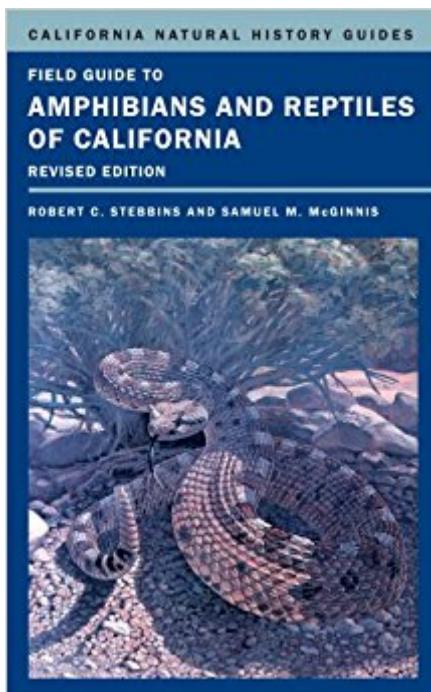


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# Field Guide To Amphibians And Reptiles Of California (California Natural History Guides)



## Synopsis

This user-friendly guide is the only complete resource that identifies and describes all the amphibians and reptiles—salamanders, frogs and toads, lizards, snakes, and tortoises and turtles—that live in California. The species are described in richly detailed accounts that include range maps, lifelike color paintings by Robert C. Stebbins, clear drawings of various life stages including eggs, notes on natural history, and conservation status. Easy-to-use keys for every order help identify species, and informative chapters cover more general topics including evolution, habitat loss, and photography. Throughout, anecdotes and observations reveal new insights into the lives of California’s abundant but often hidden amphibians and reptiles.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A must have for those with an interest in the herpetofauna of California!” (Ian Paulsen Birdbooker Report/The Guardian 2012-08-05) “A model for the ideal field guide. . . . Stebbins’ excellent color drawings stand out. . . . A valuable resource. . . . Highly Recommended.” (D. M. McKinstry, Emeritus, Pennsylvania State University Choice 2013-04-01)

Since his first book on western amphibians in 1951, Stebbins has been recognized as the authoritative voice on this subject. This new book, written with McGinnis, continues that high

standard of accuracy and usefulness. It is filled with entertaining anecdotes and user-friendly information. I recommend this to anyone getting their first introduction to the rich and diverse world of Californian herpetofauna. -David Wake, Curator, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, UC Berkeley; Dr. Robert Stebbins is the elder herpetological master of the American West, and this book has long been one of the finest state field guides to amphibians and reptiles. Now partnering to create a new, expanded edition with accomplished biologist Dr. Samuel McGinnis, a classic publication has become even better. Both the professional herpetologist and the weekend amateur naturalist will find this top-notch guide to be invaluable when exploring California's diverse landscapes. -Alan St. John, author of *Reptiles of the Northwest*

First things first, let me just say that I have not seen any previous editions of this book. However, I have owned A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians (Peterson Field Guides) for years, so I will compare this book to that one (and I will call it the "Western guide" and this book the "California guide"). Having disclosed that...This is a great book for amateur herpetologists and even a good update for more experienced herpetologists in California. The material overlaps pretty extensively with the Western guide, with some key differences. Whereas the Western guide is pretty brief in natural history in its species accounts, this California guide can be quite extensive. This doesn't apply to all species, but some, like the California red-legged frog, now have species accounts spanning several pages. Conservation notes have also been updated pretty nicely to be much more specific and detailed about the conservation status of each species, and taxonomy has been updated for most species to be current (the arroyo toad, for example, which was adopted into *Anaxyrus* last year by USFWS, is still listed as being in the *Bufo* genus). While the plates look to be pretty much the same as the Western guide, some species now have additional photos that are not in the Western guide, and some photos have not carried over. Range descriptions are more detailed than they were before, and maps due to the smaller area are now a little easier to try to gain reference from when seeing if a species should be in a certain area. One thing that bothers me, and this stands out to me because I primarily work with anurans and I saw it right away, is that for example the red-legged frog range map has gone from being colored in the Western guide to being all blue in the California guide. Whereas the Western guide makes it easy to see where the species split in range, the map in the California guide does not. A minor criticism, as the range description does describe where they change over. On top of this, the text does not do a whole lot of justice to subspecies descriptions or even similar species (such as red-legged frogs or mountain yellow-legged frogs), instead staying a little more general and describing overlapping traits. Other

than this, the rest of the information (e.g., identification, eggs, larvae) is mostly the same but just reworded. Organization is slightly different than the Western guide, with turtles now being last amongst the reptiles and lizards being first. Amphibians that did not have egg or larvae diagrams in the Western guide don't have them here, either. Again I don't know if this was the case in previous editions, but if you're coming from the Western guide probably the biggest difference you need to know is that there has been major consolidation. Whereas the Western guide splits plates, species accounts, eggs/larvae information, and range maps into distinct sections, this California guide consolidates all of that information into each species account. That means you can view all available information for each species at once rather than having to flip pages. Whether you like this or not is purely personal preference. The arrangement of the Western guide is great if you're trying to quickly figure out which species could be in a certain area based on range, for example, because you have all range maps right there next to each other; however, it is less efficient if you're trying to see everything about one species because you're flipping pages back and forth. The California guide has the opposite effect. If you prefer the arrangement of the Western guide this may take some getting used to. Outside of the species accounts the authors have included quite a lot of essays on herp ecology, field herping, and other topics. The sections on capture are a little less instructional than the Western guide and a little more anecdotal with suggestions and tips.

Photographs are supplied this time around, which is good for seeing an example of what some of these things should look like. For some reason the photographs in the book all seem to be from the '70s or '80s, which is interesting, but doesn't detract from their value. The new photography section also gives tips on getting field photographs according to the type of herp you're looking at (salamander, anuran, lizard, snake, turtle). Overall this is a great book for any California herpetologists, especially for amateurs or especially as a first herp field guide. There is a wealth of information in it and it's amazing that Robert Stebbins and Samuel McGinnis could put together a field guide that is \*California only\* that is actually longer than the field guide that is for the entire Western section of North America. That should tell you a whole lot about what you need to know: this is the premiere book for California's statewide amphibians and reptiles. Thanks for reading!

My son loves this book. Great gift for the reptile lover.

Love, love, love this book, exactly what I needed for identification, colored pictures and locations maps are brilliant

So useful when I'm hiking :) I love finding reptiles and then reading all about them.

Stebbins is an expert.

Great book by a master.

I really like this book. I live in the mountains and come across all kinds of animals. I like the fact that it is just for California. I wish it had more color pictures.

This is a reasonable price products and structure is better than I thought, well enough to be as a gift to give to friends. fast and reasonably priced Awesome deal! amazing product , amazing service , amazing item, unbelievable quality Reasonable price, packaged well, and fast shipping as well. Thanks for a great product!!

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