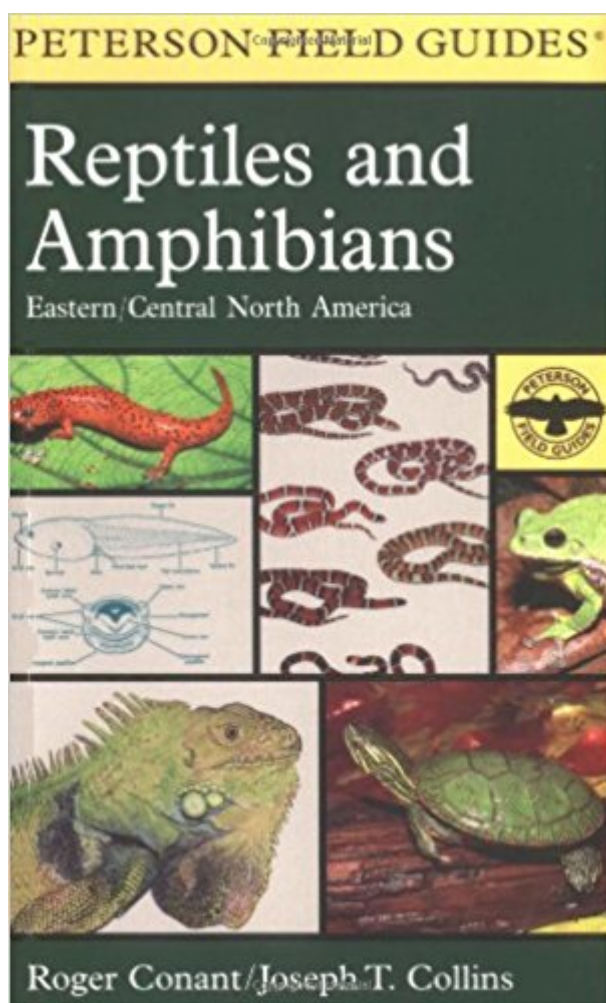


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A Field Guide To Reptiles And Amphibians: Eastern And Central North America (Peterson Field Guides)



Synopsis

This newly designed field guides features detailed descriptions of 595 species and subspecies. The 656 full-color illustrations and 384 drawings show key details for accurate identification. More than 100 color photographs and 333 color distribution maps accompany the species descriptions.

Book Information

Series: Peterson Field Guides

Paperback: 640 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; 3 edition (May 15, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395904528

ISBN-13: 978-0395904527

Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 1.2 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 104 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #79,668 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Reptiles #9 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Reptiles & Amphibians #397 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Fauna

Customer Reviews

The first edition was published in 1958, the second in 1975. This third edition of the invaluable field guide features new information, color plates, and new maps. Annotation c. Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com) (Booknews) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Roger Tory Peterson, one of the world's greatest naturalists, received every major award for ornithology, natural science, and conservation as well as numerous honorary degrees, medals, and citations, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The Peterson Identification System has been called the greatest invention since binoculars. These editions include updated material by Michael O'Brien, Paul Lehman, Bill Thompson III, Michael DiGiorgio, Larry Rosche, and Jeffrey A. Gordon. The late JOSEPH T. COLLINS was the herpetologist with the Kansas Biological Survey and emeritus at the University of Kansas Natural History Museum, where he worked for thirty years. He was founder and director of the Center for North American Herpetology and author of many articles

and books, most recently *Amphibians, Reptiles, and Turtles in Kansas* (2010; with Suzanne L. Collins and Travis W. Taggart). ROGER CONANT was an American herpetologist, author, and conservationist.Â

