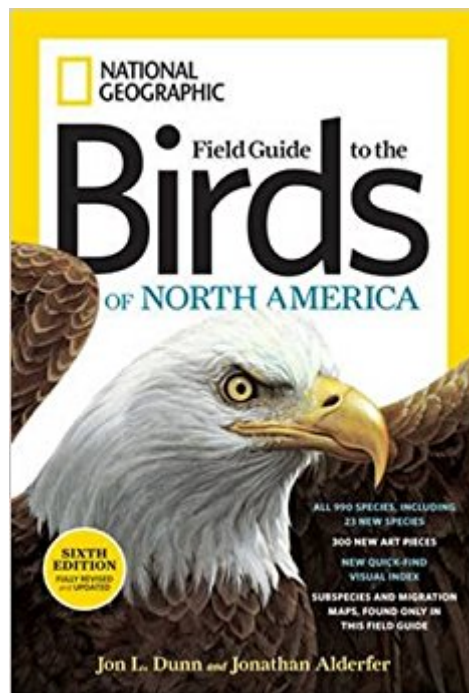




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# National Geographic Field Guide To The Birds Of North America, Sixth Edition



## Synopsis

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 6th Edition contains the most all-new material since the first edition was published more than 25 years ago. The latest edition will include 300 new art figures; unique subspecies maps never before seen in a field guide; extensive migration information overlaid on species maps; field-mark labels on all artwork; text updates to include new species; reorganization reflecting taxonomic changes in the bird community; organization, readability, and increased page count with a fresh new design.

## Book Information

Series: National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America

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> Animals > Birds & Birdwatching > Field Guides #11 in Books > Science & Math > Nature &

Ecology > Field Guides

## Customer Reviews

Reviews of the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Sixth Edition: "Wow! a 10% increase in illustrations, plates now sprinkled with text to point out key features, updated range maps, comprehensive subspecies maps, and other useful new features. This classic guide just keeps evolving and improving. This is the guide you want with your field gear." -J. V.

Remsen, Distinguished Professor and Curator of Birds, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana

State University "Jon Dunn's masterful field knowledge of North America's birds and

Jonathan Alderfer's unparalleled artistic ability and direction shine throughout this up-to-date

overhaul of a classic guide. Birders at all levels of experience benefit from a guide that is both

comprehensive and accurate, and National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North

America is exactly what they need." -Kimball L. Garrett, Ornithology Collections Manager, Natural

History Museum of Los Angeles County • The best birding field guide you can buy • National Geo 6 is now my default go-to guide. It is the design innovations that push this book to the front. You will not find a field guide that gives you better and faster access to the information it contains. •

• "Minneapolis Star Tribune blog • "Shelve all your other field guides for Dunn and Alderfer's brand-new sixth edition, which leaps beyond previous editions, as well as all competition...Study it at home. Carry it afield. It has no peer." • "Daniel Gibson (birding expert), .com • "This new, sixth edition is by far the best of this splendid guide's incarnations so far. [It] is, simply put, the one book every North American birder needs to have on the shelf. Beginners will find it attractive, easy to use, and portable; intermediate and advanced birders will refer to it again and again with profit--and with surprise at how much it can teach even the most experienced among us. • "The ABA Blog • "The 6th edition - thoroughly re-tooled by Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer - contains more new material than any other previously published revision, and it is most impressive • [The combination of organization, illustration, and design adds up to a book that should please birders at virtually any level of experience. • "Birding e-Bulletin • "It belongs in every birder's library! From beginner to expert, it will be useful to any birder. And for those interested in geographic variation, it is a must. • "The Birder's Library • "A must-have volume for birders of all abilities. • Dan Tallman's Bird Blog • "This will be one of the most popular field guides in the hands of North American birders • [it is] the most up-to-date field guide on the market. • Birdingisfun.com Reviews of the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Fifth Edition: • "[National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America Fifth Edition] is an awesome work • [the most up-to-date field guide out there] • birders can do no better than to tuck this book in their cars, backpacks, or bike sacks. • "Bird Watcher's Digest • "The must-have resource for birders. • "Miami Herald • "Birders rejoice! National Geographic has come through once again. • "Booklist, • starred review • "Libraries should feather their nests with [this]. • "Library Journal • "You could do now better than this thick compendium • • "Chicago Sun Times • "The field reference of choice for serious birders...Beginners and experts alike will flock to this handy field guide." • .com "Particularly good in making the difficult identification process easier." • The Star Ledger • (Newark)

Jon L. Dunn is a leading expert on the identification and distribution of North American birds. He is a consultant for Birding magazine, and former chair of the American Birding Association's Checklist Committee. • Jonathan Alderfer is chief consultant for National Geographic's Birding Program and a widely published author and field guide illustrator. One of the nation's foremost birding artists, he

is well known for his authority on North American birds and his expertise as a field ornithologist.

