



Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America

Roger Tory Peterson, Lee Peterson (Foreword by), Lee Allen Peterson (Foreword)

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In celebration of the centennial of Roger Tory Peterson's birth comes a historic collaboration among renowned birding experts and artists to preserve and enhance the Peterson legacy. This new book combines the Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds and Peterson Field Guide to Western Birds into one volume, filled with accessible, concise information and including almost three hours of video podcasts to make bird watching even easier.

- 40 new paintings
- Digital updates to Peterson's original paintings, reflecting the latest knowledge of bird identification
- All new maps for the most up-to-date range information available
- Text rewritten to cover the U.S. and Canada in one guide
- Larger trim size accommodates range maps on every spread
- Contributors include: Michael DiGiorgio, Jeff Gordon, Paul Lehman, Michael O'Brien, Larry Rosche, and Bill Thompson III
- Includes URL to register for access to video podcasts

Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America Details

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Author : Roger Tory Peterson , Lee Peterson (Foreword by) , Lee Allen Peterson (Foreword)

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From Reader Review Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America for online ebook

Sarah says

I had to mark this as Currently Readyng because it is a field guide and you don't really READ it as much as go through it and look stuff up but it is a GREAT guide and easy to use!

If you are a bird dork this is the book for you!!

Brian says

From *Birder's World* magazine:

Eighteen years have passed since Roger Tory Peterson published the third edition of his *Field Guide to Western Birds*. And it was six years ago that Houghton Mifflin published the posthumous fifth edition of his eastern guide.

So much has happened in field guides in the meantime that the older Peterson guides feel - I hate to say it - quaint. David Sibley gave us extraordinary paintings and clean design. Kenn Kaufman produced the hands-down-best photographic guide with clear-as-day text. National Geographic upped the ante by including every bird ever reported north of Mexico. Pete Dunne turned the concept on its head in his *Essential Field Guide Companion*, omitting pictures and describing birds only in words. And recently, Ted Floyd offered up multiple photos of most species along with a CD of bird songs and photos.

Now, I'm happy to report, the Peterson guide is back, and in a big way. For starters, it's no longer two books. All of North America north of Mexico is covered in one volume. At 6 by 9 inches, it's also larger than earlier editions, a change that made it possible to put range maps next to species entries. The maps also appear in the back in a larger size, making them easier to read. And Paul Lehman, our leading expert on bird distribution, has updated them all with the latest range information.

The book directs readers to a new website, www.petersonfieldguides.com, where they can download up to three hours' worth of video podcasts that compare common and similar species, offer tutorials on the guide, and showcase songs and calls. The podcasts play on iTunes, QuickTime, or an MP3 video player.

Cape May birder and artist Michael O'Brien painted 40 new birds for the guide, including recently split species (Dusky and Sooty Grouse) and birds that turn up in our area more frequently than they did in Peterson's day (Fea's Petrel, La Sagra's Flycatcher). Many other paintings have been digitally enhanced to produce clearer field marks. All together, the book describes 811 species.

A hallmark of all Peterson guides - concise, easily understood descriptions - has been retained and, believe it or not, improved. American Redstart, for example, is now "butterfly-like" instead of fluttering "like a falling leaf." We can thank Lehman, O'Brien, and Bill Thompson III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, for the revisions.

Perhaps most enjoyable is the three-page foreword by Peterson's son Lee. It's quite touching to read the

words of a person who calls the father of the modern field guide "Dad."

The new Peterson will be in bookstores on August 28, which would have been Roger's 100th birthday. Do yourself a favor and celebrate the big day with your own copy. - *Matt Mendenhall*

Matt Mendenhall is associate editor of Birder's World.

Grrlscientist says

No one has done more to advance and popularize birdwatching than artist and naturalist, Roger Tory Peterson (RTP), who published his first field guide to the birds in 1934 at the ripe old age of 26. No doubt, many of you probably grew up using RTP's seminal field guides to identify wild birds, but did you know that the Peterson Field Guide to Western Birds and the Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds were combined into one large Sibley-esque type volume for the first time? This new book, the ***Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America***, was published by Houghton Mifflin at the end of August 2008, on the centennial of RTP's birth.

This new 532-page field guide is printed on heavy paper and bound in a tough vinyl cover, suitable for field use. It includes the familiar paintings by RTP, including those helpful arrows that point to diagnostic field marks for each species. The color in the paintings is excellent and they are sharp and clear on the page. Because the book is larger than the original field guides, the paintings are correspondingly larger, too. All the paintings were digitally enhanced by artist, Michael DiGiorgio, so they more accurately represent what a person sees in the field.

