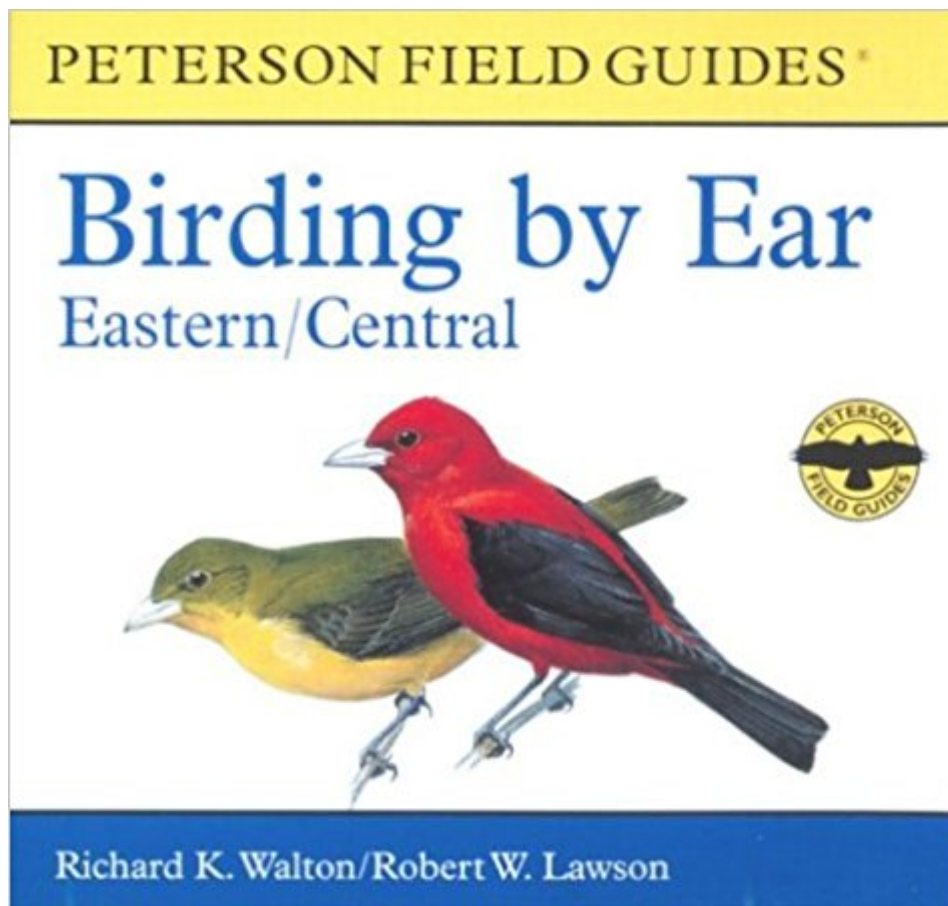




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Birding By Ear: Eastern/Central (Peterson Field Guides)



Synopsis

BIRDING BY EAR uses an educational and entertaining method for learning bird songs. Instead of merely providing a catalog of bird song samples, BIRDING BY EAR actually teaches. This proven method has greatly enhanced the field experience for birders across North America. The authors have created learning groups of similar vocalizations and clearly point out distinguishing characteristics. Using techniques such as phonetics, mnemonics, and descriptive words, Walton and Lawson provide a context for learning the songs and calls of eighty-five species of birds found east of the Rockies. Combine the auditory instruction here with the visual features of the Peterson Identification System. Page numbers in BIRDING BY EAR's booklet refer to species descriptions in the PETERSON FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA, fifth edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"(Birding by Ear and More Birding by Ear) are the best tools yet for learning bird vocalizations." - Science Times

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.

I have really enjoyed this VERY helpful guide. It is great for helping you key in on the subtle differences between similar calls, and giving you tips identify and remember the calls. I agree with other reviewers that it won't make you an expert overnight. You need to listen to it multiple times. I listened to one disk in my car during my commute until I felt I had mastered it, then moved on to the next disk, and so on. Then went back and reviewed them all one more time or focus on the difficult ones. One great thing is that it makes you much more aware of the sounds around you when you are outside. The first evening, I heard a killdeer in the grocery parking lot. That was a bird call I already knew, but how many times have I not noticed bird calls around me like this? My only complaint is that each track has a big block of bird calls in it, and I couldn't jump forward or backward to focus in on one song or pair of songs where I needed more work. I had to listen to the whole group just to hear the one I needed to repeat -- which wasted a lot of time. Also there were tracks at the end to quiz you on your knowledge -- which is great -- but I just wish there had been some feedback afterward so you could know if you got any of them right.

If you are interested in bird watching, bird photography, or just making nature hikes more interesting, then I highly recommend these CDs. I have listened to several bird and wildlife CDs over the years and this set is the best that I have used by a wide margin. The birds are grouped in a fashion that enhances the ability to distinguish similar sounding songs. And, you'll be amazed at how many birds are right in your neighborhood that you have been missing, because for most birds, you hear them before you see them. As examples, I never new that we had Scarlet Tanagers in the woods behind our house before learning their song. The same is true for yellow warblers and several other birds. Once you learn the songs, you'll realize how much you have been missing - probably 3/4 of the colorful birds around you. Like most bird song CDs, they give you the pseudo-English phrases that help you remember the calls (e.g. "who cooks for you" as a memory aid for the Barred Owl). And at the end of the last CD, they replay all the songs, broken down by habitat, without telling you the names. It's a great test to see if you've mastered the songs. One thing to note - tracks on the CDs are groups of birds, not individual birds. For example, one track is woodpeckers, which includes 6 different birds. This makes it easy to skip to the particular group that you are studying/learning, which is nice when you are learning the songs. However, it makes it cumbersome if you are looking for a specific bird song. You can't jump directly to the Pileated Woodpecker song, you have to jump to the Woodpeckers and then skip through the track to find it. Frankly, I use the internet if I'm looking for a specific bird song; that's not what these CDs are for.

Or, I just look at the booklet that accompanies these CDs, which is what you will do most often once you learn the songs. I have a few comments regarding a couple of other reviews:- Someone mentioned that they couldn't rip the CDs to put on their MP3 player. I was able to do this - I have all three of these CDs plus the follow-on "More Birding By Ear" CDs all on one WMA CD that I can play in my car while driving (which was the best way to learn for me).- One person complained about the small number of warblers on this set. It took me several months to get to a point where I could identify all of the songs in the test at the end. At that point, I was ready for the second set of CDs in the series (More Birding by Ear Eastern and Central North America: A Guide to Bird-song Identification (Peterson Field Guide Audios)). In my opinion, the first set has the right amount to start with. It gives a great sense of accomplishment when you finally master them. I also have the second set, and I don't know that I'll ever learn all of them. Limiting the number on the first set helped motivate me in that I was confident that I could master the entire set (it still took a couple of months).

My niece and I are very active birders, and we both agree that these disks have greatly enhanced our birding experience! Dick Walton suggests "handles" to help differentiate between like sounding birds. An invaluable teaching tool. UPDATE: Just today, as I was walking back to the office after lunch, I heard a bird song from the trees and thought, "OH MY GOD, THAT'S A BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER!" Until I started listening to these disks, I didn't know such a bird even existed, much less what it sounded like. I spotted the bird, then looked it up online to confirm. It was a life bird for me! So thrilled that I've learned enough that I can go out in the field and ID birds from their calls. LOVE THESE DISKS.

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