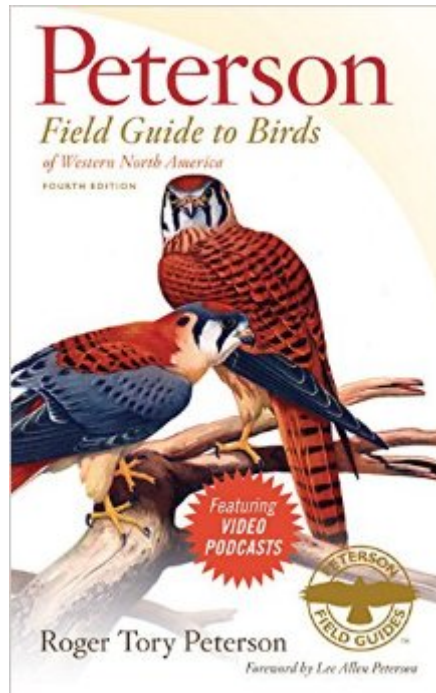


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Peterson Field Guide To Birds Of Western North America, Fourth Edition (Peterson Field Guides)



Synopsis

Field Guide to Western Birds

Book Information

Series: Peterson Field Guides (Book 4)

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; 4 edition (March 14, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0547152701

ISBN-13: 978-0547152707

Product Dimensions: 1 x 5.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

There is a stack of bird books sitting near the window in my living room from which I watch a bird feeder and its visitors every day. I have an ancient 2nd edition of Peterson that really started me watching birds. So, I admit that I have a sentimental attachment to my Peterson Guides. I have hauled Peterson Guides over 4 continents. The National Geographic Guide is a back up for me, when I am trying to compare characteristics of the birds I see. Sibley I keep for comparison and because I love books-and as a general U.S. Guide. But, day-to-day, year-to year, I still carry my Peterson in a knapsack with my maps and snacks and use it as my comfortably dog-eared companion. I also love this new addition. Although it is a bit larger, it is still smaller than my Sibley guide. It also has some of the improvements that made the Sibley guides popular, such as maps on the same page as the bird illustrations. (Another reviewer has complained the maps are not accurate, but I must admit that I only use the maps as a very general reference. The bird migration and shifting populations seem to make the presence of many birds "outside the map" a real possibility where I live). The larger illustrations are a real improvement (much appreciated as my eyes age). The biggest difference for me, after years of birdwatching, is that the Peterson Guide is only one of the sources I consult. Now I carry a field guide but am more likely to take field notes and

sketches home to look at more than one source. Perhaps because I studied art when I was young, I prefer the less constrained illustrations by Peterson vs. Sibley. All in all, the Peterson Guide is still the one I will carry with me in the field as the quick reference. I have often heard that Peterson is not for "serious' birders.

This is a copy of a review I wrote for the eastern edition, but I think it fits them both. I really wish I could agree with the glowing reviews given by others, but I can't, at least in some respects. I grew up with the original Peterson field guide, and it was my parents' bible. The revisions over the years greatly enhanced the original material. I doubt there is a "seasoned" birder out there who would not say that the Peterson guides are responsible to a great extent for their love of birding. As soon as they were available I signed up for the pre-order of both the eastern and western editions. I have had them now for around 5 months, and they have never left the house. I can only really comment on the eastern edition, because I never had a previous western ed., but I assume this applies to both. The book's content is at least 95% the same as the previous edition. I have spotted an added picture or two, but not many. Colors have been changed slightly, but I am not sure that they are better, and it may just be the printing process. The text is updated to agree with current information, bird names, etc., but I haven't noticed much else. In that the pictures and information in the guides has always been excellent, all well and good. The complaint I have is that the book is just no longer a FIELD GUIDE to me, as past editions were. It is thicker, somewhat heavier, and for a very poor reason, in my estimation. The difference is primarily in the back section of range maps, which has almost doubled in size. It takes up roughly 1/4 of the total size of the book. Now, we all refer to a range map from time to time, but I would bet it's something like 1 in 300 times we use the book.

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