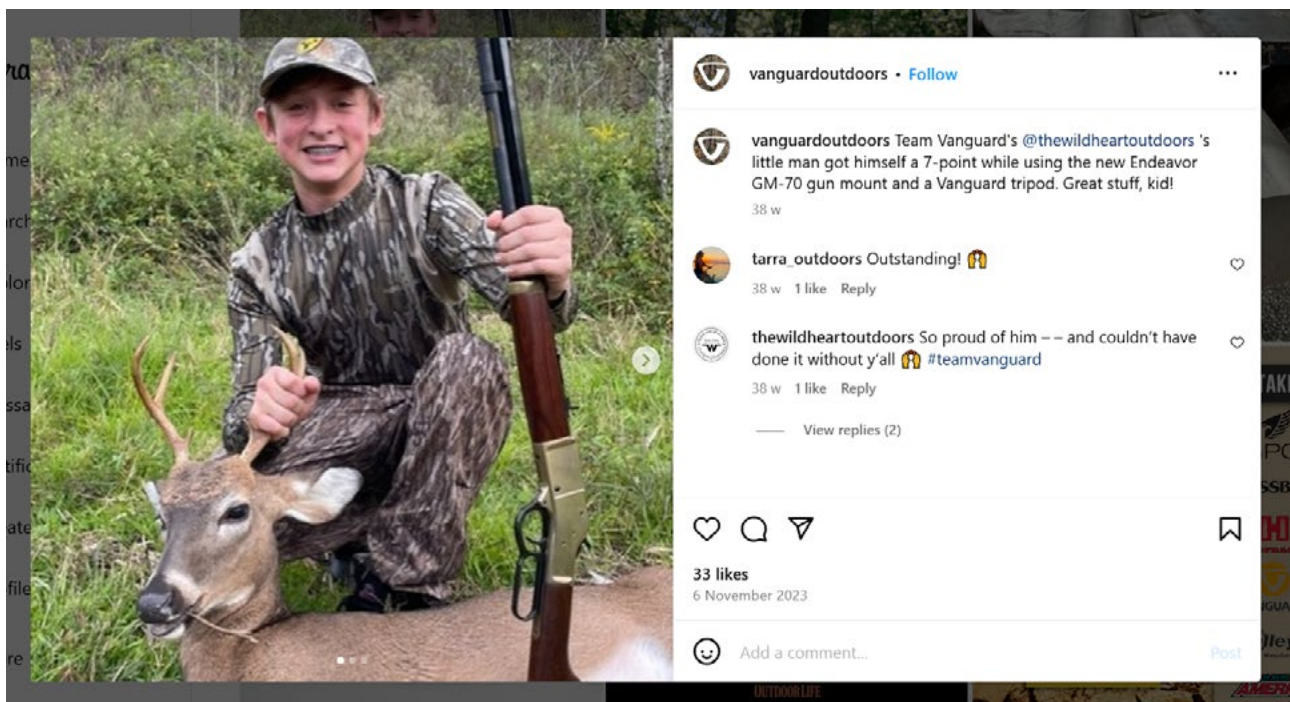
Summary

Vanguard sells accessories for hunting on both its UK and US websites, and its US social media is particularly explicit in its hunting references, language and imagery. Neither the UK nor US websites appear to sell riflescopes anymore.

The company does not have a policy against supply to the military, but no links were found with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. Its ultimate parent company is registered in a tax haven.

Background

Vanguard World was founded in 1986 with design and manufacturing headquarters in Myanmar, and distribution, sales, marketing and administrative branches in the US, Luxembourg, Spain, Germany, the UK, Japan and Guangzhou (China).⁵⁴¹ Its range of photographic equipment, accessories and optic products are distributed globally. Vanguard World UK Ltd is registered in Dorset, but its majority shareholder is Export Dragon Limited, registered in the British Virgin Islands.



Instagram @vanguardoutdoors (6 November 2023)

⁵⁴¹ www.vanguardworld.com/pages/about-vanguard

Hunting

Hunting accessories

On Vanguard World's UK website, www.vanguardworld.co.uk, products are listed by Photo/Video, Nature and Shooting, – previously Hunting”. Under Shooting, Vanguard UK no longer sells riflescopes and only sells spotting scopes, binoculars, outdoor packs, support systems (tripods and mounts), cases, rifle slings and gun bags. The Shooting section states that products have been created by a “development team that includes avid sportsmen.”⁵⁴²

Its US website lists products according to activity and has a section for “Hunting Gear”.⁵⁴³ This includes support systems for rifles, including shooting sticks, tripods and gun mounts. Neither the UK nor US websites appear to sell riflescopes anymore.

