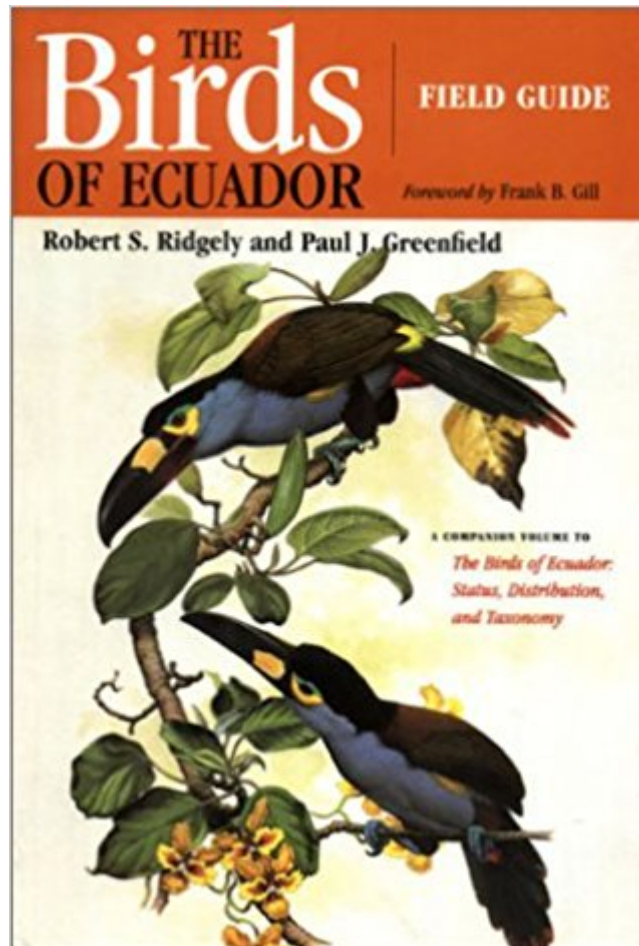


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The Birds Of Ecuador: Field Guide



Synopsis

The Birds of Ecuador comprehensively treats the nearly 1600 species of birds that can be found in mainland Ecuador. The authors describe Ecuador this way: "One of the wonders of the natural world. Nowhere else is such incredible avian diversity crammed into such a small country. . . . Birds are, happily, numerous in many parts of Ecuador: even the downtown parks of the big cities such as Quito and Guayaquil host their complement." Volume II, the field guide volume of this two-volume set, contains 96 full-color plates and facing pages of descriptive text, a color map of Ecuador, along with two line drawings of bird anatomy, 115 silhouette outlines, and nearly 1600 distribution maps. All species are illustrated in full color, including migrants and vagrants and visually distinctive subspecies. The text focuses on the field identification aspects of each species, including their behavior, vocalizations, and nest appearance. The two volumes of The Birds of Ecuador are available separately or may be purchased as a slipcased set.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Field Guide volume, 'intended primarily for field use,' contains plates, distribution maps, and text geared toward the identification of all the birds of Ecuador (excluding the Galapagos Islands). Its companion, Status, Distribution, and Taxonomy, suggested 'for your library (or hotel room or even car),' covers the occurrence and systematics of these same species. Undoubtedly, the field guide will be the volume most often consulted; an excellent aid for field identification of Ecuadorian birds, it will also be useful in much of Colombia, northern Peru, and western Brazil. Illustrations make or break a field guide. The 96 color plates, all by Greenfield, are vibrant, clear, and very

