



A Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America

Roger Tory Peterson

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The best-selling field guide since 1934, the *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America* features clear, succinct accounts of more than 500 species, accurate and beautiful paintings on 159 color plates, and 512 maps annotated with extensive range information, making this the most accessible field guide for bird watchers in eastern North America. Peterson Field Guides are valuable additions to any birder's pocket or day pack. At a trim size of 5 x 8, they are portable and beautifully illustrated. Photographs, while modern looking and colorful, capture just one moment in time. The paintings in these guides, however, show all of a bird's key field marks and use the Peterson Identification System to make bird identification easier for beginning and intermediate bird watchers. Expert birders have also created 35 entertaining and easy-to-use supplementary video podcasts, which are available to download.

A Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America Details

Date : Published March 14th 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (first published 1980)

ISBN : 9780547152462

Author : Roger Tory Peterson

Format : Unknown Binding 464 pages

Genre : Reference, Environment, Nature, Animals, Birds, Nonfiction, Science, Field Guides

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From Reader Review A Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America for online ebook

Cynthia says

This guide can't be beat for helping new birders identify what is in their yard.
Has my Life List in it!

Pat says

Informative and simple to use, even for the non-birder.

Frank says

The classic for eastern US bird identification.

Christopher says

This is a must have guide if you live in or are traveling to the Eastern and Central North America area. With numerous birds visiting daily to my backyard, this resource is always within arms reach, usually sitting next to a camera. Pictures are bright making identification easy and the book is laid out in a very easy to use format.

C. says

My late husband and I had a blast using this book while observing the birds at our backyard feeders when we lived in the country. Highly recommended for bird watchers.

Jennifer Blakeslee says

I collect bird guides, but when I actually go out in the field, this is the ONLY book I bring with me. It's truly indispensable -- and I'll always love it for describing chimney swifts as "cigars with wings."

Jay says

This is THE book my parents taught me with on our hikes. I've carried it with me all over the continent.

When a mysterious bird drops by our bird feeder it's the book my children reach for. It rarely spends time on the shelf.

Brian Cassada says

Great book for birding. Use it often. The tips that each color plate has to help point specific unique characteristics for each bird are extremely helpful. This book came to me by way of a friend who was pointed to it by some more advanced bird watchers. Definitely a must have book for those who enjoy bird watching.

Mark Carey says

For me this is the quintessential bird guide. My copy has little bits of post-it sticking out all over. I recommend it to anyone who loves watching birds.

Theresa says

This book is a keeper , as an Ontario resident, it is a must , pelee Island adventures , always on the lookout for a new species, this book cannot be surpassed as a tool!

Louis says

This is the famed Peterson's Guide. It is illustrated using paintings by Roger Tory Peterson. In a nice touch, the incomplete plate (page with the painting of birds) that he was working on when he died is found in the preface by his wife, and the forward references the completed version that was completed by a friend for inclusion in this Fifth edition.

The plates include lines that indicate field marks. The actual mark descriptions are in the short paragraph that is with each bird. Between 4 and 6 birds are in every pair of facing pages, with between 1 and 5 poses for each bird. The illustrations are fairly large, and clear. The text covers several categories, visual description included differences between male, female and juvenile, similar species, description of the range, voice, and habitat. With this much to cover, the wording is terse.

Also, there is a thumbnail range map. A larger range map is in the back. There are many reviewers who complain about the range maps being in the back of the book, presumably they are discussing a previous edition.

What Peterson introduced with this guide was a way to identify species in the field, without having to capture or shoot the specimen. In this case, the field marks. For each species, he gives marks (distinctive markings) that distinguish one bird from others of the same family. For example, if a woodpecker is small and has a red spot on the nape of the neck with a white stripe down the back, it could be Downy woodpecker. But if its bill is as long as its head and the outside tail feathers are all white (no black spots) it probably is a

hairy woodpecker. If it is large, has a red crest that extends to its bill, and the wing has a white leading edge and black trailing edge, it is a Pileated. If the trailing edge is white, the red crest does not go all the way to the front of the head and you are in a southern old growth forest, well, that could very well mean something else, especially in 2005-2006.

I suppose that a true birder does not memorize field marks, instead has an intuitive understanding just by looking as to what species a given bird is. But for those of us who have not attained enlightenment, we identify the basic type, then use the marks to home in on the species, or note things to look for when we hit our field guide. And the Peterson's does a good job of that.

For identifying what is in the air around us, this is a delight to use, and the order gets intuitive after not long. There is something thrilling of paging through a field guide and realizing you just figured out what that bird you could not identify was, and going out in the field again and wondering if you will see it again.

This is a field guide, and its purpose is identification. It is not a guide of ornithology. If the goal is to understand birds, look elsewhere. But it serves its purpose well, and its cover and construction give me confidence it should survive many walks stuffed in my jacket pocket and thumbed through in the field.

PoachingFacts says

Peterson's A Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America (Sixth Edition), attributed to Roger Tory Peterson, was most recently published in 2010. Peterson Field Guides compete directly with The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America: Second Edition and Princeton Field Guides on similar areas of focus, although there may not be a direct equivalent for North American birds from Princeton Field Guides. It also competes to a degree with the National Audubon Society's field guides, which are actually in a narrower format and more portable in some cases.

(If you've read our review of Peterson's A Field Guide to Birds of Western North America (Fourth Edition) then the remainder of the review and our conclusion regarding the functionality of the book, is identical with only minor changes where appropriate relating to the number of species represented, color plates, and so on.)