The US website and its social media contain noticeably stronger hunting references. The US website has a section called “Vanguard Life” which includes several blogs including a hunting blog. Its hunting page states: “Stay mobile for Spring bear spot and stalk.”⁵⁴⁴ It has a “hunting and outdoors” Instagram with images of people holding guns. One post with a photo of a dead deer was captioned: “Man, we love hearing stories like this. Sent to us from Richard Rubal: ‘Hey there just wanted to share a little photo from this past weekend of my fiancé’s AZ Coues deer she harvested. The buck was located 503 yards but 580 vertical feet above us so there was no real good shot to take so had to think fast and came up with a multi stand system using my tripod and one of the tri shooting rests to make it possible.’”⁵⁴⁵ Another post featured a photograph of a young boy sitting over a dead deer which stated: “Team Vanguard’s @thewildheartoutdoors’s little man got himself a 7-point while using the new Endeavor GM-70 gun mount and a Vanguard tripod. Great stuff, kid!”

Other links to hunting

Vanguard World has a pro staff and ambassador team for hunting which features on its website and Instagram. For example, one of its ambassador team photographed on Instagram⁵⁴⁶ is a hunter, also described on Vanguard world’s website as “an outdoors woman who loves hunting, fishing, and bowfishing”⁵⁴⁷ and whose Instagram features a photo from September 2024 of her standing over a dead deer with a rifle.⁵⁴⁸ Several other “Outdoor pros” who are Vanguard World ambassadors are described as hunters and were photographed with rifles and dead animals.⁵⁴⁹

Arms and military links

The company does not have a policy against supply to the military, but no links were found with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

⁵⁴² www.vanguardworld.co.uk/collections/hunting

⁵⁴³ www.vanguardworld.com/collections/support-system

⁵⁴⁴ www.vanguardworld.com/blogs/hunting

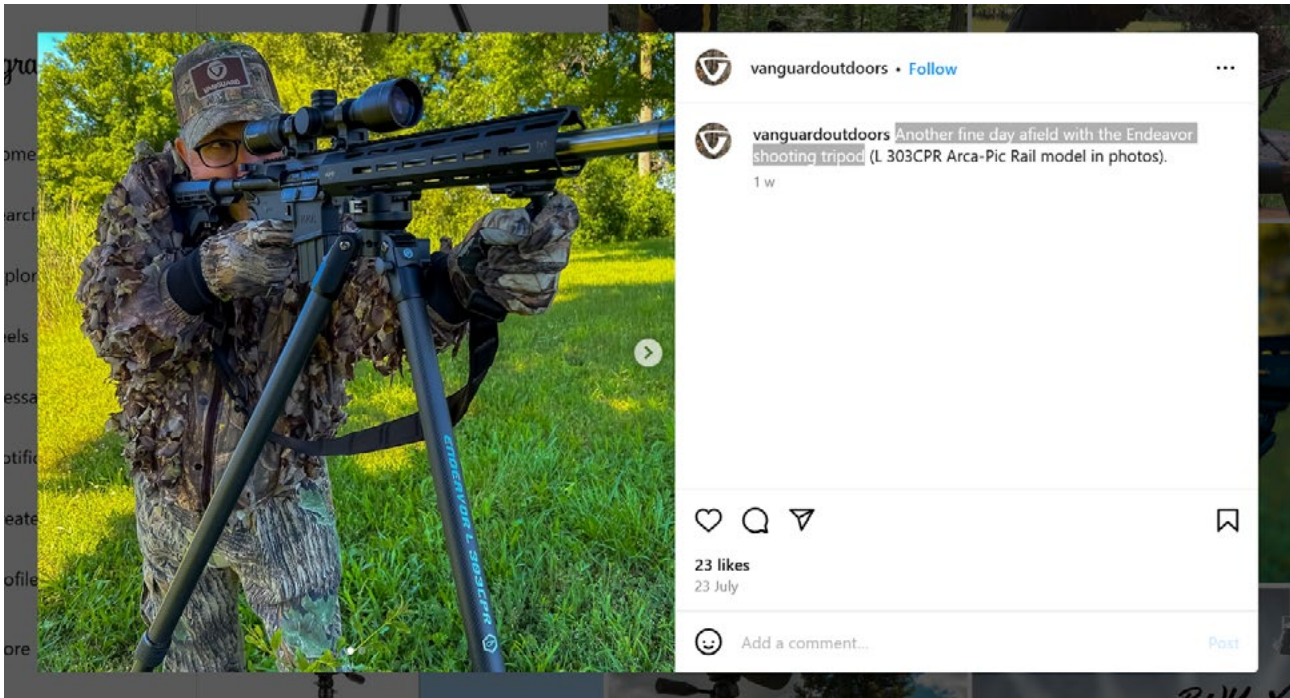
⁵⁴⁵ www.instagram.com/p/C0zLPrUrmzK/?img_index=1