effective. They depict nearly the entire avifauna, including migrants and species known in Ecuador only from a single record. They also show many rarely illustrated plumages (such as in the highly polymorphic hawks and eagles). . . . The Field Guide will be indispensable to all field biologists and birdwatchers visiting Ecuador and northwestern South America."~¢~¢ Thomas S. Schulenberg, Science, September 14, 2001 "What Ridgely and Greenfield have produced is arguably the most important publication on birds in the region since the appearance of Wetmore's . . . treatise on the birds of Panama a half-century ago. . . . The accounts are compacted but chock-full of information, covering status, habitat, field marks, similar species, habits, and voice. Despite the fact that this is a superb field guide, . . . it is the companion volume that elevates these books to a rarefied standing. This book} consists of accounts for all the species in the field guide. . . . The second volume makes this set more than just a field guide and handbook. It makes it perhaps the single most important reference for students, professionals, and bird watchers interested in the birds of South America, one that will be a first source for decades."~¢~¢ Eirik A.T. Blom, Bird Watcher's Digest, November/December 2001 "This long awaited, monumental two volume set reveals the ornithological secrets and diversity of this small Latin American nation. . . . The two amassed so much information, they could not fit it in one book. . . . The Birds of Ecuador is an incredible achievement and is most highly recommended."~¢~¢ Dan R. Kunkle, Wildlife Activist, No. 43, Autumn 2001 "The long awaited Birds of Ecuador is finally out and the results are well worth the wait. The 2-volume set is a massive piece of work and the authors intended the 2-volume set to be used by both traveling birders and ornithologists. . . . Both volumes complement each other perfectly and are well worth the price. These volumes add tremendously to the available information of South American avifauna."~¢~¢ Oscar Carmona. Surfbirds Book Reviews, October 2001 "This outstanding work is the culmination of a 20-year collaboration between Ridgely . . . and Greenfield. . . Indispensable for those planning to do bird work in Ecuador or surrounding countries. Should be in every library with major holdings on bird life or tropical ecology."~¢~¢ Choice, February 2002 "Many of us can only long to travel to exotic birding places in South America, . . . but Ridgely and Greenfield live the dream and generously share it with us through their exquisite writings and paintings. . . . In summary, this is a thorough and thoughtful production that not only provides useful and complete information, but does so in a user-friendly manner. . . . The decades-long wait for these volumes has been worth it!"~¢~¢ Geoff Carpentier, Birders Journal, Vol. 10, No. 6, December 2001/January 2002 "Eagerly awaited though it was, this work surpasses all expectations. On my own past trips into the phenomenal birdland of Ecuador I have longed for good information, and here it is in a double shot: a superb field guide and a thorough reference volume, both

indispensable. Robert S. Ridgely and Paul J. Greenfield have done a brilliant job of making this complicated avifauna accessible and understandable for the rest of us. Ornithology, birding, and conservation all stand to benefit tremendously from this landmark work." --Kenn Kaufman, author of *Focus Guide to the Birds of North America* "A monumental work that sets a new standard for South American bird guides, *Birds of Ecuador* fills a huge information vacuum. These volumes are a fitting tribute to the authors' passion and commitment to pass on their unparalleled knowledge of one of the world's richest avifaunas. Those who have not survived such a project cannot imagine the magnitude of this undertaking -- Ecuador's nearly 1600 bird species are here made accessible in a user-friendly format. Birders, ornithologists, and conservationists alike will all benefit from this landmark publication." --Steve N. G. Howell, author of *A Bird-Finding Guide to Mexico* "Birds of Ecuador is a tremendous and unique resource, not just for people interested in Ecuador, but for anybody interested in the birds of the Andean and lowland countries of South America. With its detailed distributional records and some of the first critical appraisals of the birds' subspecies and ecology, Volume One: Status, Distribution, and Taxonomy is for when you have time to really think about the birds. You won't have to lug this volume to the field with you, but you'll still have a convenient resource with which to find out more about the birds." --Douglas Stotz, The Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

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splendid variety of birds in Ecuador."--Douglas Stotz, The Chicago Field Museum of Natural History

While this 'field guide' to Ecuador has excellent plates it suffers in three very important ways. 1) It is huge! Yes, Ecuador has about twice as many birds as are typically seen in US guides, but because of the added text this book isn't going to be a practical travel book. 2) the plates and distribution are on different pages. When you use a guide like this in the field you find yourself having to spend more time flipping through the book. and (most importantly) 3) It EXCLUDES the Galapagos Islands! yes, there are plenty of guides for the Galapagos Islands. But if you bring them AND this book you are looking at some serious SERIOUS weight. So if they named this "Birds of Mainland Ecuador", dropped the 'Field Guide' designation and clarified the location, I think I would be up there in the 5 star range. But then I wouldn't have bought it in the first place. I would think they could do the same book more like Garrigues' "Birds of Costa Rica". It would be a much more useful guide. I suppose what one COULD do is slice up the plates and bring them, but then you wouldn't have the distribution maps. That goes against the grain through.

