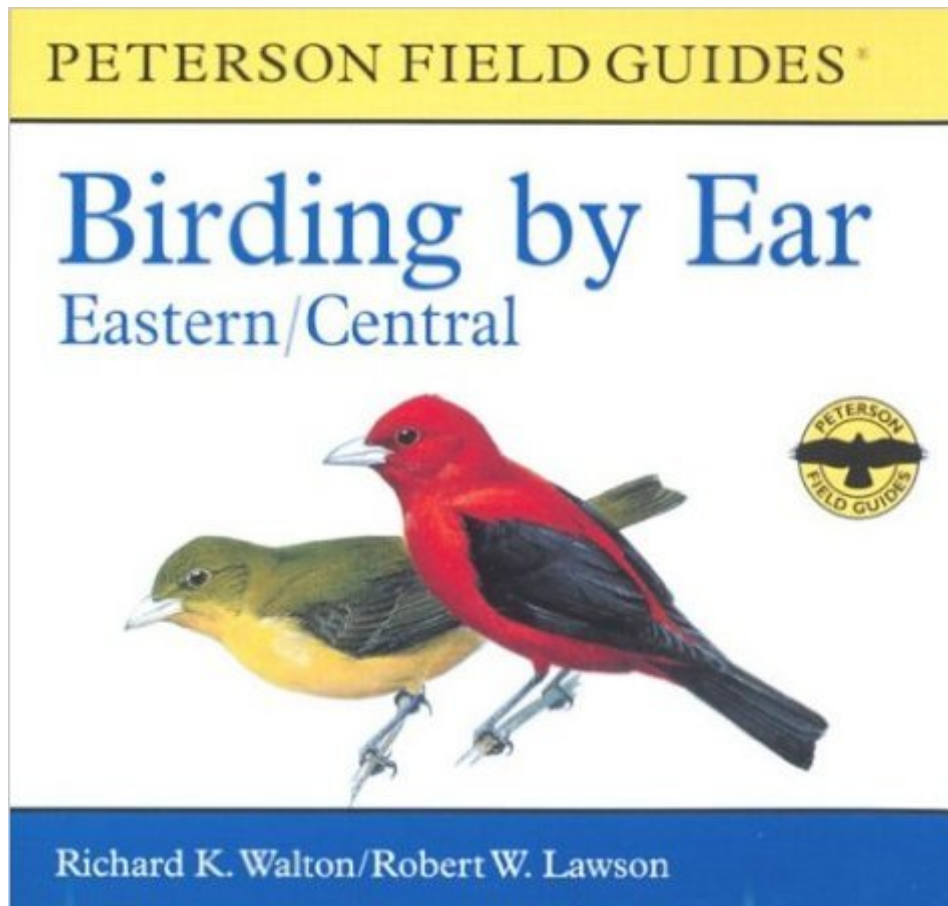


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# Birding By Ear: Eastern/Central (Peterson Field Guides)



## Synopsis

BIRDING BY EAR uses an educational and entertaining method for learning bird songs. Instead of merely providing a catalog of bird song samples, BIRDING BY EAR actually teaches. This proven method has greatly enhanced the field experience for birders across North America. The authors have created learning groups of similar vocalizations and clearly point out distinguishing characteristics. Using techniques such as phonetics, mnemonics, and descriptive words, Walton and Lawson provide a context for learning the songs and calls of eighty-five species of birds found east of the Rockies. Combine the auditory instruction here with the visual features of the Peterson Identification System. Page numbers in BIRDING BY EAR's booklet refer to species descriptions in the PETERSON FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA, fifth edition.

## Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (April 4, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618225900

ISBN-13: 978-0618225903

Product Dimensions: 4.8 x 0.9 x 5.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (106 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #163,543 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #132 in [Books > Books on CD >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

I spend a lot of time outdoors and have always been curious about identifying birds, trees and wildflowers around me. This set of CDs is the second set of bird calls I have purchased (and this does not even include all the on-line browsing and listening at the USGS Patuxent site). I have had a lot of difficulty with single bird/associated song or call types of audio (ie. name of bird-recording of call, next bird...). There are a lot of birds out there, and it is tough memory recall when you have a CD of 200 some bird calls and it is basically rote memorization to try to remember them. Not a whole lot of fun if you are a relative amateur and trying to learn to identify birds by call confidently. Those CDs will probably be useful for reference at a later time, but not now. I then picked up the

Learning By Ear CDs. Wow! This is what I should have bought a long time ago. There are 85 birds included on these 3 CDs, but they are grouped in a very intelligent fashion. Instead of just rote memorization, the birds are grouped by category. There is a really nice introduction on the first CD and then birds are presented BY GROUP (ie. Sing-Songers, Chippers and Trillers, Name-Sayers...). I cannot emphasize enough how useful this approach is to learning. Instead of just giving the sounds of, say, a Downy Woodpecker, the CD pairs similar sounding woodpeckers so you learn that a Downy has a descending whinny and a Hairy Woodpecker has an even sounding rattle - they are compared and contrasted together it is very effective. I learned more listening to these CDs than I ever learned through rote memorization.

Listening to this 3-CD set for the first time, I cycled through an entire manic-depressive episode. The depression occurred early on the first CD, track 4--"Sing-Songers." If there was one bird song I thought I knew it was the American Robin's cheerful warble. Now I learn that there are three other birds that sound EXACTLY like the robin to me: the Scarlet Tanager; the Summer Tanager; and the Rose-Breasted Grosbeak. Oh no! I'm going to have to listen to these CDs a hundred times before I can even be confident of the robin again. Later that same night, as I was crawling moodily into bed, I cranked open the window and heard a series of low hoots that sounded like, "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you?"--Instant mood swing. I lay there grinning in the dark, because I had just identified a Barred Owl. He sounded exactly like he did on these CDs. There is something so satisfying about being able to identify a song or a flower or even an animal track, as a reminder of the lives being lived around us--some of them very strange and beautiful. You will be amazed the first time you step outside after listening to these CDs, by how the orchestra of bird song begins to sort itself out into individual instruments. I was able to identify the Song Sparrow and the Oven Bird--two shy, unseen songsters that had been puzzling me for years. Each of the tracks in this CD set contains narration as well as bird calls and bird song. Birds are grouped on a track based on similarity of song, which is why you'll find the Mourning Dove on the Owl track. According to the narrator, many people mistake them for owls. At the end of the third CD, bird songs and calls are grouped together by habitat.

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