⁵⁴⁶ www.instagram.com/p/CzcnBcgtTT7/

⁵⁴⁷ www.vanguardworld.com/blogs/vanguard-outdoors-pros/ashley-hall

⁵⁴⁸ www.instagram.com/p/DAQ5fVqJGwL/

⁵⁴⁹ www.vanguardworld.com/blogs/vanguard-outdoors-pros/



Instagram @vanguardoutdoors (23 July 2024)

Tax conduct

The 2022 accounts of Vanguard World UK Ltd⁵⁵⁰ show that it is owned by Export Dragon Ltd, a company registered in the British Virgin Islands. Ultimate holding companies registered in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer's tax havens list are marked down in our Tax conduct category for likely tax avoidance. No further information about Export Dragon Ltd was found.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

550 find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/08020267

Viking

(Viking Optical Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
46	10	0	100	20	100	90	0

Summary

Viking has two websites – one for its own-brand products, www.vikingoptical.com, and another for the distribution of other brands, www.vikingopticalcentres.co.uk. No links to hunting were found on either.

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement. It does not take action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Viking Optical Ltd started trading in 1986 and is based in Suffolk in the UK. The company has been partnering as a supplier to the Royal Society for the protection of Birds since 1996⁵⁵¹ and continues to partner with BirdLife International and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Historically, the RSPB has faced criticism from animal rights groups for supporting managed shooting, particularly of pheasants.⁵⁵² However, the RSPB responded to criticism by stating: "...we are neither anti nor pro shooting. We are neutral on the ethics of shooting. And, guess what, we have been for over a hundred years."⁵⁵³ The organisation stated that it condemned bad practice and illegal hunting but wanted to praise efforts where killing may be involved but it led to environmental management "in a sensitive and thoughtful way" and would continue to work "with those that try to do good".⁵⁵⁴ Since 2020 the RSPB has campaigned for a licensing system for game bird shooting in the UK which sets out minimum standards and breaches would result in losing the right to shoot the birds. If by 2025 it hasn't achieved this, it's calling for a ban on "driven grouse shooting".⁵⁵⁵

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Viking's main website for its own-brand products, www.vikingoptical.co.uk, sells binoculars, spotting scopes, monoculars, tripods, and accessories for this equipment. Products are arranged by type, not use, and no reference to hunting was found. The website contains no images of animals other than birds to market bird-watching optics. Viking Optical Ltd also owns a second website, www.vikingopticalcentres.co.uk, through which it distributes other brands. Products are listed by type and brand, rather than activity. No images of animals or other links to sport shooting were found.

Other hunting links

No other hunting links were found.

⁵⁵¹ www.vikingoptical.com/about/

⁵⁵² www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/countryside/11502903/Row-erupts-as-RSPB-claims-pheasant-shooting-is-actually-good-for-some-wildlife.html

⁵⁵³ community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/martinharper/posts/the-rspb-and-shooting-separating-fact-from-fiction-2-29-03-2015

⁵⁵⁴ community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/martinharper/posts/the-rspb-and-shooting-separating-fact-from-fiction-2-29-03-2015

⁵⁵⁵ www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-we-do/influence-government-and-business/game-bird-shooting-laws-and-impact

Arms and military links

The company does not have a policy against supply to the military, but no links were found with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

Visionary

(Optical Hardware Ltd)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
46	10	0	100	20	100	90	0

Summary

Only one very brief mention of hunting was found in the company's Technical Guide, which is linked from the frontpage of the company's website. No other mention or marketing connected to hunting was found.

The company does not have a policy against supplying the military, but no information was found that suggested it had links with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Optical Hardware is a Yorkshire-based company that owns the Visionary brand, and distributes Olivon, Elinor, and Illusion brand optics on its website www.opticalhardware.co.uk/. The family who own Optical Hardware also run an outlet website, www.binocularoutlet.co.uk, which sells discounted optics of various other brands.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Optical Hardware's product range includes binoculars, telescopes, spotting scopes, digiscopes, monoculars, tripods and other optical accessories which are suited to a wide range of activities. The company separates products by make and type but also by use, including: Theatre, Sports & Racing, and General Observation. No mention of hunting was found under any of these categories. Only one image of a deer featured on the front page next to the caption: "Digiscoping: helping you capture the detail." Only one mention of hunting was found on the company's website in its Technical Guide, which stated that its products are for: "Walking, travel, skiing, ships, balloons, camping, mountaineering, hunting, hiking, fishing, landscape or nature viewing."⁵⁵⁶

Olivon produces riflescopes.⁵⁵⁷ However, although Optical Hardware distributes Olivon-branded products, it does not sell or distribute Olivon's riflescopes. Its binocular outlet website, www.binocularoutlet.co.uk, sells spotting scopes, binoculars, night vision equipment, opera glasses, optics for astronomy and accessories for these products. It markets one Levenhuk spotting scope for hunting: "Common uses of this spotting scope: birdwatching, hunting"⁵⁵⁸ – though the product was out of stock.

