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The Warbler Guide *by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle*

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BOOK REVIEW

The Warbler Guide. 2013. Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. \$29.95, flexibound; 560 pp., 1000+ color illustrations [by Catherine Hamilton], 50 maps. ISBN: 0691154821.

Not since the Peterson Field Guide *Warblers* (Dunn and Garrett 1997) has such a comprehensive and outstanding warbler guide been produced. Authors Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle have created a guide that is easy to use and very functional for today's busy birder. The guide has >1000 color illustrations and covers all 56 species that occur in the United States and Canada.

The first 100 pages contain easy-to-read and useful sections on how to use the guide and on various aspects of warbler ecology. These sections include information on topographic interpretation; how to use the range maps, key terms, and icons; how to age and sex warblers; how to listen to warblers; and how to learn the various chip and flight calls. Pages 100–115 contain outstanding visual finder guides that provide a quick viewing reference to all 56 warbler species. These visual finders are divided into the following sections: face quick finder, side quick finder, 45° view, under view, eastern under-tail view, western under-tail view, and east spring, east fall, and west quick finders. These quick views are reason enough to have this volume in your library. Following the quick finder sections is a comprehensive section on warbler songs that uses pitch charts.

The species accounts make up the bulk of the guide. Accounts are arranged in alphabetical order rather than in taxonomic order (a taxonomic chart is included on pages 540–541). The Latin name, common name, and an icon quick reference (explained in the beginning of the guide) make up the header of each account. The body of each account is not extensive in the classical sense (i.e., lengthy text on the ecology, behavior, and habitat of the species). Instead, the accounts contain many photographs that aid in identification of the warbler. These include key photos at different angles,

distinctive view photos, and a suite of additional photos that focus on key elements. Also included are photos of comparison species—namely, photos of species that are commonly confused for one another—with key text on how to tell similar species apart. Some accounts contain aging and sexing sections, as well as song charts. Detailed range maps are included. Following the species accounts are sections on nonwarbler birds that are often confused for warblers (such as sparrows and chickadees) and a section on hybrid warblers.

The back of the guide contains further aid in warbler identification, including a quiz and review section, a warblers-in-flight section, a measurement table (length, wingspan, and weight), silhouette diagrams, and a very useful habitat and behavior table. Also included is a glossary and resources section.

Overall, *The Warbler Guide* strays from the traditional guide design and emphasizes identification of warblers in the most efficient and accurate way possible. Rather than page after page of text, the guide provides thousands of photos to help the birder enjoy his or her field experience. The only drawback is the size of the guide; it is a bulky and heavy volume, measuring 6 × 8.5 inches compared to the 4.5 × 7-inch Peterson guide (although both guides are just over 1.25 inches thick). But with regular study and ready accessibility in a vehicle, the value of *The Warbler Guide* is unprecedented. I highly recommend *The Warbler Guide* as a reference for any birder wanting to improve his or her warbler identification skills.

LITERATURE CITED

DUNN, J., AND K. GARRETT. 1997. Warblers. Peterson Field Guides. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, NY. 656 pp.

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