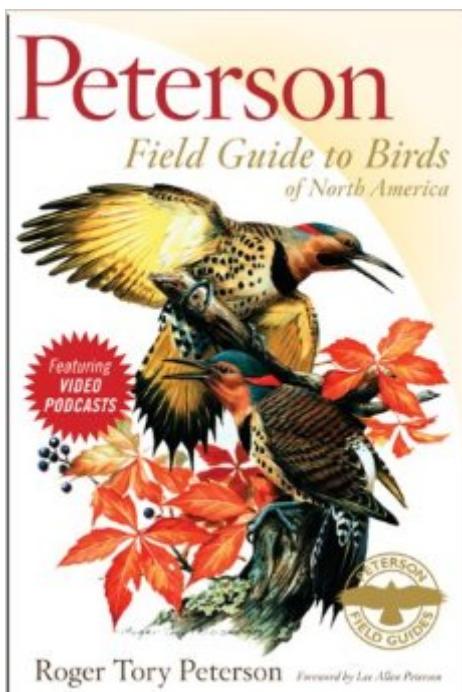


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Peterson Field Guide To Birds Of North America (Peterson Field Guide Series)



Book Information

Series: Peterson Field Guide Series

Vinyl Bound: 544 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Co; 1 edition (August 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618966145

ASIN: B001PTG37Y

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.4 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (174 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This guide is a combination of the previously separate Eastern and Western Peterson guides. The look and feel of this guide will be immediately familiar to any users of past editions, especially the latest Eastern. However, every aspect of the book, even the art, has been enhanced and updated. Here is a brief summary of the changes. The book's size is the first change that will be noticed. It is now probably too large to carry into the field. However, the increased size means that the plates are less crowded, and the art can be reproduced in a larger size. This allows the art to be better appreciated and studied. Unless you are extremely familiar with Peterson's art, you won't notice many changes on the plates. But there have in fact been many. The most extensive changes have been in the form of digital enhancements to Peterson's art. These are touch-ups and corrections to make the bird on the page look more like the bird in the field. Thankfully, these enhancements have been artfully done, and do not stand out. In virtually every case they have indeed improved the image of every species that I'm familiar with. There are also entirely new paintings, contributed by Michael O'Brien. Some, like the Himalayan Snowcock, are new species that have never before been included in a Peterson guide. But some previously included birds have been completely replaced by new paintings. These have been done in Peterson's style and some are very difficult to pick out. However, many are fairly obvious. They are not bad by any means, just different, and that difference can be jarring. Like the art, the text has also been extensively enhanced and updated. For the most part, this consists of editorial changes such as word usage.

My 5-star rating is based entirely on sentiment for Roger Tory Peterson and what his work means to all nature enthusiasts in the US today. Like countless other birders I grew up with an abiding interest in the avian life around me informed almost entirely by RTP's field guides starting with the 1947 Second Edition (still on my library shelf). This new volume almost certainly will be the last published that reproduces King Penguin's incredible art in field guide format, given that it combines birds from both the Eastern and Western guides for the first time, brings taxonomy up to the most recent level, and finally adopts the most up-to-date species order. But this is the ultimate Peterson, perhaps in the most poignant sense, because this volume celebrates the centennial of Peterson's birth, right down to the date it was to be released (but I still thank for shipping it a month early). In my humble opinion, anyone and everyone who likes birds even a little bit needs to own this book. Now I do have a few points to make that are directed at the book's value as a field guide in 2008, and my opinion here is that a rating of 4-stars (or perhaps even 3) is more appropriate. The "trim size" is indeed larger than previous, by about an inch on a side, bringing the height to just one-half inch less than the Sibley Guide (regularly criticized as too large to carry in the field). The art is less crowded for sure, but portability suffers. The paintings are for the most part the exact same as earlier editions, with frequent rearrangements (digitally performed) to account for the East/West combination and taxonomy modifications. New paintings by Michael O'Brien are inserted and are virtually indistinguishable from RTP's own work - a very high compliment to Mr. O'Brien, if you ask me.

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