



# nhbs BUYER'S GUIDE



Highlighting the very best conservation equipment

## SPOTTING SCOPES

### INTRODUCTION

Typically associated with the professional bird watcher, the spotting scope brings power and clarity to the enjoyment of wildlife watching. While this addition to the nature lovers kit is sometimes perceived to be an expensive wish list item, scopes can actually be as inexpensive as a reasonably priced pair of binoculars. If you are thinking of stepping up your wildlife watching game, then here are some important insights on how to decide what is important to you when deciding which scope fits your budget, and your plans.

Before you start examining all the different scopes that are on the market, you should

ask yourself a few questions to help you thin out the selection you wish to choose from, such as:

1. What are the predominant subjects you wish to watch?
2. Typically how close or far away will you be?
3. How important will the weather be in your plans?
4. What are the end results going to be?
5. What is your budget?



To view our full range of spotting scopes, visit [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)

### MAGNIFICATION

In the same way that binoculars have indicators of power and clarity, spotting scopes also give you more information about the effective distance they can be used at. Most scopes have two sets of numbers that indicate their zooming capability and how bright and crisp the images will be. Many scopes will provide a range of zoom somewhere from 15x to 80x power. It can be tempting to go for the most powerful magnification but remember that the higher the magnification, the more restricted the field of view will be.

While it may be difficult to forecast the distance you will be using your scope at, the decision on power should be based on your general subject matter. If you are bird

#### Hawke Optics Nature-Trek Spotting Scope

Low magnification

High magnification



16-48 × 65

Model 55 200 #236999



20-60 × 80

Model 55 201 #237000

watching, for example, but will be expecting to view your subjects between 300 and 500 yards, then a scope with a magnification of 20× to 80× should give you enough variation of zoom to enjoy the detail of the subject.

### OBJECTIVE DIAMETER



**Kowa TSN-663M PROMINAR  
Spotting Scope**

**#254809**

The front lens plays a crucial role in the brightness and level of sharpness of the image you see. The larger the diameter of the lens, the more light passes through the scope. This also has the added benefit of improving the visibility of subjects in low light (at dusk for example). It is worth noting, however, that a larger front lens will increase the weight and cost of the scope.

### GLASS CONSTRUCTION AND COATING

The production of glass and the coatings used have developed over time to enhance what you see. Spotting scopes with extra low dispersion coatings on the lens will reduce the amount of chromatic aberration you may have to deal with when looking through your scope. It can be confusing when a manufacturer refers to fluorine or fluorite in relation to the glass of the scope. Fluorine is deployed as a coating that is designed to repel dirt and dust, whereas fluorite is part of the lens construction that will help with reducing chromatic aberrations.

While there are coatings to protect the outside of the lens, there are also points to consider for the internal construction. If you are planning on using your scope in varying temperatures and humidity, you should consider a gas-filled product. In the same way as with some binoculars, the air inside is replaced with nitrogen to help prevent the glass from fogging from the inside when there is a temperature fluctuation that may cause normal air to generate moisture.

### STRAIGHT OR ANGLED EYEPIECE

This is a personal choice. If your intention is to view objects for a long period of time, then you may find having an angled eyepiece more helpful. Placing it on a tripod and looking down into the eyepiece while sitting is a common approach. If you are looking to take pictures (see Digi Scoping below), a straight scope might be more useful, especially if the screen on the back of your camera can be articulated (tilted).

### Bushnell Prime Spotting Scope

Angled



20-60 × 65

Model SP206065AB **#246120**

Straight



16-48 × 50

Model SP164850B **#246119**

## WATERPROOF

### Kowa TSN-663M PROMINAR Spotting Scope



#254809

Manufacturers may mention in the product specifications that a product is waterproof. It is worth paying attention to the level of waterproofing they have, especially if you are going to be out in all weathers using them. Understanding the different levels commonly found will help you decided on your purchase. The most common ratings found are IPX6 or IPX7. There is a big difference between these two levels. IPX6 is mostly concerned with incidental water and dust, for example light rain, whereas IPX7 means the product has been immersed completely in water to a depth of 1m for 30 minutes without any water ingress.

## EYEPIECES

The addition of an eyepiece, or magnification extender, can change the quality of the images you will view through your scope. For example, if you wish to use your scope with a camera to take images, then a fixed eyepiece will be better than a zoom (variable) eyepiece. The variable eyepiece will decrease the amount of light passing through the scope along with increasing the amount of 'shake' experienced. Having a tripod will help reduce this should you decide to go with a variable magnification eyepiece.

### Opticron MM3/MM4 Zoom Eyepieces

HR3  
Zoom Eyepiece

Model 41145 #234462



SDL v3  
Zoom Eyepiece

Model 41270 #250744

## DIGI SCOPING

If you are planning on using your spotting scope to take pictures, then you should consider which style of scope you want to use, especially if it is something you are planning on doing frequently. A straight scope tends to be the preferred choice for people using a camera with an articulated screen as the screen can be easily repositioned, although if you are using a phone to achieve the same results, an angled scope might be a better choice. It should be said that this is a personal preference. For instance, if you prefer sitting down with the scope mounted on a tripod, you may find the straight scope easier to use when looking at the screen of the camera or phone that is mounted on it.



Opticron Universal  
Smartphone Adapter (USM-2)

#237797



## ACCESSORIES

### TRIPODS



**Slik Pro  
400DX Tripod  
#255246**



**Manfrotto 190X  
Tripod and  
Befree Live  
Fluid Panhead  
#256055**

### MOUNTS

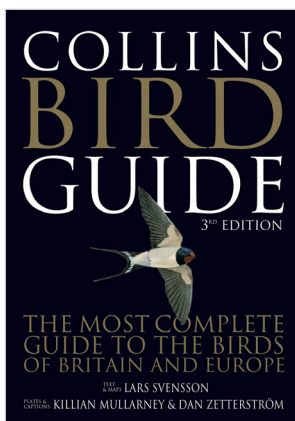
**Opticron Car  
Window Mount  
#193280**



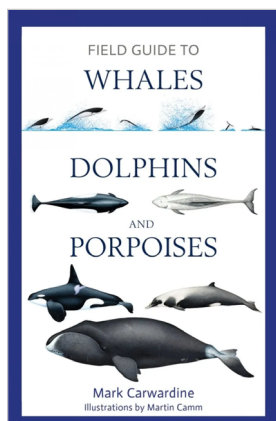
**Opticron  
Universal Mount  
#193279**



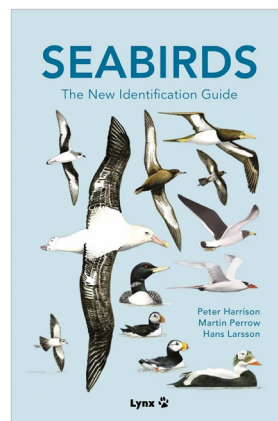
### SUGGESTED READING



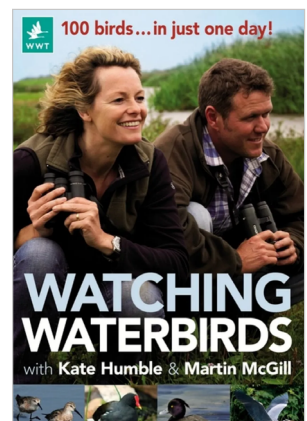
**#255852**



**#254643**



**#252214**



**#245115**

Explore the complete range of spotting scopes on our website. If you have any questions about our range or would like some advice on the right product for you, then please contact us via email at [customer.services@nhbs.com](mailto:customer.services@nhbs.com) or phone on **01803 865913**