I always felt that when I started carrying my 5th edition of the Geographic Guide as my main field guide, that I had sort of graduated to the field guide of a serious birding hobbyist. I needed to know what else has been seen as I traveled around the nation, just in case, and with 967 species in the 5th edition, I felt like I was covered just in case. I loved the 5th field guide, though it had some issues with color that I am glad to see fixed in the 6th edition. The 6th edition now covers 990 species seen or expected in the United States, keeping up with the new additions to the ABA lists. Never before have I pre-ordered a book of any kind, but when I learned that the 6th edition was coming out, I just had to see how "America's #1 Bird Guide" was going to be made better. I did pre-order my copy from as soon as I was made aware of its availability, I had it in my hands November 4th, 4 days after its November 1, 2011, publication date. Today I finished a page by page, bird by bird review of the new edition, and I do believe that the folks at National Geographic have made some nice improvements and kept their field guide the best that exists for North American birders. I am thrilled with the new guide. Specifically, the first thing one notices is the new maps. They are excellent, detailed and include much more information now with migration ranges noted (two excellent examples are Baird's Sandpiper and White-rumped Sandpiper), with migration routes shown separately for spring and fall. Along with those changes, they also included subspecies ranges for the species where that might be important to know. It is worth noting that for species that have complicated sub-species maps, there is a section in the back of the book with 41 detailed sub-species maps that are much appreciated. Furthermore, there are many more range maps for birds that are not regular visitors to North America (Fea's and Bermuda Petrel come to mind), or have very small ranges (Island Scrub Jay for example). These maps show the Asian, Caribbean or Mexican typical ranges for the species in much more detail and indicate how the species might find its way to the United States. It is a small detail that I really like. There was never a need to just show where the bird was seen in the US, and I am glad the folks creating this guide didn't stick strictly to US maps only this time around, the map flexibility has really allowed a wonderful addition of knowledge that these maps impart. The next detail users of the 5th edition will notice that is different in the 6th edition is that every species entry is now broken into three distinct parts. They begin with species description, and then have clearly marked sections on VOICE and RANGE. It is the new and more comprehensive details in RANGE that are substantially improved in this edition. Clearly, they had lists in mind as they added the details they did about how often and when species are seen, or have been seen, that is just an excellent improvement, especially for the

serious lister. A third major change for this edition is the addition of field note details along with the bird images. They are insightful and great reminders for the accomplished birder, but wonderful instructional notes for the learning birder. I have always loved these notes in the Kaufmann guide, and the addition of these notes, in my mind does not detract from the wonderful images. I have always hoped that this feature would be added to this guide, and I never would have expected two other changes to make this anything other than my favorite update to the guide, but both the above outweigh this fantastic change to this guide. A few small things I liked, images of the ducks flying are now WITH the species accounts. They still kept the duck, shorebird and raptor pages showing flying images of the birds for comparison to similar species, but for the ducks I always wanted the flying images with the species, and now that change has been made. The updates to Red-tailed Hawk are nice, not a comprehensive overview, of course, but more information that can be followed up on if one needs to know more. The new images of the sub-species are a nice basic update that was overdue. Finally, very minor, I loved the image of the Yellow Warbler feeding a just fledged Brown-headed Cowbird. How many times I have seen that in the field. Nice touch. My suggestions for improvement? I have a few. One, why doesn't any field guide show the ABA Species Code number? It would be easy to add and I would love to know what are code 2, 3, 4 and 5 species without having to add that information to the guide by hand. Two, I must also admit at after Crossley's ID Guide, I like having the 4 letter codes with the species accounts. I would like to see those codes added to this guide too. Three, I was disappointed to see Bachman's Warbler and Eskimo Curlew exiled to the Accidental & Extinct Species section (I love the section for accidentals, and found it surprisingly up to date). If this was my guide, I would keep the extinct North American species, Labrador Duck, Eskimo Curlew, Great Auk, Carolina Parakeet & Bachman's Warbler in their taxonomic places within the guide. It is a good way to place them inside the appropriate taxonomy, AND a great reminder of just how precious every species is, and how we need to protect the remaining species we have so we don't add to this list anytime soon. Finally, of all the images, I thought the Winter Wren image to be terrible and off color. It was the only image I had a completely negative reaction too. The Winter Wrens we get in Chicago look NOTHING like that washed out light image that they have included for this species now that it has been split from Pacific Wren. But none of these small suggestions should take anything away from how comprehensive and complete this guide is. The maps are worth the price of the book alone, the image accounts and much better with the RANGE notes, and the addition of field mark notes with the images has been done with respect and insight. This is a fantastic update, and every serious birder, or aspiring birder, needs this update for not just their library, BUT to have with them in the field.

