



BIRDING OPTICS

**Binoculars
and Scopes**

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Topics

- Introduction
- Binoculars
 - Background
 - Choosing a Set of Binoculars
 - Decide on Price Range
 - Where to Shop
 - Pick Magnification X Objective Lens Size
 - Choose Roof or Porro Prism
 - Test/Handle Multiple Models to Assess Features
- Spotting Scopes
- Other Considerations
- Recommendations

Decide Your Price Range



Top-of-the-Line >\$2000



High-End \$1000-\$2000



Mid-Range \$500 - \$1000



---upper--- **Good-Value \$200 - \$500** ---lower-----



Get-in-the-Game <\$200

Online Resources

- Audubon Society
 - <https://www.audubon.org/gear/binocular-guide>
 - <https://www.audubon.org/gear/scope-guide>
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology
 - <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/the-cornell-lab-review-affordable-full-size-8x42-binoculars/#>
- Best Binoculars Reviewed – BBR (good general info)
 - <https://www.bestbinocularsreviews.com/birdwatching-binoculars.php>

Where to Shop

- Retailers

- Local Birding Stores – Wild Birds Unlimited
- Sporting Goods – Bass Pro*, Dick's Sporting Goods*
- REI*

- On-Line Sales

- Amazon*
- B&H Photo*

- Miscellaneous

- Audubon Naturalist Society – Chevy Chase
- FeatherEdgeOptics* – Cape May Bird Observatory (annual sale)
- MOS Convention
- Birding Festivals/Conventions

* On-line shopping available

Magnification (Power)



6x



8x



10x



Naked Eye



8x



10x

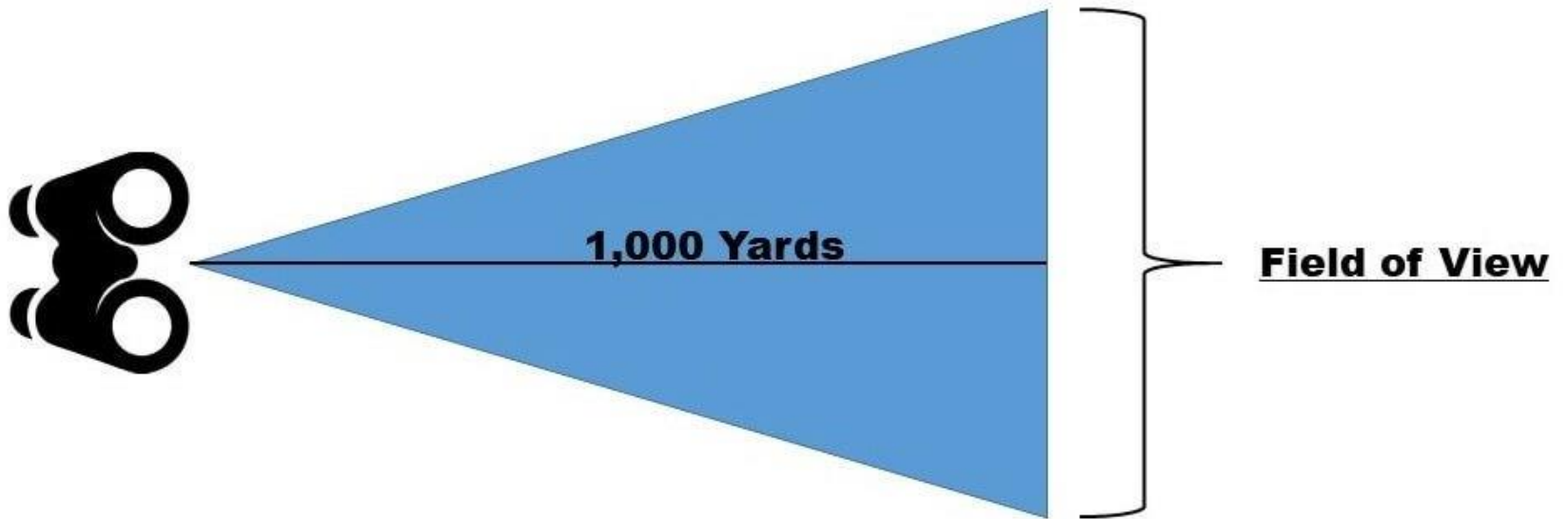


Naked Eye
(1x)



10 x 42

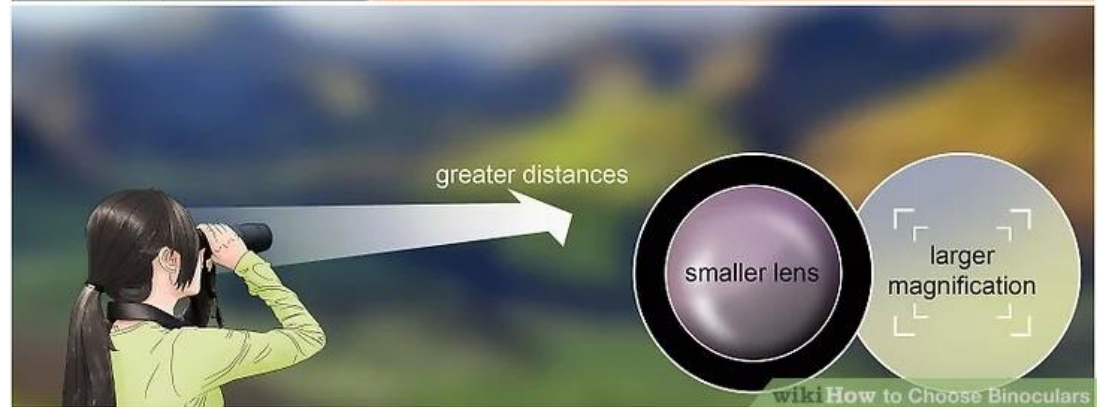
Field of View



Objective Lens Size



Measured in Millimeters



Porro or Roof Prism Design



**Test, Touch, Feel, Handle Multiple
Models of Binoculars to Assess
Features that Work for You.**

You have a great opportunity today!