Living in the country and being retired and outdoors more, I run across many new (to me) little critters that I cannot identify. I ran across this incredible little book that has come in handy more than once in my search for the correct name of the reptile that scared the bejeebers out of me. Last year my Purple Martins were causing such a racket and circling their house and as I was walking within two feet of it, I looked up. There curled around the pole and on the "sun porches" of their house was the largest snake I've come across since I've lived at our place. 22 years. Now this house is at least 20 feet in the air and has a smooth aluminum pole. I'm here to tell you I let out a screech that could be heard a quarter mile away. My husband, my hero and white knight, came to the rescue, got a ladder and hooked it with the garden hoe and pulled it down. The Martins left the next day as it was time for them to leave anyway. I identified the snake as a bull snake from my trusty little book. I've identified many frogs and lizards with it, too. The book is quite informative on each habitat and colored maps showing where they range. My only complaint, or I should say wish, is that I would have liked to see more colored pictures. But then I would be lugging around a 10 pound book, wouldn't I. I'm waiting to see if the Martins will come back this year or if they were as freaked as I was.

I have the first version of this book, which my Dad bought for me at the Smoky Mountains National Park gift shop while we were on a family vacation in 1962. I have used that book frequently since then, including using it as a textbook in a college-level herpetology course. This book is an upgrade of the original, and many of the photographs are the same ones used in the original. The original book had mostly color photos but some black and white, and the former black and white photos have been colorized in this edition. This book is organized in a different way, and I especially like that the range maps are placed adjacent to the species descriptions rather than in a separate part of the book as they were in the original. Many of the scientific names have changed since this book was published in 1998, but the animals remain the same, whatever names we think they should have. I will probably still prefer to use my battered original, but I'll use this new one, too.

This is your basic field guide. It's rugged: the pages are thick and will withstand repeated thumbing through. Caveat: for a chubby little paperback, it's pretty hefty, about 2 lbs, so it might not be

something you want in a fanny pack. . .Near the front are the familiar comparison pages with illustrations of animals in a given taxonomic group. This is intended to help distinguish one similar species from another related species. It's tried-and-true. It works OK, but if you are new to field guides and haven't seen this sort of illustration, you should be aware that each drawing is a composite, and that individual animals in the wild do have variations--sometimes significant ones. These pages work for me, but might not for a person just starting out. In addition, most of the drawings are necessarily on the small side. This book is not flashy---there are no cool, huge full-color high-res photos, but instead smaller but helpful ones located on the "Species Accounts" pages following the illustration plates. However, be aware that in the SA pages, not every animal's essay is accompanied by a photo. Each species account has a map, showing where a species--and its related or subspecies hang out. I like this book--it's the classic sort of field guide that is pretty mindless to use. And, I have always been able to tell one species from another---which means I've been able to leave the poisonous snakes be, and pick up or play with only the others. :)

I ordered this guide to identify a snake whose pattern and colorations I've never seen in Southern New Hampshire. Too few pictures so it wasn't much help to a lay person. I ended up emailing a Zoologist at UNH and he identified it as a water snake. I told him that I had been worried that it was an Eastern Timber Rattler and he said that the species had been eradicated from NH with the exception of one small area far away from me. The Guide shows the species occupies a large swath of Southern NH, so the information is very dated.

Exactly as advertised.

This is the best field guide I've had for herps. The layout is typical; there are color plates of the species and some written commentary and advice on field herping in the front of the book, followed by species accounts and range maps. Fairly typical layout. However, the way in which subspecies were handled is new, at least to me, and incredibly practical and useful. Those subspecies that are readily distinguishable in the field are given full separate entries and individual range maps, which is particularly nice with certain large species groups (milk and king snakes, *Pituophis*, etc.) My only complaint, and it is minor, is that the taxonomy is old and very conservative, even given when this book was published. *Pituophis* is treated as monospecific genus in the book, whereas it's currently regarded as having several species, and *Elaphe* is still used for a good many of the colubrids that have since been reassigned. This, however, has little bearing onto the practicality of this field guide,

or it's usefulness for ID'ing animals. It's really the best done reptile field guide I've seen, and if you herp the eastern and/or central part of North America, it's a must have. The layout is logical, the subspecies are handled well, the color plates are excellent, and the book is solid enough to actually be used in the field. This continues the Peterson tradition of great reptile guides, and actually improves on it.

The organization, natural history information and plates are outstanding. Right now the taxonomy is quite out of date and needs to be updated as well as changes in the distribution of some species.

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