Other hunting links

No other links to hunting were found.

⁵⁵⁶ www.opticalhardware.co.uk/technical-guide/

⁵⁵⁷ www.olivon-europe.com/riflescopes.php

⁵⁵⁸ www.binocularoutlet.co.uk/product/levenhuk-blaze-70-plus-20-60x70-spotting-scope/

Arms and military links

The company does not have a policy against supply to the military, but no links were found with the arms industry, military or gun rights movement.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found about its policies or approach to workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

Nothing of note was found.

Vortex

(Sheltered Wings Inc)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
23	10	0	100	0	0	30	20

Summary

Images and text across the Vortex website, social media channels and hunting catalogue refer to trophy hunting. Vortex no longer states that it supports organisations as part of efforts to protect the second amendment and hunters' rights, but its social media makes clear it still supports these issues.

Links between the company and the gun rights movement were no longer found and hashtags like #bluelivesmatter and #2ndamendment accompanying images of guns and armed men, found in 2020, had been deleted. It does not appear to be taking action to reduce its environmental and climate impact, or protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has no subsidiaries in tax havens.

Background

Vortex Optics is the trading name of the US-based company, Sheltered Wings Inc. Vortex Optics was established in 2002 by the Hamilton family and sums up its business as follows: "From tagging your first buck, to hitting the range with friends, to using the right optic to get closer to nature, our team thrives on your success."⁵⁵⁹ Vortex Optics sells a range of products to wildlife watchers, hunters and military personnel. Sheltered Wings Inc had an estimated annual turnover of £83m.⁵⁶⁰ No further information could be found about the company.

Hunting

Hunting accessories

Vortex Optics' products include riflescopes, spotting scopes, binoculars, monoculars, rangefinders, red dots, and red dot mounts. These are arranged by product type rather than activity on its website: www.vortexoptics.com.

At the time of writing, the main page on its website featured an image of a man and a blood-spattered bighorn sheep with the words "Vortex Hunts" superimposed, which linked to a YouTube video of a sheep hunt.⁵⁶¹ Product pages frequently feature text promoting big game and driven hunting; for example, for one of its riflescopes it stated: "From big game to predators, there's a proven model for every hunting application."⁵⁶² Its 2024 product catalogue featured images of people carrying rifles and carrying, or next to, dead animals including turkeys and deer antlers.⁵⁶³

Other links to hunting

The Vortex website contains a lifestyle section called "Vortex Nation"⁵⁶⁴ that publishes a podcast, videos and a blog with the description: "Join the thousands of hunting, shooting, and outdoor fanatics brought together by a shared passion for chasing life's wild moments. Vortex Nation™ is a mindset and a lifestyle. And we invite you to become a part of it." Hunting is one of the main topics in all media on the Vortex Nation platform. The blog gave tips on hunting, including trophy animals such as bears.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁵⁹ vortexoptics.com/

⁵⁶⁰ D&B Hoovers, viewed in August 2023

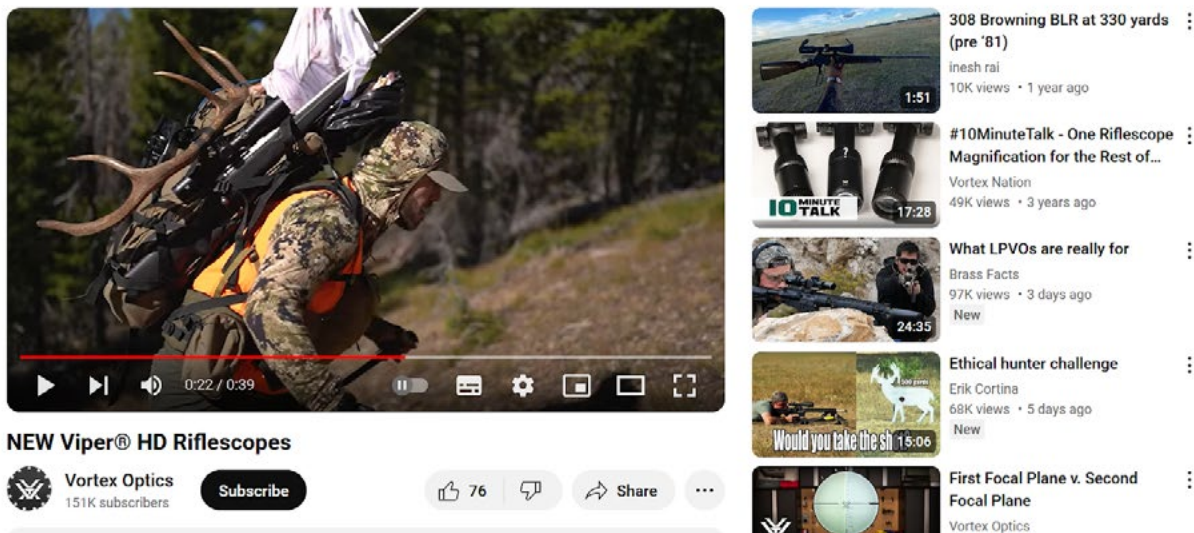
⁵⁶¹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARUzhB95f4