**Pros:** Very easy navigation, light, satisfying images  
**Cons:** Possible outdated map ranges and names in future

**Bottom line:** This book is worth every penny as it provides easy navigation, points out every detail on identifying birds, and is very easy to carry anywhere. As a person who has been bird watching for a decade, no field book that contains all bird species in North America has been able to fit easily in my bag except for this one. I tend to go out in the field quite often and often need a field book to confirm my ID on birds especially the birds that give a majority trouble with identifying (Gulls). I am a fan of technology and have used the electronic field guides for iPhone but I still suggest having actual book as way for you not to drain your battery. The images all matter on preference for expert birders and I believe this will leave most somewhat satisfied. I have been a fan of using Sibley guides for years as Field Guide for birds but as soon as a friend recommending me to update and look into a Nat Geo Field Guide for birds, this was by far the one of the best recommendation for a new and improved field guide for birds.

**Price** I overall paid \$11.45 used including shipping. It was really worth it as this book looks new and was most likely untouched by user. I recommend buying it used if you are unsure about Nat Geo guides as I was. If this is your first field guide purchase, I believe it's worth the price you pay and all beginning birders should have it.

**Content** The content is overall outstanding. It provides very clear wording accompanied by imagery that can aid you in identifying in a majority of birds. It provides you range map for all birds along with brief description of birds. I believe that these will be outdated in the near future along with names but that is the con in purchasing a field guide print. It also describes the sound of birds in word which can be helpful for some. Very excellent when it comes to describing plumage, size, and other unique aspects in birds.

**Navigation** Probably one of the best features of this book. Has a quick find index that is ordered by family taxa with the page numbers. It also has cut-out sections that outline the main families which is very helpful. If you know the taxa very well this could be very helpful for you to easily find the bird you are looking for.. If you are a starting birder, this is also very useful in getting you familiarize with your bird taxa.

**Weight/Size** Very easy to carry around and light. Easily fits into my small backpack for a book containing all North America bird species. The font size is also large enough to read which is great for those who are far-sighted. The one thing about the font that bothers me is the text that outlines field marks. It is in a lighter font than most fonts in the book which can be troubling to read when light is hardly available. The size and weight overall makes it excellent to carry around in the field.

**Images** This all matter on preference for art style. As a birder who often uses Sibley books, I still prefer some images of birds in the Sibley over Nat Geo but regardless this books gets the job done in helping anyone identifying

birds. The print on some images of birds seem a bit odd to me but it will pass. The images also have birds placed in positions that you are likely to find them in the field which can be helpful for identification.

This is one of the most complete and well written north american bird guides available. It is perhaps a little large and some might prefer a smaller guide that can fit in a smaller pocket for long hikes, but if you have a large pocket in your jacket or trousers this guide is well worth carrying. It is laid out with quick guides on the front inside and the rear inside covers that make this book very easy to use. Although I have been birding for at over 40 years, I am not an advanced or expert bird watcher, just a casual enthusiast. I recommend this book to all us that enjoy the activity but are not so good at it that we don't need a good guide book anymore.

This book is considered by many the bible on bird identification, it's also good for beginners as it uses multiple illustrations per bird showing how the juvenile, male, female, adult, and breeding adult vary in its plumage, also on some birds that show variations it show an illustration for that. It describes the size, physical features, flying and singing behavior, and has charts about the range of habitation of the birds. This is the field guide.

This is the one that lives on the floor of my car. It is strong enough to survive the occasional "foot traffic" and indexed for easily finding "that bird" I just photographed. The larger version of this would make a good loose leaf manual so that personal notes and photographs could be inserted.

The best bird guide because it shows you so many of the stages of the bird's life, the seasonal changes, and the underwing appearance of large birds. It also shows the ranges of birds. So easy to understand and use. A great quick reference guild.

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