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A Field Guide To Insects: America North Of Mexico



Synopsis

Find what you're looking for with Peterson Field Guides—their field-tested visual identification system is designed to help you differentiate thousands of unique species accurately every time. Detailed descriptions of insect orders, families, and many individual species are illustrated with 1,300 drawings and 142 superb color paintings. Illustrations - which use the unique Peterson Identification System to distinguish one insect from another - include size lines to show the actual length of each insect. A helpful glossary explains the technical terms of insect anatomy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

At the risk of repeating myself to readers who are searching for an insect field guide, I said in another review: Consider the lucky birders. In North America there are less than 900 species of birds. While some may be only 3 or four inches long, others are measured in feet. New birding guides are issued every year. And while a few species, like the empidonax flycatchers may be difficult to tell apart, all of the species are illustrated in most guides, and 90% are identifiable if the birder gets a good look at them. Now consider the amateur entomologist. There are over 80,000 species of insects in North America. Most insects are relatively small. Telling the difference between species may require examining the vein pattern in wings. The field guides to insects illustrate at most 700 insects. No wonder there are more bird watchers than insect watchers. And no wonder there hasn't been a major insect field guide published since 1981! A field guide to insects then

probably can't help you identify most specific species. The authors feel they have done their job if they can help you identify the family. The Peterson guide provided a decision tree just inside the front cover that helped me to identify the order of the insects. The tree also provided the page of the guide where the entries for this order could be found. Next I had to flip through the entries, which are arranged in taxological order, examining each of the black and white drawings to find an insect that most closely resembled my specimen. Occasionally a species listing bore a reference to a color drawing found on collected plates in the center of the book. Occasionally detailed drawing were provided for identification, such as a comparison of the wing venation of a family of bees.

"In this century," according to ecologist Paul R. Ehrlich, "no one has done more to promote an interest in living creatures than Roger Tory Peterson, the inventor of the modern field guide." Peterson's "Guide to the Birds" - "the first modern field guide" - was published in 1934. Its pioneering approach was to use visual characteristics rather than technical data to identify species. This was achieved by grouping similar species together on a plate, using clear, two-dimensional illustrations, and pointers to key field marks as well as succinct text, a combination known as the Peterson Identification System. That revolutionary style was later applied to a host of field guides covering anything from the night sky to moths and geology to mushrooms and including the present volume. Here we have Number 19 in the Peterson Field Guide Series, published in 1970 and still in the original edition. Borror, an entomologist and well-known sound-recordist, is the author and contributed line-drawings. The main illustrations, in colour and monochrome, are by Richard White. With over 90,000 species of insects in America north of Mexico, a field guide to the insects must choose between being highly selective or else providing an overview to enable the user to identify major taxonomic groups. This guide achieves the latter aim admirably, allowing the reader to identify most insects to family level for 579 families. Apart from the systematic text, there are introductory chapters on collecting insects, studying live insects and basic insect biology as well as a handy Glossary. Because of the mammoth diversity of insects, a single volume work cannot be expected to allow the reader to identify insects to species by using colour plates.

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