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HOW TO KNOW THE BIRDS

ROGER
TORY
PETERSON



AN AUTHORITATIVE, RICHLY ILLUSTRATED GUIDE
TO OVER 200 AMERICAN BIRDS

A COMPACT HANDBOOK ON BIRDS

Here, newly enlarged with a 24-page color supplement, is an authoritative, on-the-spot guide to help you recognize instantly most American birds on sight.

This book by Roger Tory Peterson, one of the country's noted ornithologists and artists, takes bird study out of the display case into the open field—showing how birds really look, fly, and act. Using the “short cuts to recognition” made famous in his renowned *Field Guides*, Peterson points out the vital clues to look for in any unfamiliar bird—its flying style, its body outline, and “Nature's trademarks,” its field markings. He describes the most typical members of the 54 major families and tells which of the thirteen main types of wildlife areas each inhabits. More than 200 species are pictured here in 72 full-color illustrations and over 400 black-and-white drawings, including a spot recognition section on silhouetted birds as they look by roadsides, on wires, in woods and fields, and outlined against the sky.

Compact, fully indexed, *How to Know the Birds* provides an immensely readable and useful introduction to the multitudes of winged wildlife around us.

“Such an inexpensive introduction to bird knowledge has been sorely needed.”—*Nature Magazine*

The color illustrations in this book are taken from the gallery of the famous Wildlife Conservation Stamp Series. The National Wildlife Federation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization concerned with educating the people to the vital necessity of good management of our woods, soil and wildlife. For information on how you can help in this great work, write to National Wildlife Federation, Dept. N.A., 232 Carroll Street, N.W., Washington 12, D. C.

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PREFACE

Birds can fly where they want to when they want to. So it seems to us, who are earthbound. They symbolize a degree of freedom that we would nearly give our souls to have. Perhaps this is why bird watching has almost become a national hobby in Britain and is rapidly becoming one here. It is an antidote for the disillusionment of today's world, a world beset by pressures it has never before known. Many men in business and the professions find in birds a much-needed balance, a retreat from their highly complex affairs and the artificiality of the city. Housewives find in them a pleasant relief from the routine of the home, and children enjoy their pursuit for the release it gives their abundant energies. Boys in their teens make the keenest bird recorders, for once they fall under the spell of the "lure of the list," they play the game for all it is worth.

This small book was written mostly for those who have never had a bird guide before, but who are becoming aware of the multitude of birds with which we live. In it I have pointed out the short cuts to recognition. By applying its principles you can in one year gain a background that took most of us old timers several years to acquire. It is not even necessary to use field glasses if you know the silhouettes and field-marks of birds, but it must be admitted that a pair of eight-power binoculars makes each bird look eight times as handsome.

The thousands who already own my *FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS* and the *FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS*, and who carry them in their pockets will, I believe, find this book useful as a sort of refresher course, even though the *FIELD GUIDES* are more complete in matters of field-marks, song, and range.

November 1, 1948

ROGER TORY PETERSON

HOW TO KNOW THE BIRDS

IN THIS MANUAL—ILLUSTRATED WITH 72 FULL-COLOR PAINTINGS AND OVER 400 BLACK AND WHITE DRAWINGS—A NOTED EXPERT SHOWS HOW TO MAKE BIRD-IDENTIFYING AS QUICK AND ACCURATE AS PLANE-SPOTTING, BY NOTING KEY MARKINGS, SILHOUETTES, AND FLYING STYLES. HERE, TOO, ARE DESCRIPTIONS OF HABITS, PECULIARITIES, AND LEGENDS ABOUT MORE THAN 200 AMERICAN BIRDS. ALTOGETHER, THIS VOLUME CONTAINS A TREASURY OF NATURE LORE FOR STUDENTS, HOBBYISTS, AND EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE LIVING WORLD OF THE SKY.



ROGER TORY PETERSON, ONE OF AMERICA'S FOREMOST BIRD ARTISTS AND ORNITHOLOGISTS, IS SPECIAL CONSULTANT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY. AMONG HIS BESTSELLING BOOKS ARE A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS AND (WITH JAMES FISHER) WILD AMERICA.