Close Focus



Bad



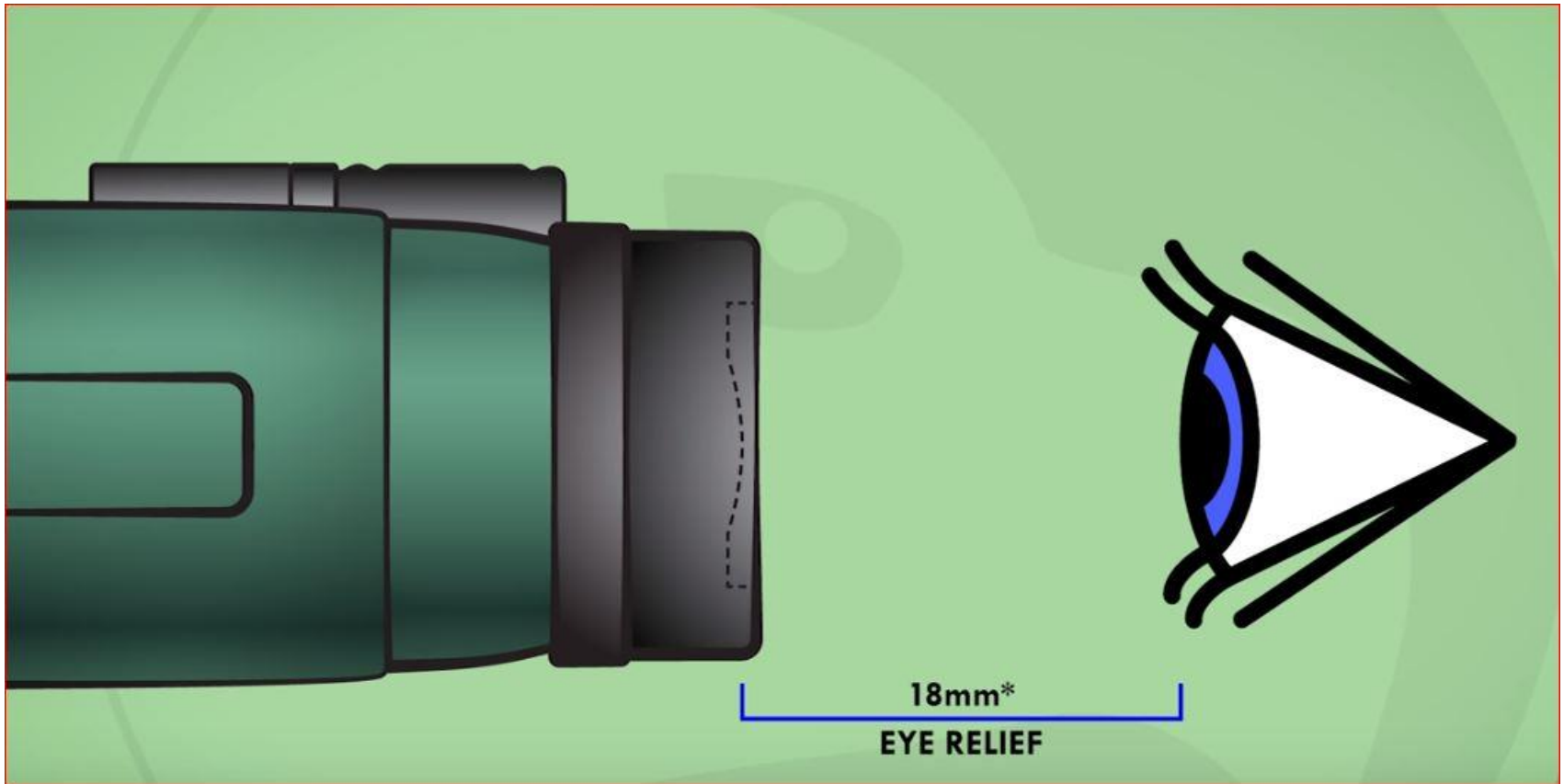
Better



Best



Eye Relief



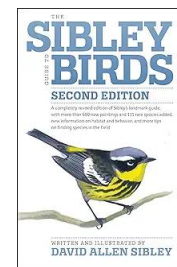
Spotting Scopes



Scope Considerations

- A later purchase ... maybe
- Scopes have very specialized uses and limitations
 - Ideal for long-distance viewing, i.e. shorebirds
 - But cumbersome and not nimble for following moving subjects
- Generally quite expensive
- A stable, sturdy tripod and head is essential
- Ask to look through the scopes of other birders on field trips to evaluate whether one is right for you
 - Don't worry – birders are always generous about letting you look through their scopes
 - They'll do the fine tuning of locating the subject and focusing too!

Other Birding Considerations:



Wrap-up



- Key Recommendations for choosing a set of binoculars:
 - Decide your budget – Stretch, it's likely a long term purchase.
 - Familiarize yourself with specifications and features that are listed for each binocular you consider.
 - Test, touch, and feel as many different models as possible.
- Key Recommendation for scopes: Wait until later
- Resources
 - Club Members (Feel free to ask for advice and help)
 - On-line resources (Google key word searches will be more current)
 - Sample search terms:
 - “binoculars for birding”
 - “best birding binoculars” – for recent years
 - “birding binocular reviews”
 - “bird watching HQ” - finds web site I found very useful

