

PRAKTICA DIGISCOPING



practical steps to successful digiscoping

THE RIGHT CAMERA

Some digital compact cameras are more suited to digiscoping than others, as a general rule a compact camera with an optical zoom of 3 - 4x will work best when aligning to a spotting scope. A good clear LCD screen is essential to help with the focussing of the scope. Cameras that allow the user to change settings like focus control, exposure and ISO should produce better results. Bridge cameras and cameras with large zoom lenses are generally not suitable.

VIGNETTING

When you first turn on your camera (when connected to scope) you will notice that the image through the scope will be surrounded by black, this is an effect known as vignetting, to eliminate this, simply apply optical zoom on the camera until the image fills the screen.

TRIAL & ERROR

Invest some time lining up the camera on the adapter. Gently increase the optical zoom on the camera until all vignetting is eliminated. Find the 'sweet spot' between your camera lens and eyepiece - this will vary between cameras. Make sure the lens does not hit the scope eyepiece. Use the rubber around the eyepiece to your advantage by positioning the camera lens inside it - this will help avoid any light flare.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Don't run before you can walk, spend time in your garden, lining up the kit, take pictures of static objects and keep reviewing the image so you can master the technique before moving on to other subjects. It's best to practice on larger, slower subjects out in the field like ducks and geese, then progress to smaller birds as your skills improve.

FOCUS

Use the camera's LCD screen as your guide to focus a shot, point the scope and locate your subject then gently turn the focus wheel on the spotting scope body until the image appears sharp on the LCD screen of the camera.

MINIMISE CAMERA CONTACT

When you take your shot, try to minimise any contact with the camera, the simple motion of you touching the shutter will shake the set-up resulting in motion blur - A remote shutter release cable is recommended.

NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN WITH YOUR EYES, BINOCULARS OR SPOTTING SCOPE AS PERMANENT DAMAGE MAY RESULT.

MOVIE MAGIC

You can record video through your scope by setting your digital camera to video mode (Check your camera settings to see if you have this function). Most modern digital compacts now record in HD so it's best to always use a high speed media card to capture video smoothly and quickly. Videos are perfect to review on your home TV or PC - or why not publish your efforts to a wider audience on Youtube?

THE RIGHT CONDITIONS

One of the main factors that can affect your digiscoping is the weather. Good light is essential, it illuminates your subject and will result in faster shutter speeds helping you limit camera shake and any motion of the subject matter. Strong winds will cause your digiscoping set-up to move - even tiny movements will be greatly magnified which could make your final image blurred. If you are interested in capturing as much detail as possible, try and position yourself with the light source behind you - your subject will then be well lit. Although why not experiment with your digiscoping - often a silhouetted subject or motion blur can make a very interesting image. Dull conditions will vastly reduce your shutter speed and increase risk of blurred images. Remember - the faster the shutter speed - the more chance of freezing a moving subject and getting a sharp image.

KEEP IT STEADY

Use a good, strong tripod to reduce any shake and movement. Remember, any camera shake is greatly magnified with telephoto photography which can result in frustrating blurred images. Invest in the best tripod you can afford and ensure you use a video tripod head with a good fluid motion.

ENJOY IT

There are lots of factors that can affect your digiscoped image, don't get too disappointed by unsuccessful digiscoped pictures. Even the best digiscopers out there have to take lots of images in the hope of getting that great image. Don't be fooled by some of the spectacular images you see on the internet - more than likely they have been improved and sharpened in image software. It's all part of the digiscoping method. The main thing is to remember to enjoy the whole experience!

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