



GGRO BINOCULAR RECOMMENDATIONS

Binoculars are every hawkwatchers' primary tool. The quality of your binoculars can make all the difference in your ability to fully enjoy and appreciate the raptors at Hawk Hill. Get the best pair you can afford or borrow for your own use.



Choosing Binoculars

Binoculars are described by two numbers, e.g., 7 x 35. The first number is the magnification (7-times); the second is the size of the objective lens (35 mm). A larger objective lens allows the binoculars to collect more light than a smaller one. Skinny pocket binoculars with a field of view of 20 to 30 are generally insufficient and will be hard to use on Hawk Hill over a long day. To offset the neck strain of holding your binoculars around your neck for 6-hour stints, try using a wide soft neoprene strap, or a binocular harness. These are available at most camera stores.

For hawkwatching, any binoculars from 7x to 10x magnification will suffice. You may think that bigger is better, but what you lose with the higher power binocular may be more important to hawkwatching than what you gain. Ten-power binoculars have: (1) less field of view (7x have a bigger "screen" — good for searching for that hawkdot); (2) more handshake (it is harder to hold a higher magnification binocular steady); and (3) lower brightness (this is the amount of light that is captured by the binocular and delivered to your eye). Thus, the 7x is a more relaxing binocular on the eye for long stretches of use. Ultimately, the optic quality (along with cost) of the binocular is a bigger factor than the magnification.

Make certain that your binoculars can be focused correctly: when the two images come together correctly, you should not have to work your eye muscles to hold them together. If you do, your binoculars are out of alignment.

Binocular Services

Most large camera and optic stores have repair services for binoculars. Also most of the large optic companies have reasonable repair services associated with their factory address; most can be found online.

Scopes

For beginners, scopes take practice to learn to use, but once you get the knack for locating a distant hawk and focusing in on it, you'll be amazed at the magic of a good spotting scope.