⁵⁶² vortexoptics.com/riflescopes-viper-hd-5-25x50-1+reticle-VMR-3~MOA

⁵⁶³ indd.adobe.com/view/da2dfd0e-6d42-4529-abc5-b3ed62f780b5

⁵⁶⁴ join.vtxnation.com/

⁵⁶⁵ vortexoptics.com/blog/predator-calling-for-bear.html



YouTube @VortexOpticsUSA, NEW Viper® HD Riflescopes (9 May 2024)

Its Instagram featured a video compilation of people holding up their dead turkeys, some with guns, with the caption: “It’s been a bad month to be a turkey for Team Vortex! Here’s to hoping you had a fun and successful spring turkey season. #VortexOptics #VortexNation #TeamVortex #TurkeySeason #TurkeyHunting #WildTurkey.”⁵⁶⁶ On YouTube it markets one of its new Viper riflescopes as being for “every game and every terrain” with a video from June 2024 of a man carrying a gun and large antlers on his rucksack, which states: “as the light fades, your hunt doesn’t have to.”⁵⁶⁷ The same video also featured a man holding a dead bear.

Our Shooting Wildlife II (2018) report found the following statement on Vortex Optics’ website: “Wildlife conservation, protecting the second amendment, hunter’s rights, and supporting our military and law enforcement personnel – these are things we believe in. That’s why we proudly support the following organizations: Association of the United States Army, Honored American Veterans Afield, Mule Deer Foundation, National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, Wild Sheep Foundation.” This statement has since been removed from the website. Not all of these organisations currently name supporters on their websites and so it was not possible to establish whether Vortex still supported them.

Vortex Optics remains a partner of Sportsmen’s Alliance,⁵⁶⁸ an organisation that describes its missions as “to protect and advance America’s heritage of hunting, fishing and trapping by uniting sportsmen to protect against legal and legislative attacks by the animal-rights movement, win public support for outdoor sports, ensure the future of this heritage by involving families in the outdoor experience, and by promoting the sportsmen’s stewardship role in the scientific management of America’s fish and wildlife.”⁵⁶⁹ It fights against animal rights and anti-hunting campaigns and opposes gun control legislation.

Vortex is listed under the “our partners and sponsors” section of The First Hunt Foundation,⁵⁷⁰ which is a US based organisation with the mission to “Keep the Hunting Heritage Alive.” A search of its website found images of dead trophy animals. For example, its “African Safari Fundraiser” page showed a man with a gun standing next to a dead animal.⁵⁷¹ Vortex optics are also promoted on the Safari Club International website,⁵⁷² and were named in a lion hunt story.⁵⁷³

⁵⁶⁶ www.instagram.com/reel/C7pXAEHJAvv/?locale=ne_NP

⁵⁶⁷ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydQXQrFbih0

⁵⁶⁸ sportsmensalliance.org/membership/business-memberships/business-partners/

⁵⁶⁹ sportsmensalliance.org/who-we-are/

⁵⁷⁰ firsthuntfoundation.org/partners-and-sponsors

⁵⁷¹ firsthuntfoundation.org/african-safari-fundraiser

⁵⁷² safariclub.org/vortex-optics-fury-hd-5000-the-future-is-now

⁵⁷³ safariclub.org/covid-lion-in-zambia

Arms and military links

No evidence was found that the company had links to militia, the gun rights movement and/or hate groups. It organised an annual Vortex Rampage rifle competition,⁵⁷⁴ but this did not appear to be linked to any of these. In our last report (2020), the company was registered as an attendant of the (cancelled) 2020 National Rifle Association's (NRA) exhibition and was an official sponsor of the National Rifle League (NRL) in the US and South Africa. These links were no longer found in 2024.