Excellent, despite big, heavy, and unwieldy. Well laid out, excellent plates, easy to get around. While there are the usual indexes in the back and also a species index, it would be helpful to have a double page "quick reference" with a representative image in the front or at the start of the plates (similar to the one in "Birds of Southern Africa" by Sinclair and Hockey). It would also be useful to split the Field Guide into two volumes, one with just indices and color plates, and then the remainder. A friend butchered her book this way and rebound it, then carried just the plates part in the field. In most cases this was sufficient, saving a lot on weight; only very occasionally did we feel the need for the missing text and distribution maps.

Whether or not you like this book really depends on how you intend to use it. It is not something that you would want to carry with you into the field, because it is way too cumbersome. It really is much more of a reference book. Two other aspects of how this book is organized and presented also make it impractical for a field guide. The first (and a real pet peeve of mine with many birding books is that plates of birds are in a different section of the book, so you're always flipping back and forth between the written descriptions and the plates. The second problem that I have with this book is that there are no real pictures, just plate drawings. I tend to be pretty visual (that's probably why I like birding in the first place), when I received the book I was expecting pictures, not plates, so I was a bit disappointed. Real pictures would have had some redeeming effect on the organization of the

book. That being said, as a reference book, it really has just about everything you need or would want to know about all of the species you will likely encounter.

I hate to hack apart this wonderful book, but it is a must. In reality this should be a three volume book. The field guide should look more like a Peterson guide. Keep the plates and give me some small range maps in the back. That being said even after hacking it into two parts, it is worth the money. The illustrations and descriptions are accurate and aside from modifying the format there is nothing I would change about it except the much needed addition of an index for the plates would have been helpful. I added my own. Otherwise you have to flip through the bird families; this is time consuming. It is very helpful that there is a map in the very beginning with notable locations and the opposite page has them numbered in the key. Again do not worry about modifying this book in anyway. Hell, I hope to come across someone in my travels who took the time to organize the range maps and put them all right after the plates. I will be impressed. So, just keep half with you in the field and half at your lodgings. You won't be the only one walking around around Ecuador with a glued, stapled, or taped up version of this guide sticking out of your vest pocket. Just give your fellow travelers a nod.

This book is so massive, that when I bought it, I assumed that it would cover ALL of the birds found in Ecuador. It doesn't. It omits the Galapagos Islands. I missed the fine print in the description that stated "mainland Ecuador". So, if you plan to tour some of the most-visited, most popular parts of Ecuador, you need to carry a second field guide for the Galapagos Islands. There are relatively few species on the islands, so their inclusion in the "complete" Field Guide should have been no problem. Also, if you want to use this heavy book in the field, plan to have a bookbinder separate the color plates from the bulk of the text. That way, you can carry the illustrations and leave the text for reference at the camp/hotel. The range maps are included in the text section (not placed by each species in the color plate section), so you might also do a little "homework" and make a bird-list for each area that you plan to visit.

There is no questioning the content and detail of this book. Congratulations. However, as I have read elsewhere, having just returned from my 2 week adventure, it is thoroughly impractical. Way too heavy & large. It needs splitting into 2 volumes. Plates (i) and detailed descriptions (ii). The golden-crested quetzal just wouldn't wait long enough for me to lug the book out for confirmation (luckily the camera shot was good enough to verify). If I go back, I'll re-arrange the book myself.

Dated 2001 it certainly needs an update. Many additions, name changes, and updates on ranges are available...but it is still the best available at this time. I cut the plates out and took them to Staples to be bound. There was some loss to some of the species shown but that sure beats having to carry that massive book around all day. The writeups were then taped back together taped back together.

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