This Sixth Edition claims a few significant improvements compared to previous editions, though it's unlikely to be worth upgrading from the Fifth Edition. Paul Lehman and Michael O'Brien have gone to great lengths to improve the accuracy of the data and provide updated range maps for numerous species while Michael DiGiorgio improved the digitized plates where necessary, building on updates to the Fifth Edition. Overall, the *Field Guide* offers a number of useful features, some duplicated for ease of access at the beginning of the book and at the beginning of the appropriate section, achieving an ease of use that will help novices quickly identify birds but may not provide enough detail or have a comprehensive enough format to satisfy more experienced birders.

There are 333 color-coded pages describing the size, voice, habitats, scarcity, classification, nomenclature, and "similar species" of over 500 species comprising over 30 families of birds with ranges within Eastern and Central North America, including eastern Mexico. For those seeking the most comprehensive coverage of species, this does not compare favorably to the 650 species in the Sibley field guide for the same region. The 159 color plates contained within the Peterson *Field Guide* primarily offer illustrations for adult plumages of males and females, with some species getting the requisite illustrations for adolescent plumage or seasonal changes which are essential to identification. Over all, the color reproduction and clarity from the

latest editions of Peterson Field Guides are on par or better than what is found in Princeton Field Guides, although we can't speak to the accuracy of the color reproduction with respect to actual bird plumage, since individual species' plumage can vary significantly from one region to the next. National Audubon Society field guides on birds have color photos which some people may appreciate more, however the plates found in the Peterson Field Guides are so large and life-like that there are unlikely to be many complaints beyond plumage accuracy. Videos on the Peterson Field Guides' YouTube channel are a free supplement to this guide.

Towards the back of the book just under one hundred pages are dedicated to enlarged "range maps" depicting the same ranges accompanying nearly all of the bird species described, but with the benefit of being a larger size. These range maps are fit 6 to a page and have both a map number and the page number of the corresponding species, making it incredibly easy to turn to the larger range map when wanting a more detailed view or back to the species data. This feature also makes it very easy to plan trips around what birds will be in their seasonal or year-round ranges simply by looking at all the range maps side-by-side and deciding on what areas will help you check off your "life list."

The last ten pages before the index feature a "life list" with a checkmark spot beside each species so readers can make a note of whether or not they've observed this species (with enough space to write in a state abbreviation to denote where they've seen it). Life lists are a key way for novice and veteran birders alike to keep track of what species they've had the pleasure of observing and such a functional – and essential – element for birding enthusiasts is a great inclusion in this *Field Guide*.

Like many field guides, the index lists all the bird species described within. The Peterson *Field Guide* offers a functional twist on the traditional alphabetized index by providing an alphabetically sorted list of both scientific and common names together, making it very easy to find the page number, or range map, of a specific species regardless of which name springs to mind first. 70 silhouettes of bird species are also included to round out the last pages of the field guide and make rapid- or distant-identification easier.

The *Field Guide* is laid out in a way familiar to anyone who has used field guides from other publishers and provides a good entry-level bird identification book with some features that may provide better subjective functionality in some areas while falling short in others. The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America: Second Edition and The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America may offer a superior overall format and more comprehensive collection of individual species and illustrations depicting identifying features and seasonal or regional variations and should be the first consideration for those seeking to invest in a standard-sized field guide. For those looking for something more compact and portable with a similar coverage of information then National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds: Eastern Region and National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds: Western Region are great choices.

Kaitlyn says

"A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America" is a field guide for new or seasoned birders around the globe. You may not be in Eastern or Central North America but perhaps you'd like to see birds from there? Well, I reckon if you lifted up this book it'll suit you just fine!

This was actually the book that had started it all. The book that started my beginner bird identification skills, the book that started by dream to complete the big year or sail the sea to an expedition on finding the

Wandering Albatross and best of all, this book started my dream of being an Ornithologist.

My Grandfather gave a paperback copy of this to my Father and here it is in my lap from three generations. Peterson's Guides are always in my shelf and most of all, this one always in my heart.

I'd suggest it to you with my deepest smile! It has a sweet little section in it to see the maps of where birds mostly landed during the year the book was written; granted the records might not be the same now, but you can see what the past migratory changes have been in THAT year. There is also a very neat index you can easily search through and find the bird you're looking for before they fly away. Now, we all have different book tastes, but if you have a love of birding, young or old? This book should be in your hands! Happy reading! I hope to see your review when you finish. ;)

Lisa (Harmonybites) says

This book was owned by my mother--who was the nature lover and birder in the family. She found more to watch than you might expect living in New York City. We lived near Central Park, which is something of a bird sanctuary. This book taught her a lot that she passed on to me, Though I'm by no means the naturalist she was, I do appreciate the way this book made me more aware of the birds around me. I was oblivious before to all but the pigeons ("rock doves" in this book) and sparrows. After this I was more aware of the occasional American Robin, Cardinal and Blue Jays I'd see around the streets, let alone the Mourning Dove, Chickadees, Mockingbird, Oriole, Tufted Titmice among others I could spot in Central Park. Somehow it all made New York City a friendlier and more magical place.

max says

Talk about definitive. There are others, but this was the first that was intended to provide specific identification aids in the field. It still rules. It is often fun just to do some armchair browsing through its gorgeous plates and recall what I have seen and where, and what I have not seen.

Birding is such a sweet pastime, and is fun either alone or in the company of others, especially highly skilled observers.