Instagram @vortexoptics (31 May 2024)

Vortex markets its optical products for military and tactical use but does not sell arms or ammunition. For example, it sells riflescopes, which are marketed for “long range, tactical shooting”.⁵⁷⁵ It also supplies to the military: “Vortex® is honored to deliver the Next Generation Squad Weapon-Fire Control (NGSW-FC) to the US Army.”⁵⁷⁶ The deal featured in the Army Times.⁵⁷⁷

Historic Instagram posts from 2020 that featured #vortexnation accompanied by hashtags such as #bluelivesmatter and #2ndamendment with images of guns and armed men had since been deleted and accounts had been made private.

Climate change and environmental impact

No information was found that demonstrated the company was working to reduce its environmental and climate impacts.

Workers' rights in the supply chain

No information was found that demonstrated the company was taking steps to protect the rights of workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

No information was found that suggested the company was engaging in tax avoidance.

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

⁵⁷⁴ www.precisionrifleseries.com/m/5257/2024-vortex-rampage/

⁵⁷⁵ vortexoptics.com/razor-hd-gen-iii-6-36x56+reticle-EBR-7D-MOA

⁵⁷⁶ vortexoptics.com/featured-content

⁵⁷⁷ www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2022/01/07/army-finally-picks-an-optic-for-next-generation-squad-weapon/

Zeiss

(Carl Zeiss Stiftung)

Ethiscore	Climate	Workers	Tax	Company Ethos	Hunting	Arms/Military	Environmental Impact
17	10	0	0	0	0	90	20

Summary

For a number of years, Zeiss has somewhat distanced itself from hunting although some references remain. Zeiss no longer participates in production of the consumer hunting magazine PASSION, while references to trophy hunting were no longer found on the company's website and there were fewer references to hunting on social media profiles. Both the Zeiss UK and global websites no longer promote the company's hunting courses. Although the company says it does not agree with killing animals "for fun", it still produces riflescopes and explicitly markets for driven hunts.

It supplies components for a company involved in production for the military and is a member of the lobby group Aerospace, Defence, Security and Space Trade Organisation (ADS). It takes some action to reduce its environmental impact, but limited information was found on how it reduces its climate impact. It takes no action to protect workers' rights in the supply chain. It has subsidiaries in tax havens that are at high risk of being used for tax avoidance.

Background

The Zeiss Group is headquartered in Germany and is managed by holding company Carl Zeiss AG, which is ultimately owned by the Carl Zeiss Stiftung (Carl Zeiss Foundation).⁵⁷⁸ Governance ultimately comes from its Foundation: "The Foundation uses the dividends from Carl Zeiss AG and SCHOTT AG to promote science – particularly the natural and engineering sciences, mathematics and information technology – at universities in the German federal states of Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Thuringia. Today, the Carl Zeiss Foundation is one of Germany's largest foundations focused on the promotion of science."⁵⁷⁹

The group offers a range of Zeiss branded optics and optical electronic products which are manufactured and sold in more than 40 countries. The company started as a small workshop in Jena, Germany, in 1846 and was set up by Carl Zeiss. The workshop serviced and manufactured scientific equipment, and produced glasses, weighing scales, drawing instruments and telescopes. Encouraging scientific development continues to be a key aim of the foundation.

The company started to rapidly expand its product portfolio from the late 1880s onwards, producing a range of binoculars, medical optics and scientific equipment. The first world war forced the company to focus on optic equipment for military use.⁵⁸⁰ The Zeiss Group now comprises four key business groups: semiconductor manufacturing technology, industrial quality and research, medical technology, and consumer visual care and optics. The group had a turnover of €10.1bn (approximately £8.4bn) in 2023.⁵⁸¹

Carl Zeiss Stiftung also owns Schott AG, a company that manufactures speciality glass, glass-ceramics and solar panels, as well as car, air and spacecraft components.⁵⁸² According to its blog, Zeiss' position on hunting is as follows: "ZEISS sees hunting as part of human culture, active protection of nature and species, and in this way as part of our today's society. ZEISS understands hunting in a legal, sustainable, ethical and conservational way. We desist from hunting on endangered species, from killing animals for fun, without reasons or hunting for trophies only. We clearly oppose the inappropriate use of firearms. Our products help hunters to carry out their service to nature as responsibly as possible."⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁸ www.carl-zeiss-stiftung.de/en/

