

# Vanguard VEO HD 80A

Enhance your enjoyment of nature with a high-quality spotting scope, such as this Vanguard model offering up to 60x magnification – it's portable and rugged, too



**CAPTURED** The VEO PA-65 digiscoping adapter for smartphone costs £49.99 and fits eyepieces between 34 and 54mm

**GREAT POWER** The VEO HD 80A has a 20–60x zoom range, selectable with the firm action magnification barrel

A TOP-END spotting scope can cost a serious amount of money. If you are a dedicated birdwatcher, committing makes sense, but those wanting a scope for occasional birdwatching and astronomy will be looking for quality performance and value in the pocket. Well, something like the Vanguard VEO HD 80A should appeal. It is a ruggedly built scope that is dustproof and waterproof, costing £350. The 80mm front objective pulls in plenty of light, while the fixed eyepiece has a zoom range of 20x to 60x. A rubber eyeshield rotates out by 1cm to stop light striking the eyepiece, and there's a retractable lens hood at the front.

Spotting scopes are used on a tripod of some sort – perhaps a mini tripod in a hide, where you may have a shelf to rest on or a full-size pod in the open. The tripod foot on the VEO HD 80A is Arca-Swiss compatible, so no need for an additional plate if you have a suitable tripod head.

The focusing barrel has a taut and reassuringly positive action and, once focusing is set, it's not going to drift unless you want it to. That's the same with the zoom barrel, which is equally tight in its action and focus doesn't alter as you zoom in and out.

The viewing image is lovely, with plenty of contrast and brightness, even in dull, flat lighting. Acquiring sharp focus is easy enough, thanks to the crisp, high-quality image.

I tried the VEO HD 80A with Vanguard's VEO PA-65, a digiscope adapter. This is a universal adapter and will fit scopes with an eyepiece between 34 and 54mm wide, holding smartphones with a width between 59 and 90mm. I used it with an iPhone X in a protective case about 77mm wide.

Fitting the adapter on to the eyepiece is simple enough. Three ratcheted, rubber-covered prongs adjust as the locking collar is rotated. These hug the scope's eyepiece to give a secure fit. The phone is also securely held in the cradle and can be rotated, and the height adjusted, to line up the smartphone camera with the eyepiece. It takes a little time, but the process is easy enough. A separate Bluetooth remote release is supplied for touch-free shooting – important when you're shooting at such long focal lengths, so this is worth using.

With my iPhone on the scope, I got a circular image within a black frame at 20x, and had to magnify the viewing image on the phone to 2.5x to fill the frame. Zoom the scope to 60x, and you need to zoom in much more to get rid of the black surround.

Capturing acceptable images takes a little patience, especially if your phone is not very responsive and you are working at high magnifications, so focus is super critical. I had plenty of near-misses and complete failures, but I got shots I was pleased with, too. **WC**



**ON THE FEED** Digiscoping with the VEO HD 80A and the PA-65 adapter gives decent image sharpness and detail rendition, especially at the centre of the frame. No image sharpening has been added in editing, but contrast has been increased

## SPECS

- › **Price** VEO HD 80A scope £349.99, VEO PA-65 digiscoping adapter £49.99
- › **In the box** Scope, eyepiece cover, front cover, protective cover
- › **Magnification** 20-60x
- › **Objective lens** 80mm
- › **Hood** Yes, fitted. Retractable
- › **Lens coating** Fully multi-coated
- › **Minimum focus** 6m at 20x, 6.5m at 60x
- › **Body material** Carbon composite body
- › **Fast focus wheel** Yes
- › **Fine focus wheel** No
- › **Waterproof** Yes
- › **Fog-proof** Yes
- › **Tripod foot** Arca-Swiss compatible
- › **Dimensions (lxwxh)** 37.6x17.9x9.7cm
- › **Weight** 1.55kg
- › **VEO PA-65 ADAPTER**
- › **Phone size** 59-90mm
- › **Eyepiece diameter** 34-54mm
- › **Contact** [vanguardworld.co.uk](http://vanguardworld.co.uk)

**THE VIEWING IMAGE HAS PLENTY OF CONTRAST AND BRIGHTNESS, EVEN IN DULL, FLAT LIGHTING. ACQUIRING SHARP FOCUS IS EASY**

## Verdict

The Vanguard VEO HD 80A is a solidly made spotting scope that performs well and comes in at a good price. Adding the VEO PA-65 digiscoping adapter gives the scope an extra dimension, so is also worth considering.

**PROS** Excellent value, high-quality optics, Arca-Swiss fitting, water- and fog-proof

**CONS** A fine focus control would be nice