El Camino Real Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™ program

Field Guide List

Birds

2. Birds and Other Wildlife of South Central Texas, Edward A Kutac and S. Christopher Caran, University of Texas, ISBN-10: 0292743157

The Texas Master Naturalist program activities are coordinated by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife. Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.
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**Mammals and Tracks**


**Plants, Flowers**


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**Snakes, Amphibians, Reptiles**


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Overview of Field Guides

These are designed to help identify wildlife, objects, or natural occurrences. Most are designed specifically to be carried into the field. The often utilize an easy-referencing system where you can easily distinguish one item from another.

It will typically include a description of the objects covered, together with paintings or photographs and an index. More serious and scientific field identification books, will probably include identification keys to assist with identification, but the publicly-accessible field guide is more often a browsable picture guide organized by family, color, shape, or other descriptors.

History

Popular interest in identifying things in nature probably were strongest in bird and plant guides. In 1902, Florence Merriam Bailey, wife of well-known zoologist Vernon Bailey wrote a Handbook of Birds of the Western United States which was arranged by taxonomic order and had clear descriptions of species size, distribution, feeding and nesting habits, resembling the modern field guide. From this point to the 1930s, many much more modern parts of field guides were tried out by Chester A. Reed and others such as changing the size of the book to fit the pocket, including color plates, and different subjects such as garden and woodland flowers, insects and dogs.

In 1934, Roger Tory Peterson, using his fine skill as an artist, changed the way modern field guides approached identification. Using color plates with paintings of similar species together - and marked with arrows showing the differences - people could use his bird guide in the field to compare species quickly to make identification easier. This technique, the "Peterson Identification System", was used in most of Peterson's Field Guides from animal tracks to seashells and has been widely adopted by other publishers and authors as well.

Also popular in the 1960s were the Golden Guides which expanded the range of subjects of what a field guide could address, including antique glass, wine, photography and hallucinogenic plants (often written by experts in their respective field - the latter was written by Schultes, a respected name in ethnobotany). This series was edited by Herbert Zim for Golden Press.

Today, each field guide has its own range, focus and organization. Specialist publishers such as Croom Helm, along with organizations like the Audubon Society, the RSPB, the Field Studies Council, National Geographic, HarperCollins, and many others all produce quality field guides.

Source: Adapted from Wikipedia, 2008.