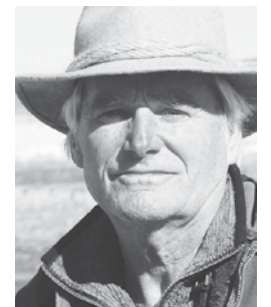


BIRD EXPLORER

Birding and digiscoping

BY PETER J. THIEMANN



Peter J. Thiemann

During late summer and early fall, birds are not very visible and an abundance of young birds makes for tough identification. But come autumn, birds are again on the move preparing for the season ahead.

For better bird identification, many birders use spotting scopes, which allow intimate views often at great distances. However, under the tension of a field sighting, often of short duration, misidentification is very common.

Here is one solution: Record your field sighting to be later identified on a computer screen using a spotting scope adapter that works with a smartphone camera. Not only can you record your bird sighting, but you can also share with friends. Also, if you're on a field trip and there is a great sighting, you can share that view with others.

Believe me, it is much better to look at a smartphone screen than through

the spotting scope eyepiece. Birders have knocked the bird completely out of view by trying to peer through the eyepiece of my spotting scope!

I did some phone scoping recently to capture wild wolves in Yellowstone National Park, and I can report that it works well under even extreme conditions—like minus 20 degrees F and snow. Fellow wolf watchers were really appreciative when they were able to look at my iPhone screen.

For fast-action wildlife shots, use the camera "burst" mode to capture the perfect frame, and also make videos with spotting scopes and smartphone adapters. Then, using inexpensive apps, a single frame can be captured for that perfect shot.

Happy birding phone scoping.

Peter J. Thiemann

peterjthieman@yahoo.com



Using a spotting scope adapter on a smart phone, Peter Thiemann captured shots of owls and a golden eagle delivering a ground squirrel to its nest (bottom right photo). Photos courtesy of Peter J. Thiemann flickr photo stream.

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