

Learning Laguna Field Activity: Using Spotting Scopes and Binoculars

Goal: To give students the experience of effectively using optical equipment.

Spotting Scopes:

- Before approaching the spotting scopes, pause with your group and re-focus their attention.
- “Next, we get to use some very special equipment that can help us get close-up views of the landscape, and sometimes, wildlife like birds.” “We get to watch with out disturbing them!”
Extension questions:
 - **How would we know if we are disturbing wildlife?** – Animals may flee, freeze movement, make sounds, etc.
 - **Why do we want to avoid disturbing wildlife?** Disturbing wildlife causes them to use up very valuable and hard gained energy that they need for living – food gathering, being safe from predators and raising young.
- Explain that the scopes, like other types of equipment, are very delicate and fragile.
- Show the group (by pointing) where the scope is focused.
- Explain that bumping or adjusting the scope will move it away from the nest (or owl or turtle...) that we are trying to look at and they may not be able to see it.
- Tell them, while showing them, to approach the scope with their hands behind their back. Especially avoid the tripod legs. Point out the focus knob, which is the only part that they may need to touch. If the (nest, owl, turtle, etc) is not in view, have the students ask for your assistance.

Binoculars:

- Always put the strap around your neck before using.
- Hold binoculars on the sides and avoid touching the lenses. Fingerprints make them harder to see through.
- Find an object you want to examine through the binoculars. While keeping your eyes on the object, bring the binoculars up to your eyes without taking your eyes off the object.
- Use the focus knob to make the object clearer. (Make sure that the diopter (the single eye focus) is set to the center position)
- Keep your arms close to your body when holding the binoculars, this helps make them more stable.
- Stand still when you look through the binoculars, walking while looking through the lenses could be dangerous.
- Never look at the sun through the binoculars or allow them to pass before the sun while searching the sky.