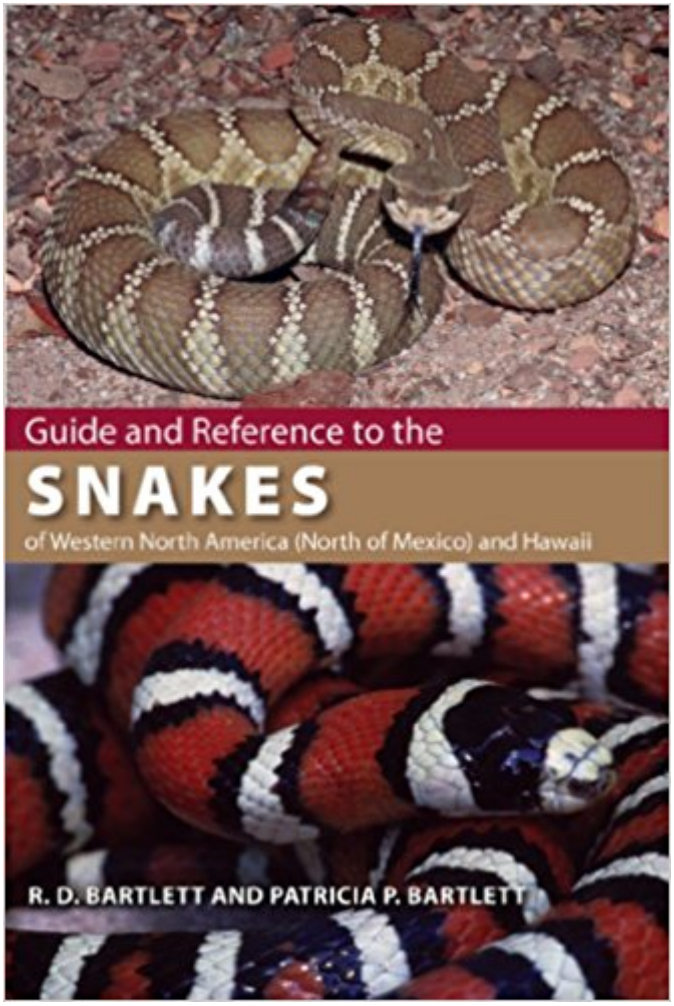
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Guide And Reference To The Snakes Of Western North America (North Of Mexico) And Hawaii



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Synopsis

Accessible, accurate, and up-to-date, with striking color photographs and range maps!"If you love snakes, read this book. If you are repulsed by snakes, definitely read this book and you might just find yourself warming up to these fascinating creatures of mystery and myth."--Daniel Beck, Central Washington University"Vignettes in the book let the armchair reader feel he or she is part of a herpetological adventure. These personal interludes make the book unique, as the straightforward identification varies little from field guide to field guide."--Traci Hartsell, Smithsonian Museum of Natural History"The most impressive aspect of the book is its completeness. Each species account is very complete and includes information far beyond the diagnostic characters and distributions. I learned quite a bit from reading this book."--Jeffrey R. Parmalee, Simpson CollegeInformation on how to search for herpetofauna, habitat descriptions, captive care, and a special section on reptiles and the law make these guides the perfect resource for amateur or professional naturalists. They also are ideal for anyone living in or visiting a western state who is interested in knowing more about the natural world around them.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: University Press of Florida (May 10, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813033012

ISBN-13: 978-0813033013

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #629,912 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Reptiles #147 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Reptiles & Amphibians #791 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Reference

Customer Reviews

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R. D. Bartlett is a veteran herpetologist/herpetoculturist with over forty years' experience writing, photographing, and educating people about reptiles and amphibians. He is the author, with Patricia P. Bartlett, a full-time editor and writer, of more than fifty books on the subject, including Florida's Snakes.

Excellent quick reference material, though I wish it had expanded information on the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake.

I am an aspiring herpetologist, but am not huge on snakes and prior to this book did not own a dedicated snake book. All I had snake-wise was Stebbins'Ã Â A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians (Peterson Field Guide)Ã Â and St. John'sÃ Â Reptiles of the Northwest. So based on the recommendation of californiaherps.com, I picked up this book in the three-book "Guide and Reference to the ____ of Western North America (North of Mexico) and Hawaii" series of R.D. and Patricia P. Bartlett. I'm glad I did.The book contains species accounts, photos, and range maps for 147 snake species that occur in the western United States (defined in this book as the region from the Pacific Ocean to the eastern borders of New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana), in Hawaii, in Alaska, and in western Canada. The introduction is fairly dispensable and mainly goes over general snake biology, from feeding habits to reproduction to even tips for pet enthusiasts. If you are familiar with snakes there probably isn't much you won't already know, but if you are new to snakes it's a pretty good crash course in basic snake biology and some of the differences between snake types.Snakes are organized into eight chapters: 1) Slender Blind Snakes, Family Leptotyphlopidae; 2) Blind Snakes, Family Typhlopidae; 3) Boas, Family Boidae: Rosy and Rubber Boas, Family Ericinae; 4) Advanced Snakes, Family Colubridae: Racers, Sand Snakes, Rat

