

"BEST OF THE TEST"
From FIELD & STREAM
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AS SEEN IN
FIELD & STREAM

Eyeing Up the Small Glass

WE CHECKED OUT FIVE COMPACT SPOTTING SCOPES > By Thomas McIntyre

When binoculars just aren't enough, but full-size spotting scopes are too much, the answer is a good 50mm compact model. • The price range of the scopes tested is dramatic, and the most surprising unit isn't the most expensive. • David Paullin, hunter and birder, helped in the testing. The two of us measured weights and lengths (including eyepieces), judged freehand use, checked for waterproofing and fogproofing, and viewed distant objects and animals in varied light conditions, from predawn to evening.

1 ALPEN 20X50MM MINI SPOTTING SCOPE

(\$83) alpenoutdoor.com

MODEL #711

For comparison's sake, I wanted a cheaper scope in the mix. As it turns out, Alpen's tiny fixed-power model deserves singling out. This true mini is waterproof, nitrogen-purged, multicoated, sharp, and bright. It works great without a tripod, and it sells for \$83. Paullin took it to use on an elk hunt. I hope he brings it back.

THE SPECS

WEIGHT: 12.1 oz.
LENGTH: 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ "
EYE RELIEF: 16mm
EXIT PUPIL: 2.5mm
FOV: 147' @ 1,000 yd.

2 BRUNTON ETERNA 18-38X50MM COMPACT

(\$770) brunton.com

The Eterna isn't compact compact, but it's not bad. Guaranteed waterproof-fogproof with grippy rubber armoring, it isn't practical without a tripod, but it does represent a quality group of lenses in a sturdy housing. Included are a quick-detachable bayonet eyepiece mount, a built-in sunshade, and a generous focusing wheel.

WEIGHT: 37.5 oz.
LENGTH: 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
MAXIMUM EYE RELIEF: 16mm
EXIT PUPIL: 2.8mm @ 18X
FOV: 141' @ 1,000 yd. at 18X

3 BUSHNELL SPACEMASTER 15-45, 25X50MM COLLAPSIBLE

(\$196) bushnell.com

The Spacemaster comes with a sunshade and a mini tripod that doubles as a window mount. Handheld, the scope does well, and the collapsible design makes it easy to carry. But it's not guaranteed waterproof or fogproof, Paullin said the focus wheel feels "loose," and it gets dim at 45X. It has a bonus 25X fixed eyepiece.

WEIGHT: 21.3 oz.
LENGTH: 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (collapsed)
MAXIMUM EYE RELIEF: 14mm
EXIT PUPIL: 3.3mm @ 15X
FOV: 113' @ 1,000 yd. at 15X

4 MINOX 16-30X50MM MD 50 W

(\$450) minox.com

This waterproof-fogproof Minox offers a good power range in an agreeable weight and size. One-handing the angled design was awkward, and Paullin preferred focus wheels to this one's large ring, but I liked the ambidextrous ring. It wears tough rubber armor, the glass is excellent, and the price is right.

WEIGHT: 23.8 oz.
LENGTH: 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ "
MAXIMUM EYE RELIEF: 15mm
EXIT PUPIL: 3.125mm @ 16X
FOV: 142' @ 1,000 yd. at 16X

5 NIKON 13-30X50MM ED STRAIGHT BODY

(\$1,001) nikonsportoptics.com

Nikon uses extra-low-dispersion glass in this waterproof-fogproof scope—and the results are crystal clear. A hard, tacky covering encases the handsomely molded lines. A centrally located, precise focus knob works for righties or lefties. Plus, the ED is very light.

WEIGHT: 19.9 oz.
LENGTH: 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ "
MAXIMUM EYE RELIEF: 14.1mm
EXIT PUPIL: 3.8mm @ 13X
FOV: 157.5' @ 1,000 yd. at 13X



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