Due to the advent of DNA-based phylogenies, avian evolutionary relationships are especially fluid at this time, so the paintings were rearranged to reflect the latest taxonomic changes to bird groups.

Forty new paintings by the artist, Michael O'Brien, were added to this field guide to either replace art, as in the case of the Canyon Wren, *Catherpes mexicanus*, which was lost or painted over, or to add a species to the guide that RTP had not painted, as in the case for the pair of Orange Bishops, *Euplectes franciscanus*, which are fairly common escapees from aviaries in some parts of the country. As you can see, these paintings are stylistically very similar to RTP's work.

All range maps were reworked by Paul Lehman, North America's expert on bird distribution, based on the latest information available, and these maps were digitally rendered by Larry Rosche. A thumbnail range map is included alongside each species account and the text refers the reader to a much larger range map in the maps section in the back of the book. Because of the book's larger size, these maps are correspondingly larger and therefore, more useful.

The text of the species accounts was updated by Paul Lehman, Michael O'Brien and my friend, Bill Thompson III, who is the author of several books and the editor for *Bird Watcher's Digest*. These accounts still preserve the essence of RTP's succinct and insightful observations, especially the written descriptions for each species' vocalizations.

I do have several complaints (yes, I am a birder, and we are a detail-oriented and therefore, very picky bunch). First, this book is really heavy! I have been dragging it around with me on the NYC subways and it is uncomfortably heavy even though I am relatively unfettered. But when I go birding, I am further burdened

by a variety of bulky objects that, together, often give me quite a nasty backache by the end of the day. Second, the paintings of the gulls and terns were not improved over the original field guide and in my opinion, are almost useless for identifying them. Each species is only illustrated in flight, while none of them are perched, so it is impossible to get an overall impression of what these birds look like when they are not zooming overhead. Third, why weren't the owls repainted to include the entire bird, instead of providing just a "head shot"? I always found RTP's lack of a complete representative for each owl species to be both annoying and inexcusable. And speaking of "head shots," the "head shot" paintings of many of the parrots are not very accurate, especially the painting of the yellow-headed parrot, *Amazona oratrix* (p. 229), which is just plain *wrong*. Last but not least, where did all the "accidental", "vagrant" and "stray" birds disappear to? Originally, they were illustrated (with a "head shot" only, grrr) in the back of the book, but they are completely absent from this new field guide?—?a flaw, in my opinion because it detracts from the overall authority of the book itself.

In view of my criticisms, let me remind you that the perfect field guide has not been published.

I should point out that I have not watched any of the video podcasts that are advertized on the cover of the book, but they are freely available on the Roger Tory Peterson Institute's website without a book purchase, so be sure to check those out and let me know what you think of them in the comments.

Overall, despite my complaints, this is a very useful ID guide and I would like to compliment the publishers on their exemplary job in producing it. I highly recommend this book for RTP fans, beginning birders and as a worthwhile reference for advanced birders and for public libraries. However, the overall size and heft force me to rely on this book as a ID reference only (alongside Sibley's and the Smithsonian's equally heavy ID guides), whilst I stick to my first choice for field guides: the comprehensive and very portable *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*.

NOTE: Originally published at scienceblogs.com on 14 December 2008. This review curated at Medium, where it is accompanied by 5 color illustrations and links to the online resources mentioned.

Rosemary says

An outstanding field guide.

Thomas Walton says

got to love the classic, the guide I carry with me on the trail

Joey says

Roger Tory Peterson's Guide to Birds of North America is very helpful and informative with beautiful illustrations painted by the author. A must have for birders and nature lovers.

Don Gubler says

Great resource for knowing things.

Madi says

This field guide to birds was probably one of the best and coolest guides that I've ever seen or even read. Peterson did maps that showed where the birds ranges of where they live. The thing that actually was the coolest that he drew all of these birds and they looked like a picture almost. He did an amazing job describing what each birds voices were. Best and most descriptive Bird Guide that I have ever seen and read.

Lolalaura says

This guide has everything you could need for birding. I'm a rookie at birding and after an hour flipping through, I can already tell it has everything I'll need.

Bonuses;

- checklist for birds you've seen in your lifetime
- bird silhouettes!! Which will be so helpful when you're watching birds in the evening and around bodies of water.