Snakes, Ring-necked Snakes, Hog-nosed Snakes, and Relatives; 5) Advanced Snakes, Subfamily Natricinae: Water Snakes, Garter Snakes, Brown Snakes, and Relatives; 6) Coral Snakes, Family Elapidae; 7) Sea Snakes, Family Hydrophiidae; and 8) Vipers: Pit Vipers, Family Viperidae. A multiple-page list following the Table of Contents breaks these down into smaller groups and tells you where each snake fits in. One gripe I have with the Bartletts' organization is that they do not number their species list by page numbers (the eight chapters DO have page numbers, just not the long species list). Instead, they number it by the number of the snake, 1 - 147. While this is still useful and better than nothing, it's slower than just using page numbers since if you are flipping through the book you have to be on the first page of a snake to see what number it is, whereas you can always just look at the page number at the top. I understand the species list is not intended to be a second table of contents; however, by nature it effectively is one since it lists all the species. It's a small complaint, and they do list page numbers in the Index at the end at least. The beginning of each chapter contains a short description of that Family or Subfamily, from one to several pages. This tells you the basic distinguishing factors of this group of snakes along with their general biology. Some of these introductions also contain short personal accounts of the authors' experiences with a species or multiple species from this Family or Subfamily. They are interesting and it's nice to read about the authors' personal herping adventures. Note that these short descriptions are also within the chapters where, for example, a new genus is presented, in which case the description would be of that genus of snakes.Now on to the species accounts. Both common and scientific names follow those suggested by the publication "Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, with Comments Regarding Confidence in Our Understanding." Thus, where a certain species has begun to split the scientific community as to which genera it belongs to, they keep the traditional genera to avoid any contention or confusion while the name change is still being debated. The authors point this out when it occurs. The individual species accounts contain several types of information: abundance/range, habitat, size, identifying features, and similar snakes; some also contain comments and subspecies information if applicable. Some of the species also have the authors' personal vignettes mentioned above. Abundance/range is supplemented with a full-color easy to read range map for each species which very clearly distinguishes subspecies when applicable. The size section is a little more helpful than something like Stebbins, as it doesn't just give the basic length range, but generally will tell you the longest-known length of that species as well. The identifying features are detailed and easy to follow. Each species has at least one photo and from what I could tell, the subspecies also have photos, along with their own accounts (although not as

extensive as the accounts for the main species). Where snakes have different color phases, such as the California kingsnake, photos are presented of the different phases. The photos take up about 40% of the page length and go all the way across the page width; they are clear and easy to see distinguishing markings. In most cases the head and tail are clearly visible along with the rest of the body, but for some species the photo is only a closeup of the head region. Species accounts are generally a page or two, although some, like the California mountain kingsnake, are longer (that one is seven pages with numerous photos of the color phases). What I would have really liked to see is more time spent talking about the natural and life histories of the species. Knowing more of their daily and annual habits and information about their life stages would have really been great, but that kind of species-specific information isn't as detailed as it could be, unfortunately, which is why in the title I referred to it as more of an identification guide, not necessarily a guide for learning a whole lot about the animals themselves. Conservation status is mentioned where applicable for protected species and subspecies, although I found that this is not always entirely accurate. For example, Alameda whipsnake is listed as being a CA state threatened species, but not a federal threatened species, which was determined in 1997 and is still current as of January 2011. From what I could tell, though, it looked like the statuses on the protected species were generally correct and this appears to just be an oversight.The remaining pages after the species accounts end consist of a glossary, acknowledgements, a bibliography, and an index, which as I mentioned does go by page number instead of the unusual species number that the species list goes by. One thing that would have been nice is a checklist for each state. You can go off of the range maps if you want, but having one central list to tell you what snakes are in what state, rather than having to thumb through each map, would have been helpful for those who like to check off the animals they encounter.Overall this is a very useful comprehensive guide to the 147 snake species and subspecies of western North America (north of Mexico). The individual species accounts are better organized and contain more detailed information than Stebbins, so if you like me do not have a dedicated snake book, this is a good choice for your library.

Great guide to the snakes of the west. I gave this guide to my grandkid and he loves it. It also is good for me an amateur herpetologist. Good pictures and great text. The best (accessible) guide on the subject.

We are absolutely Loving this book and all of the beautiful Photos. It was received in excellent condition. Thank you, Melanie

excellent!

I was expecting something more from those books,a little desapointed,very little informative from what I was expecting.nice pictures,that,s all

My 8 year old grandson received this book on Tuesday and has not put it down. He absolutely fell in love with it. He loves snakes and learning about them so this was perfect for him.Good pictures and information throughout

THE PHOTOGRAPHY IS OUTSTANDING AND THE DESCRIPTIONS HAVE MORE INFORMATION THAN NORMAL FOR A FIELD GUIDE.MANY SPECIES FEATURE A SIDEBAR OF THE AUTHORS EXPERIENCE WITH THE SPECIES AND HAS SOME INTERESTING COMMENTS.I LIKE THIS BOOK SO MUCH THAT I WILL NOW PURCHASE THE COMPANION VOLUME WHICH IS THE GUIDE AND REFERENCE TO THE SNAKES OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA NORTH OF MEXICO.BUY IT!YOU WILL LIKE IT.

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