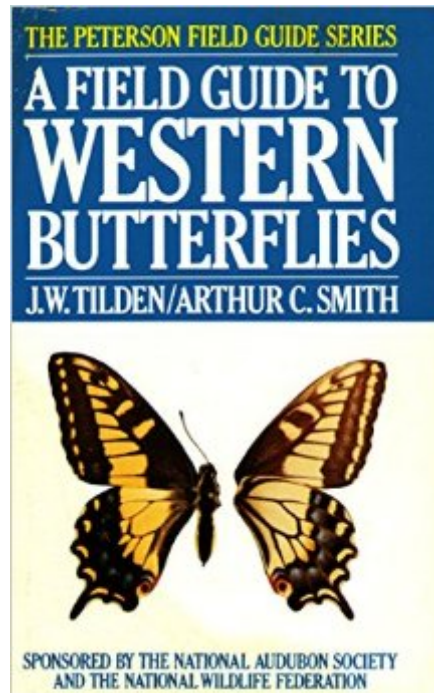


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A Field Guide To Western Butterflies (Peterson Field Guide Series)



Synopsis

This all-new edition includes more than 590 species, illustrated in lifelike positions on beautiful new color plates. With descriptions of all the butterflies that occur west of the 100th meridian in the United States and Canada, this guide has accurate information on ranges, habitats, flight seasons, food plants, and more. Brand-new color range maps and more than 100 color photographs accompany the species descriptions. Paul Opler is the author of several books, including the Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Butterflies. He is a professor and senior research scientist at Colorado State University and a vice president of the North American Butterfly Association. Amy Bartlett Wright wrote and illustrated the Peterson First Guide to Caterpillars and illustrated the Peterson First Guide to Butterflies and Moths. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the first part of this excellent field guide, families of butterflies are presented together on color plates, ably illustrated by Amy Bartlett Wright. This allows the reader to compare similar looking species--a must with hard-to-differentiate groups like the Blues, where minute differences mean the difference between one genus and another. The illustrations are cross-referenced to fuller descriptions in the second part of the book. Here there is additional information about appearance, food, habitat, flight, and range. As a beginner, I especially like author Paul Opler's decision to

organize the butterflies by taxon rather than appearance. As I identify butterflies in the field, I am also learning a bit about the science of these beautiful creatures. Highly recommended.

"A Field Guide to Western Butterflies" by Paul Opler is the book I use as a standard when taking part in the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) 4th of July Butterfly Count. It is by far the best book to use in the field. I prefer the artist's illustrations to a totally photographic approach for accurate identification because several aspects of the same species can be shown on a given plate. In addition there are a number of complementary photos of butterflies in natural habitats inserted in the text and distribution maps are placed next to the species descriptions. The discussions are very useful in locating food plants and in confirming field marks and distributions. Most of the time even tiny lycaenids and difficult skippers are usually identified easily once you get used to the format. All in all this is the book to have for identifying butterflies in the west and it outshines all its competitors for handiness in the field. Combined with a pair of short-focus binoculars and a good butterfly net for capture and release it just cannot be beaten. I found only one problem with this book, which is also true of other guides. Occasionally an illustration is slightly off in color or shows a more idealized pattern than seen in the field. In such cases (especially with some of the skippers and blues) identification is more difficult. That said if you are a butterfly watcher in the west you really need to own this book!

Unlike some other reviewers I have always liked the Peterson guides best and this is no exception. The emphasis of the book is not simply on sight identification (which can be difficult at best) but also on a rounded education about the world of butterflies. The first several chapters cover butterfly habitat, life history, behavior and other things helpful for the collector or student. The main chapters are divided by common names with each sub-heading giving both common and scientific names. The butterflies are described according to range, size, and habitat, and there is typically some discussion of the insects' identifying peculiarities. This isn't the best guide for someone wanting to identify bugs in their garden - other guides have much better and many more photos - but for the general student this is the best.

This book lives up to the quality expected of the Peterson Field Guide series. Descriptions are of 590 species of butterflies, with 110 color photos plus 44 color plates of images. Habitats and foods are described. Range maps point to where the species are. There's a lifelist at the back of the book and a good glossary. I recommend it.

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