



Jay Scott • Field Editor

Game Trails

Tracking Down Western Hunting Tactics

Digiscoping Adapters

Did that bull have an extra point? What side was it on? Last year wasn't that point longer? Are you sure that is him? Did that ram have the chip in his horn on the right side or left side?

These are all questions that my hunting partners and I have asked over the years while roaming the hills. When I first started taking digiscoping photos of trophies through my spotting scope, I would just hold the digital camera up to my spotting scope to take photos and video. The shots were exciting but often resulted in poor image quality. I then began the search for something to stabilize the images. My hunting partner, Darr Colburn, turned me on to the Cabela's Digiscoping Camera Adapter. We began using this adapter and were really surprised at how well it worked. We both have small point-and-shoot digital cameras that are different, but each fit on the Cabela's adapter. I recently purchased the Scope Cam adapter from *TinesUp.com*. They sell a small point-and-shoot camera with the threaded rings already attached to the camera that is very easy to use as well. It was very important for us to keep the whole digiscoping setup as light as possible. Although our photos are not cover material, they help us keep track of what we see in the field and have greatly improved our trophy judging.

There are three simple reasons that I use a digiscoping adapter while in the field. First, I use it to compare images with my hunting partners, second, to keep an inventory picture/video list of trophies from year to year, and third, to improve my trophy judging capabilities. As a hunter and guide, the ability to take pictures and video that captures every aspect of the animal's body and antler characteristics is of utmost importance. Most of the time video is better than photos because you get a better perspective of the strong and weak points of your trophy's horns or antlers. Video typically doesn't hide anything, whereas photos of the strong side can make the trophy's rack look much better than it is and conversely, weak side photos can make the trophy look much smaller.

Tips for digiscoping through a spotting scope

1. Make sure you have a good, sturdy tripod.
2. Turn the spotting scope to its lowest magnification, which is usually 20x.
3. Use the zoom in your camera to zoom in/out, not the spotting scope zoom.
4. Make sure you turn off the digital zoom on your camera—only use optical zoom.



Darr Colburn using the Cabela's adapter to capture a nice ram on video.



The Swarovski Spotting scope with the TinesUp adapter attached.

5. To avoid blurry photos, use the 2-second autotimer so your images will come out clearer.
6. If your camera has a burst mode, use it with the autotimer so you can get more pictures without destabilizing the setup.
7. Don't touch your tripod or adapter while shooting.
8. When possible, try to shoot with the sun at your back for clearer images.
9. Make sure to carry a couple of extra batteries.
10. Shoot on the highest quality setting for both video and photo.
11. Use high-capacity SD cards. I use a 16GB card and can easily get 1000+ photos and hours of video.

Below are the two adapters I like to use for digiscoping. Both adapters are made of machined aluminum. My spotting scope of choice is the Swarovski STS 80 HD. Both point-and-shoot cameras I use shoot HD video and 12-14 megapixels photos.

Cabela's Digiscoping Adapter – www.cabelas.com

Price: \$45

Size: 9" tall and weighs 14oz (19.3oz with the Sony DSC-T90 camera attached)

Tines Up Scope Cam Adapter – www.tinesup.com

Price: \$80

Size: 2.5" x 2.5" and weighs 4.5oz for just the adapter and rings (9oz with adapter rings and Canon SD 1400 IS camera attached). It is important to get the right size adapter for your spotting scope. They also make the rings to adapt to your video camera or even an SLR camera.

I highly recommend getting one of these digiscoping adapter setups. When questions arise about antler/horn characteristics from your buddies, you can whip out your SD card and let them see for themselves. If you have a hunting partner that likes to stretch the truth a little, then this would make a great gift as well, *which is how I got both of mine!* Once you spend a day using either setup you will find they are very easy to use. After a day in the field it is exciting to pop the SD card in the computer and check out your handiwork. If you get one of these adapters, I am sure that your evaluation of trophy animals will greatly improve. Have fun out there and be safe! •

Editor's Note:

To follow Jay's latest adventures in the field, visit his website at www.JayScottOutdoors.com.

All of these photos were taken by Colburn & Scott Outfitters using these two camera adapter setups.

