



## **Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding: Understanding What You See and Hear**

*Kenn Kaufman*

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Birders can memorize hundreds of details and still not be able to identify birds if they don't really understand what's in front of them. Today birders have access to almost too much information, and their attempts to identify birds can be drowned out by excess detail. The all-new *Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding* takes a different approach, clarifying the basics and providing a framework for learning about each group. Overall principles of identification are explained in clear language, and ten chapters on specific groups of birds show how these principles can be applied in practice. Anyone with a keen interest in identifying birds will find that this book makes the learning process more effective and enjoyable, and that truly understanding what we see and hear can make birding more fun.

## **Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding: Understanding What You See and Hear Details**

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## **From Reader Review Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding: Understanding What You See and Hear for online ebook**

### **Jennifer Dudley says**

Concise, well-written, well-organized, covers broad spectrum of information on each genus and each species.....all that AND fascinating reading. With this guide in my hands or jacket pocket, I feel like I Kenn is at my side while birding and he really really wants me to become a great 'bird-understander' but also understands how frustrating the process can be. Thank you so much Kenn.

The book also owes its success to first-rate publishing and excellent contributions by everyone involved.

Rare that I sacrifice precious early morning hours normally devoted to watching wild birds to do anything else, let alone write a review of a book!

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### **David R. says**

This field guide expands greatly on Kaufman's earlier standard field guides to birds of Eastern and Western North America. But it is not for the faint of heart! This is a reference for very experienced birders. With emphasis on "very". Kaufman is most interested in developing skills needed to even attempt identification of birds from difficult vantage points, where molt and juvenal situations are involved, and between confusing species (especially flycatchers!). The latter 2/3 of the guide provide very detailed discussions of what to look for in these difficult evaluations. I strongly urge even moderately skilled birders to stick with the earlier Kaufman guides, which are excellent. This one is rather powerful (and potentially discouraging) medicine.

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### **John says**

A great resource for birdwatchers looking to improve their identification skills. See my full review at my blog.

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### **Melissa says**

The book covers some problematic groups of birds and some common similar birds that are very difficult to differentiate from each other. It gives tips on how to watch birds, how to listen to them and how to learn behavior of each class of bird. I did find that I needed a little more information about several groups of birds and a little less detail about some (such as Hummingbirds), since I live in the Northeast. Perhaps there is a book that only covers east/west or north america?

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### **Russell says**

Fantastic! Even as a veteran birder I learned a whole lot from this book.

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### **Helen says**

A good reference book. I read specific sections when I need more info about a bird.

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### **This Is Not The Michael You're Looking For says**

Most field guides have a very similar design: they are essentially laundry lists of species (some comprehensive, some focused on common species), with photos/drawings, brief descriptions, and maps, usually with a short introductory section on general issues of the groups involved but not much more detail than that. The new *Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding* is completely different. Almost a third of this ~450 page book is about learning the principles of understanding what you see (or hear) in the field. Rather than simply show you what the different species are, it teaches you **how** to identify the species. After the thorough and detailed "introduction" on generally how to identify birds, the rest of the book focuses on each of the major groups of birds, what the common problems are with that group, and what characters are most diagnostic. Detailed explanations are given on how to identify the more confusing species within each group. The language is clear and easy to read and the photographs are excellent and cover many more angles, ages, as variants than most. For some species they even include sonograms of the common calls, something I've never seen in another guide and which (with practice) can definitely serve as a much better indicator of call than textual descriptions.

Although it covers a reasonably large number of species, this book cannot substitute for your favorite "laundry list" field guide because it simply doesn't contain the full list/descriptions of all of the species in North America. However, not only will you want this guide as a supplement to the other guide (or perhaps, more accurately, the other guide is really the supplement to this one), unlike that guide, this is the book you will actually want to read from cover to cover, because doing so is a lesson in bird identification that standard field guides simply do not offer. This is a must read for anyone interested in birding and identifying species in the field.

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### **Lynda Elkin says**

Excellent information for birders who want to hone their skills.

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### **John says**

Excellent guide to solving some common identification challenges, such as juvenile accipiters and fall warblers.

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## **Gregory Boyce says**

May 5, 2012: I read his first edition and liked it for the most part. But this second edition is much better! I can clearly understand what I need to do to take this hobby to another level of enjoyment.

It's not written for beginners but I think if I was a beginner I'd want to be coached on this material - to get started with a different orientation than simple field marks, although they are necessary.

For advanced birders, the book is a must read in my opinion.

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## **Anna Nesterovich says**

This book made me appreciate even more that I didn't have to learn birdwatching on my own. I strongly believe that to start birdwatching having a teacher is essential. But if you don't have one... If there is really no one around who can teach you... Then this book does contain all those little things that must be told to a beginner birdwatcher.

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## **Katie Boord says**

This book helped me a TON. I initially got it to help me learn to identify shorebirds, which I found especially hard. It not only helped me to do that, but helped me identify pretty much every other kind of bird, too. It's probably one of the best birding books I own.

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## **Kerry says**

So, this is a very detailed, in-depth book on birding. I got through the first section, which was about identification in general. Unfortunately I didn't retain very much -- for example, he goes into detail about molting, and the different kinds of molts, etc. I was happy to read it and I'll keep in mind the idea that "well, that bird looks weird, but it might just be between molts" or something but there's no way on God's green earth I am ever going to be able to remember specific molts for certain species of birds. But still, I'm glad it's in there!

I stopped when I got to the part that starts talking about identification for specific types of birds (I think ducks were first.) Again, it's interesting and useful but there's no way I'm going to retain most of it. But maybe before I go out somewhere where I know there will be ducks, I'll read the duck section as a refresher.

Long story short, it's a valuable book, but not as useful to a birder such as I, somewhat more casual and in it for the "being outside on a leisurely walk" side of things, moreso than the "getting a long list and spotting rarities" side of things.

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### **Mark Nenadov says**

This is an excellent guide. I am not sure that I retained enough of it, and hope to re-read it some day..

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### **Art says**

Very well written book with more knowledge transfer than a standard birding field guide. This is more about what to look for and how to appreciate behavior and appearance in the field. Recommended.

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