⁵⁷⁹ mamcache.zeiss.com/viewer/2204_1707312141129#page_no-0

⁵⁸⁰ www.zeiss.com/corporate/en/about-zeiss/past/history.html

⁵⁸¹ www.zeiss.com/annual-report/home.html

⁵⁸² www.schott.com/en-gb

⁵⁸³ blogs.zeiss.com/sports-optics/hunting/en/about-us/

Hunting

Hunting accessories

On the Zeiss website consumer products are arranged according to use, with a section for “hunting and nature observation”. It has the option to filter according to “products for hunting”.⁵⁸⁴ In its hunting section it also states: “The love of nature is the main reason for going hunting.” Its products listed for hunting include thermal cameras, riflescopes, binoculars, spotting scopes, and accessories. Some of these products have special features for night vision, or inbuilt laser equipment. Its riflescope marketing is targeted at a variety of hunters, and references driven hunting. For example: “Every hunting trip is different, but that does not mean that you shouldn’t be as prepared as possible. Your riflescope will be critical to your hunting success. The ZEISS LRP S3 first focal plane riflescopes provide the best-in-class total elevation travel combined with an advanced optical system. They deliver ultra-sharp images and gather the maximum amount of light for low-light conditions with the ability to reach out to identify game at great distances.” It lists its uses as including “driven hunt” and “stalking” as well as “medium range/alpine hunting”.⁵⁸⁵



Instagram @zeissshunting_eu “Rutting season is getting close, which means there’s a chance to see (and hear!) this amazing sight.” (24 September 2024)

Other links to hunting

The Zeiss Hunting blog gives tips on various types of hunts, including falconry,⁵⁸⁶ moose hunting with dogs⁵⁸⁷ and hunting tahr in New Zealand.⁵⁸⁸

Zeiss has a dedicated hunting Instagram, which features a video of a woman looking through binoculars at a live deer while talking about the “roe buck hunting season”.⁵⁸⁹ Its Instagram also features images of live wild boar and deer, but without targets/red dots or images of guns next to them. The company has the slogan “By hunters for hunters” on its Instagram and states: “ZEISS products are developed by hunters, with hunters in mind.” It uses the hashtag #ZEISShunting next to images of hunting in a number of posts.

Zeiss donated one pair of binoculars to Safari Club International Auctions, including to the 2024 SCI Convention: “The world’s largest hunting auction, the SCI Convention features an incredible range of outstanding auction items. Day and night, the auctioneer gavel keeps falling on dream hunts and hunter-preferred items from around the world.”⁵⁹⁰ Zeiss products are also promoted on the SCI website,⁵⁹¹ and are offered as part of a membership rewards scheme.⁵⁹²

For a number of years, Zeiss was no longer one of the editors of consumer hunting magazine PASSION.⁵⁹³ The Zeiss Academy pages on its global website no longer appeared to be functional. Formerly, the global Zeiss website advertised seminars and training courses in which “seasoned specialists offer you hands-on training

⁵⁸⁴ www.zeiss.com/consumer-products/int/hunting.html?vaURL=www.zeiss.com/hunting

⁵⁸⁵ www.zeiss.com/consumer-products/int/hunting/riflescopes/lrp-s3/lrp-s3-425-50.html

⁵⁸⁶ blogs.zeiss.com/sports-optics/hunting/en/falconry/

⁵⁸⁷ blogs.zeiss.com/sports-optics/hunting/en/moose-hunt-baying-dog/

⁵⁸⁸ blogs.zeiss.com/sports-optics/hunting/en/hunting-tahr-new-zealand/

⁵⁸⁹ www.instagram.com/p/C6LkAMItt3P/

⁵⁹⁰ auction.safariclub.org/auctionlist.aspx?dv=2

⁵⁹¹ safariclub.org/look-out-the-latest-binocs-rifles-scopes-and-range-finders/

⁵⁹² safariclub.org/new-sci-membership-rewards-program-goes-live/

⁵⁹³ www.passion-magazin.de/en/

that demonstrates the right way to use your top-quality ZEISS optics for nature observation and in hunting.” Only a Zeiss metrology academy was found.⁵⁹⁴

Although Zeiss’ pro-staff programme was no longer found on the UK or global site, its named pro-staff members in the previous report were found to still have links to Zeiss, for example with one as a “Zeiss pro stalker”.⁵⁹⁵

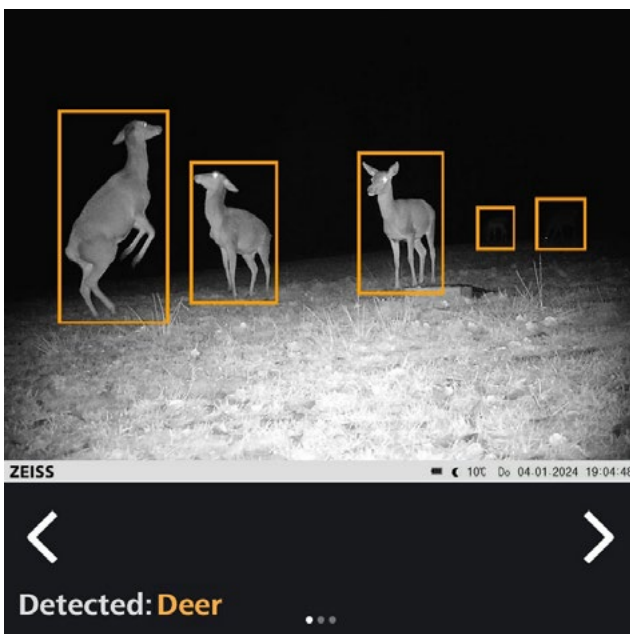
Arms and military links

Historically, Zeiss has had strong links to the arms industry.⁵⁹⁶ Carl Zeiss began producing optronic instruments for military and civilian applications in the 1890s and established a military division shortly thereafter. During both world wars, Carl Zeiss produced almost exclusively military optics and the company continued to supply thermal imagers, periscopes and other optics for military use afterwards.

