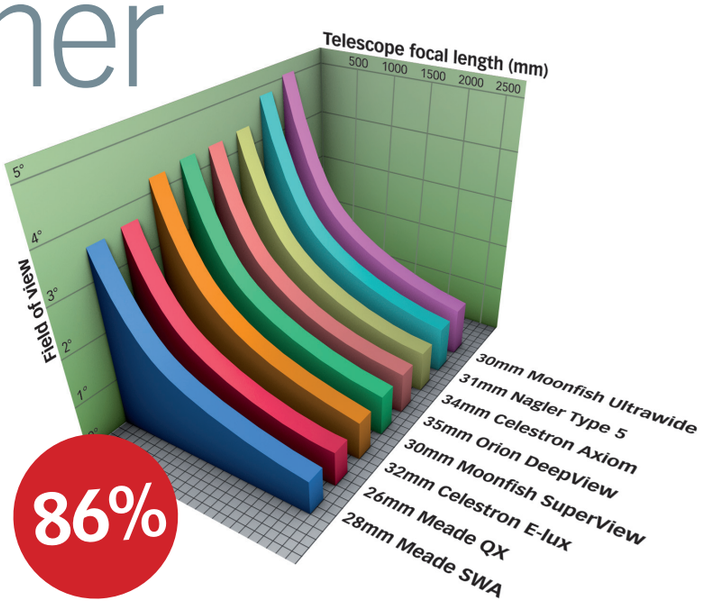
Overall winner

Moonfish 30mm Ultrawide



Pincushion distortion, that optical anomaly in which the image magnification grows with increasing distance from the optical axis, is the wide-angle eyepiece's commonest affliction.

Since this has the effect of stretching the edge of the field of view, the true field covers a larger-than-calculated apparent field. This leads to skewed apparent-field results that are usually at odds with the published figures.

Apparent field is what you experience when you look into an eyepiece, but true field is far more important because it's what you get in the sky. Consequently, the tests concentrated on the true field of view delivered by each ocular. The accompanying graphs, collated above, chart their performance against differing telescope focal lengths.

The Tele Vue Nagler was optically unsurpassed in tests, closely followed by the Meade 28mm SWA, though both were eclipsed in true field by the appropriately named Ultrawide from Moonfish. In fact, the area of sky encompassed by the Ultrawide was twice that of the SWA.

Users of large aperture, short focal ratio Newtonian/Dobsonian reflectors will be acutely aware of their scope's inherent off-axis coma with the Nagler and SWA, but in a well-corrected refractor or catadioptric these eyepieces will deliver breathtaking views. The same is true of longer focal ratio Schmidt- and Maksutov-Cassegrains, where the fantastic value Moonfish Ultrawide will shine through.

It's a very close call, but our winner this month is the Moonfish 30mm Ultrawide.

NEXT MONTH

Steady yourself for clean views as the *Group Test* investigates the optical properties of six image stabilising binoculars

At a glance guide

EYEPIECE	Celestron 34mm Axiom	Orion 35mm Deep View	Meade 28mm Series 5000 SWA	Celestron 32mm E-lux	Tele Vue 31mm Nagler Type 5	Moonfish 30mm Ultrawide	Moonfish 30mm SuperView	Meade 26mm Series 4000 QX
OPTICS	76%	65%	95%	61%	97%	77%	62%	80%
FIELD OF VIEW	85%	70%	60%	70%	90%	96%	70%	65%
EYE-RELIEF	75%	80%	95%	75%	91%	70%	60%	85%
BUILD & DESIGN	87%	60%	92%	65%	93%	89%	70%	75%
VALUE FOR MONEY	73%	73%	84%	75%	55%	98%	80%	78%
OVERALL	**79%**	**70%**	**85%**	**69%**	**85%**	**86%**	**68%**	**77%**