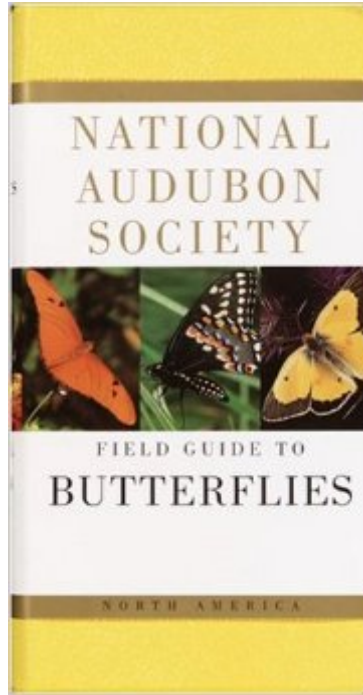


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# The National Audubon Society Field Guide To North American Butterflies



## Synopsis

Butterflies are among the natural world's most colorful and intriguing creatures, so what could be more useful than a handy field guide with more than 1,000 photographs of all the butterflies of North America north of Mexico, including all true butterflies, the most common skippers, and many migrants and strays. The color plates are visually arranged by shape and color, and thumb-tab silhouettes provide a convenient index to identification of butterflies in the field. The species account for each butterfly provides measurements, descriptions of each stage of the life cycle, and information on coloring or distinguishing markings, flight period, habitat, and range.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

This field guide has significant strengths and weaknesses. First, the strengths. This book provides what most casual butterfly enthusiasts want, page after page of photos of butterflies (several hundred photos as a matter of fact). The photographs are good, for the most part, showing differences and similarities between many butterflies included in the book. (Most taxonomic characters are not readily seen in photos though.) One particularly helpful feature is that for many butterflies, such as skippers and those bearing eye-spots, both the upper and underside of wings are shown. The butterflies are arranged, for the most part, by wing coloration or shape. This can help with more rapid field identification. There is also a section in the back of the guide that provides more information on butterflies listed. The book is a convenient size, readily able to fit into a jacket or

back pocket.OK, now for the weaknesses.As with other field guides published by the Audubon Soc...I can't figure out why the editors didn't include the scientific names along with the common names by each photo. If you want to use this book for any kind of taxonomic work, it becomes an annoying exercise in page flipping from the front to the back of the book. More serious entomologists will, of course, use taxonomic keys to identify specimens, but for the amateur collector who may not have or know how to use such keys, the format of the book can be frustrating.There are too few photos of caterpillars, chrysalises, etc. at the front of the book. I know of no field guide that provides much on early life stages, and this guide is no different. Don't get me wrong, I'm pleased that they included a section on caterpillars, I just wish there were more.There is very little information on the kinds of characteristics usually used in butterfly taxonomy...antenna type, wing veination, etc...presented in the book. A significant weakness.Even with the large number of photographs, a photo cannot, in my opinion, do the same job of a well-done illustration in helping someone identify what they are looking at. As photo-based guides on butterflies, this is probably one of the best out there. Still, I wish there were a good general guide based on illustrations.With that said, it is important to realize that no single field guide can ever hope to be comprehensive in treating the butterflies. There are simply too many species and variations out there to make a portable field guide.With all that said, I think that this is a good, useful guide, but with a few changes it could be even better.4 stars.Happy butterfly spotting!Alan Holyoak, Dept of Biology, Manchester College, IN

I use both Audubon Society and Petersons small wildlife identification guides and find that are quite good with their own plus and minuses. Petersons is better for taking into the field for things that move (animals and insects) due to the layout which allows for quicker identification. Audubon is better for things that can't get away (plants) and with animals and insects, for obtaining data about the creature's habitat. This guide is as good as any other in their series, which is to say that it is very good.

This book covers all of the native and introduced species of butterflies in North America north of Mexico. There are good quality photographs taken in the field of most of the adults and some of the caterpillars and eggs. Not all of the variations are shown but showing many variations of each species in a national guide would make it too big and confusing to easily use in the field. Ranges are described verbally but there are no maps. Host plants are named and listed alphabetically in the index. The volume is a convenient size to carry and has a sturdy plastic cover.As a national guide

this book is a good next step from the Golden Guide. It is also a good source of information for planning a butterfly garden.

The Audubon Guide to Butterflies equals the completely perfect Kaufman Guide to Butterflies in every way. First, there are countless numbers of species listed, which is essential to identify a particular specimen. It is also very detailed in the description of the species in the back of the book. It is perfect for beginner naturalists and experts! So, why is it so underrated? For one reason, many are too lazy to quickly flip to the back of the book and read the description. Anyone stating that this is for the very beginning amateur must have the wrong field guide altogether! Saying that the Golden Guides are for beginners is understandable, but saying that about an Audubon Guide is not. This a "stonewall" entry in the long list of Audubon Guides, and may very well be one of the best!

Good comprehensive descriptions of all the North American butterflies - same amount of info as, say, a typical Peterson bird book has on each species. The pictures leave a lot to the imagination. Try to identify half the N American 'Sulphurs' with these photos. Colour illustrations would be much better - they don't go out of focus either. I had to use other books as well for more difficult species. This book with plates in the style of 'European Butterflies' by Higgins and Riley would be the perfect field guide. As it was it was the best I could find for its compact size.

The Audubon Guides are almost always first rate and the way they are bound and covered make them perfect for the outdoors. This particular guide in typical fashion for the series is strong on color photographs but weak on taxonomy. That being said as the enthusiast continues in the hobby and their library on butterflies grows it is not the type of book one will discard, "re-gift" or consign to the back of the shelf. Used together with just one other book strong in taxonomy will be a winning combination for the lepidopterist. Highly recommended.

These audubon guides are good basic guides. We got them to identify butterflies, insects and spiders in our midwestern back yard. It is often difficult to find the bugs we are looking for. We've had much more luck with Kenn Kaufman's "Field Guide to Insects of North America". In some ways it's more user friendly, with lots of bugs photos on one page and descriptions that are on the opposing text page. The Audubon guide is set up so that you have to flip back and forth between images in one section and text/description in another - which can be tedious - however, the Audubon descriptions are much more thorough than Kaufman's.

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