Although Zeiss does not appear to have a specific military division anymore and “stopped the manufacturing of products for military applications in 2012 with the sale of the division”,⁵⁹⁷ it supplies equipment to companies like Jamco Aerospace, which “manufactures complex and precision-manufactured components and riveted sub-assemblies for military and commercial companies.”⁵⁹⁸ Between 2008 and 2015, Carl Zeiss companies applied to the UK government for 17 export licences for equipment designed for military use to Abu Dhabi, Germany, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Oman and South Korea.⁵⁹⁹ Zeiss was found to be a member of a defence-related lobby group, the Aerospace, Defence, Security and Space Trade Organisation (ADS).⁶⁰⁰

Climate change and environmental impact

The Zeiss global website has a sustainability section.⁶⁰¹ It also has a 2022/23 sustainability report for the group.⁶⁰² Although its reporting had some information on its main impacts, it lacked detail. For example, one of its aims was for “Improved sustainability performance of ZEISS products and services” but it did not provide detail on how it was going to achieve this. It briefly discussed some of its targets for reducing the use of energy, water and waste, however did not publicly report its scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions and did not have an emissions



Instagram @zeiss hunting_eu “We’re always thinking of ways to improve your hunting experience...” (28 February and 8 September 2024)

⁵⁹⁴ www.zeiss.com/metrology/en/services/zeiss-academy-metrology.html

⁵⁹⁵ www.instagram.com/roebucklee/?hl=en

⁵⁹⁶ www.zeiss.com/corporate/en/about-zeiss/past/history.html#milestones

⁵⁹⁷ www.zeiss.com/corporate/en/about-zeiss/past/history/technological-milestones/defense-systems.html

⁵⁹⁸ www.zeiss.com/metrology/en/industries/success-stories/manufacturing-of-complex-aerospace-parts.html

⁵⁹⁹ caat.org.uk/publications/company-export-licence-application-data-from-2008-2015/

⁶⁰⁰ www.adsgroup.org.uk

⁶⁰¹ www.zeiss.com/corporate/en/about-zeiss/present/sustainability/insights.html

⁶⁰² mamcache.zeiss.com/viewer/2204_1707312141129#page_no-0

reduction target in line with international agreements. Its target was: “ZEISS aims to achieve carbon neutrality in its own activities (Scope 1 and 2 emissions) by 2025.”

Schott AG, a subsidiary of the Carl Weiss Foundation, produces components for the car, aeroplane and spacecraft industries, which all have a high climate change impact.

Its sustainability report no longer mentioned that Zeiss supports numerous nature conservation activities, including its support of BirdLife. Although its reporting included some description of its activities related to its environmental impacts, it made vague statements and was lacking detail. For example, on hazardous substances it stated: “Wherever possible, potentially hazardous materials are replaced with less problematic substances.” It stated that it had made “an annual saving of over 100 million liters of water”, although it did not state how, and on waste it stated: “In the reporting year, ZEISS was able to reduce the relative amount of waste by 35% as compared to the base year 2018/19”, although it did not outline how. It also briefly mentioned wastewater. Taken together, this was deemed to be some evidence that the company is reducing some of its impacts, although its statements on how it had achieved this were vague.

Workers’ rights in the supply chain

Zeiss only has a UK modern slavery statement⁶⁰³ for its UK operations and not the whole company group. No further information was found about its policies and approach to the workers in its supply chain.

Tax conduct

Zeiss has holding companies in jurisdictions on Ethical Consumer’s tax havens list, including Carl Zeiss Vision China (BVI) Ltd in the British Virgin Islands and SCHOTT Forma Vitrum Holding AG in Switzerland.⁶⁰⁴

Company ethos

The company lost marks as it was large – with a turnover of over £50m – and did not disclose its director remuneration.

⁶⁰³ www.zeiss.co.uk/corporate/legal-information/legal-notice.html#UKModernSlaveryAct

⁶⁰⁴ D&B Hoovers, viewed in July 2024

Beyond specs

THE ETHICS OF THE OPTICS INDUSTRY

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