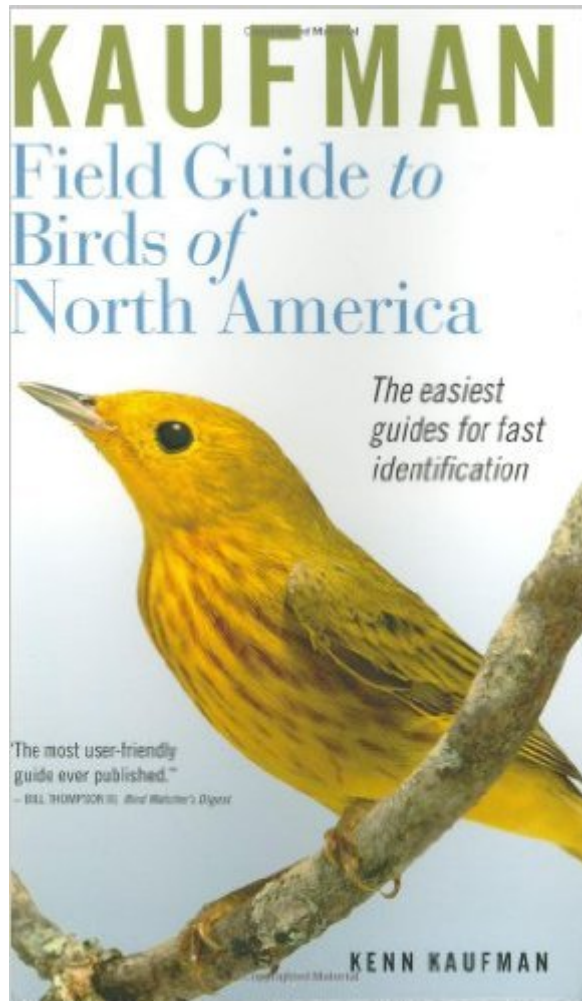


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Kaufman Field Guide To Birds Of North America



Synopsis

In 2000 Houghton Mifflin first published the Kaufman Focus Guide to the Birds of North America. Critically acclaimed for its innovative design, the Kaufman guide began introducing a new generation to birding. In 2005, this new Kaufman Field Guide to Birds of North America is now the most up-to-date field guide, including dozens of changes by the American Ornithologists' Union in official names of birds; the addition of new species to reflect the latest scientific discoveries; and dozens of updated range maps. Additional information helps beginning birdwatchers get started, all in the same compact format that has made this guide the easiest to use for fast identification in the field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Attention, all North American birders. The ultimate field guide has arrived--Ken Kaufman's new Focus Guide to the Birds of North America! Not since Roger Tory Peterson's landmark guides has one book combined all the essential elements a birder needs to quickly and accurately make field identifications. Previous guides have used either artists' color plates or photographs; each has its pros and cons. But the Kaufman Guide's use of computer-enhanced and edited photographs gives us the best of both worlds and works marvelously, now that the technology makes it possible. The range maps, in addition to providing the usual winter and breeding distribution, distinguish between areas where species are common and rare. They also include migration ranges, which are rarely pictured in other field guides. Best of all, Mr. Kaufman has put all the essential facts and photos into

a compact 384-page paperback that will easily fit in a coat or pants pocket. While no one book can possibly provide everything a birder might want, this one, for its size, gives one the most important info. For birds that are usually seen in flight, like pelagics, raptors and waterfowl, there are additional poses. And for those especially nasty challenges, such as juvenile gulls, fall warblers, and immature sparrows, there are also extra photos. If you can only afford one bird book or don't care to carry a library everytime you go out in the field, this is the book for you! I've been birding for nearly half a century, and this is now the one I'll take everytime!

Field Guides of Birds come in two different forms and each has its supporters. Some folks prefer those showing reality using one or more photographs. Others prefer those based on paintings that can be made to highlight key features. Kaufman's Field Guide attempts to blend the two approaches by using digitally enhanced photos as its basis of identification. And they are among the best photos I've seen for this purpose. But I have to admit that they don't quite do it for me; there is a degree of artificiality to the photos that is unsatisfying. The paintings of Peterson and Sibley are, to my eyes, more useful in helping me understand the key elements of shape, plumage, and other characteristics. Anyone who is familiar with other Field Guides will also have difficulty with Kaufman's non-standard order of images (e.g., owls and hawks grouped together). It makes finding a given group of birds difficult until or unless you become very familiar with this book. But there is much that is good as well. The multi-colored range maps, using a variety of scales, clearly impart more information than their counterparts in many other Guides. And the Family introductions are full of useful tidbits that help you understand common characteristics of a group of related birds. It was certainly Kaufman's misfortune that Sibley's Field Guide was published so close on the heels of his for it makes comparisons inevitable. Viewed by itself, Kaufman's book would be applauded for its innovation and the wealth of information it contains. But when compared to Sibley, it is but a distant second-best. I would consider it a welcome addition to my bookshelf, but not my first choice as either a pocketable Field Guide or a home/car reference book (I'd choose National Geographic and Sibley, respectively, for those roles). Nice to have, but not a "must-have".

That amazing guru Kenn Kaufman has finally finished his all new birding field guide "Birds of North America" using touched up photographs and "pointers" (similar to Peterson) I think this guide will catch on and be loved by amateur and beginner birders. I think the maps are very good and the many colors used really help the maps. Kenn uses two colors for each of the seasonal ranges. A darker color indicates the area where the species is common during that season, while a paler color

indicates areas where the species while present is less common or rare. The pictures for me at times can become a little crowded and some of the photos are a little pale, but most of them are much better than any other "photo guide". Some of my Photos and ink smeared in my book, so you may want to double check before purchasing your book. This field guide makes it very simple to look up a bird on the field. The Color Tabs are simple as well as the index in the back. I enjoyed the vocal I.D. for each bird but that is a very personal taste. Each I.D. also adds a little something I miss in a lot of field guides, for example: "A hyperactive midget, common in winter in woods and thickets of south. Harder in summer, when often high in tall conifers. Flicks wings open and shut especially when excited." Golden-Crowned Kinglet In closing I must say this is one of the easier field guide to birds to use and is a warm welcome to the birding community. Martin Phillips

This is a magnificent guide, especially for beginners. Expert birders may prefer the encyclopedic guide by David Sibley, another excellent piece of work. This guide has a number of advantages as a guide: It easily fits into your pocket It has a handy thumb index, once you get used to it It has a comprehensive index inside the back cover The photos are superb, and the color matches better than any other guide I know. I highly recommend this guide.

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