

BETTER BIRDING

THE AUDUBON GUIDE TO SPOTTING SCOPES

BUYING THIS MUST-HAVE TOOL MAY BE A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXPERIENCE. HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT / BY WAYNE MONES



Bird-worthy binoculars are the single indispensable birdwatching tool. If you don't already own a pair, read "The Audubon Guide to Binoculars" (November-December 2009) and get yourself properly equipped to get in the game. As a serious member of the birding tribe, you will, sooner or later, want a spotting telescope and tripod. The higher magnification and stability will allow you to see field marks and fine details of distant birds that you cannot distinguish with your binoculars. Choosing the right model is more complicated than choosing binoculars, because there are more choices of style, size, and eyepiece. You should know what to look for and be aware of the trade-offs before pulling the trigger. Since a spotting scope is a major investment, and since you will probably buy only one (okay, maybe two—three at the outside) in your lifetime, you will really want to get it right. Although this guide includes a few recommendations, it is not a comprehensive buying guide. Our goal is to help you make an informed choice. >>