



Quiet as a **Church**



Mouse

The popularity of birdwatching is increasing: Once ridiculed, birdwatching is becoming the new leisure time hobby for people who want to take it a little more slowly.

Always on the Lookout for Rare Birds

The blackcap is a useful creature: it can be easily identified by its “monks' hood” and ideally adapts to changing living conditions.

As many other birds, this small song-bird no longer winters in Spain, but heads north to Great Britain. It goes where the food is: the British are enthusiastic feeders. Of course they do not do this simply because they are nice. The British love birdwatching as do many people in other countries. Great Britain has the world's largest bird-lovers club with more than one million members and newspapers that employ their own bird columnists. At first glance, birdwatching is a peculiar sport in which there are neither winners nor losers, only observers who are as quiet as a church mouse. Real birders get their thrills by observing as many different birds as possible and checking them off a personal list.

These hobby ornithologists arm themselves with spotting scopes, binoculars and field guides in their attempts to conquer this list and are always on the lookout for rare birds which are usually far away and shy by nature. Recently, birdwatchers have received support in their arduous work in the form of new technology.

Digital photography, digiscoping in this case, makes it possible.

Carl Zeiss has developed an instrument to make picture taking easier. How does this work? A compact digital camera is placed in front of the eyepiece of the spotting scope and held in place with a camera adapter. The new solution for digiscoping takes it one step further: the *DC4 camera eyepiece*. It is mounted to the spotting scope in place of a pure observation eyepiece. It allows birdwatchers to continually observe and

take pictures at the same time. The camera is triggered via a remote control. Special software corrects contrast, definition, exposure and color fidelity – even before the image is stored on the chip card. The camera eyepiece achieves 40x magnification.

Many changes are still to come for birdwatchers when a leisurely migration from north to south takes place in the near future. In the winter, the British have the German blackcaps, but they do not yet have the red kites, of which more than 70 percent of all pairs in the world nest in Germany.

*Photo on pages 10/11: Sven Achtermann
Photos on pages 12/13: Stephen Ingraham*



Belted kingfisher



European robin



Gray heron



Yellow-rumped warbler



Great egret



Blackcap



Linnet