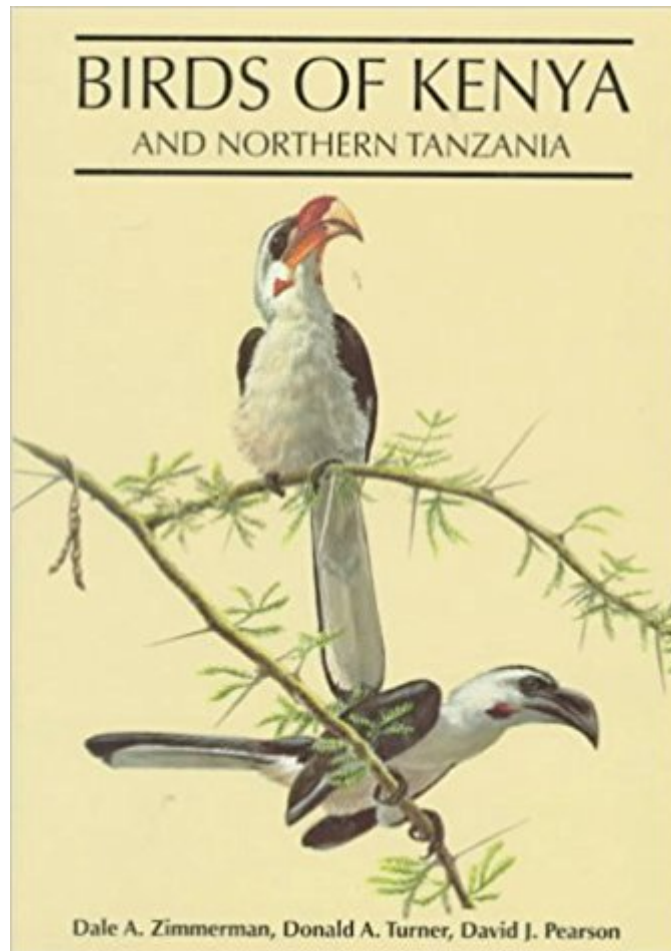




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# Birds Of Kenya And Northern Tanzania



## Synopsis

Here is the definitive guide to the birds of Kenya and, indeed, to all of Eastern Africa. For the first time, each of the 1,114 species of the region is described and illustrated. This long-awaited book includes detailed information for every species, including appearance, plumage, vocalization, habits, status, and distribution, as well as detailed treatments of habitats and ranges. The product of more than ten years of development and field testing, *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* renders obsolete all other guides to the area. The Republic of Kenya is home to more bird species than any other African nation, with the exception of Zaire, which has a land area four times greater than that of Kenya. This book serves as both a handbook and a field guide to this fascinating region--one that will meet the needs of professional ornithologists and amateur birders alike. It is the only guide to this region that is truly comprehensive. In 112 color plates and numerous line drawings, every one of Kenya's 1,080 bird species is illustrated. In addition, 34 species from northern Tanzania are illustrated and described. In all, approximately 90 percent of Tanzania's birds are included, as are more than 85 percent of the birds of Uganda and a majority of all species endemic to the entire area. "In East Africa, where Kenya alone boasts nearly 1,100 species, scarcely more than half are figured in the most widely used field guide. Because there has been so much guesswork by traveling birders about the hundreds of unfigured species, a superb team has finally done something about it and filled the gap. There will be no more guesswork.... The present volume should be hailed not only by birders but by conservationists aware of the urgent need for African governments to establish strong strategies to preserve their rich natural heritage."--From the foreword by Roger Tory Peterson

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Honorable Mention for the 1997 Award for Best Professional/Scholarly Book in Biological Science, Association of American Publishers "More than just the definitive guide to East African Birds, this is a beautiful book--a 'must have' especially if you contemplate a journey to see these birds in the feather."--Audubon Naturalist News "This book provides us with plates that not only address the most difficult identification problems but also delight us as works of art."--Birding "This is the best and most authoritative and modern field guide available for the region and clearly should be carried by all residents and visitors alike. The price seems absurdly reasonable."--Choice "Birds of Kenya is a superior achievement, and the design and artwork set a standard for the guides that cover areas with a large number of species. . .Any bird watcher visiting Kenya must have it."--Bird Watcher's Digest

"The guide features 124 color plates, depicting all 1,114 species in the area, including variations by subspecies, age, and sex. It contains over 800 range maps and succinct text that covers identification, voice, and distribution. Specially designed for use in the field, it is a compact version of the widely acclaimed Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania, hailed on its publication in 1996 as the most comprehensive, accurate, and beautiful guide ever produced for the region. This field guide is the one volume that every adventurous traveler to Kenya and northern Tanzania must have."--BOOK JACKET. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was the field guide I used for a short birding visit to Kenya, July 2015. I was relatively inexperienced with this avifauna, but I was able to identify just about all the birds I encountered, with the help of this book--and that of a superb local expert, Brian Finch. Without Mr. Finch, my birding partner and I would have spent much more time paging through our field guides. My friend had a copy of Stevenson and Fanshawe. It was helpful to have two books on hand, but I much preferred the Zimmerman book, since it covers only Kenya and a tiny slice of Tanzania, rather than East Africa in its entirety. Excellent as it is, the Zimmerman book does suffer from one shortcoming. Not having the range maps on the same page as the picture and text is a nuisance. I made up for that by marking up the book in pencil before the trip; I drew a little box beside the name of any of the species expected in the area where I planned to bird on this trip. Thus I would not waste time in the field looking at species from areas away from Nairobi. The pictures on the plates are numbered,

rather than having the bird's name next to each picture; I pencilled in the names of all the likely species right next to their pictures, so that I would not waste time trying to figure out what bird was depicted on Plate 84, "5b." Since this book is now over 15 years old, I also found it useful to update the names of the birds. This is something I do before any international trip anyway, but in this case, there were many, many name changes to pencil in here and there. For example, that "5b" on Plate 84 is no longer the Common Fiscal--it is the Northern Fiscal. New visitors to Kenya might find it confusing to use this book if they have not boned up on the taxonomy before the trip, since so many splits and renamings have occurred. All in all, I found this to be a very good bird book, albeit one dating from a previous generation in the evolving history of birding field guides. In my opinion, all new birding field guides, and all subsequent revisions of existing ones, should follow the best possible format. That format has existed since the 1960's, when it appeared, I believe, in the old Chandler S. Robbins "Golden Guide" for North America. This format is used in the Sibley field guides, as well as in the wonderful Mullarney et al. The text and map for a given species should be on the left of the spread, with the pictures on the right. The name of each bird should be printed next to the picture. Period.

I was a bit confused for two reasons:1. The book I received from had a different cover than the one on the product page. Both, however, seem to be the same 1999 edition;2. My guide in Kenya, as luck would have it -- the trip was organized by my travel companion -- an absolute bird lover, carried a 1999 Helm Field Guides edition called, imagine this, "Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania" with him at all times. As unfortunately my book arrived late and I went to Kenya without it, I used the guide's guide (!) a lot. When I returned, I looked at my copy and it was identical to his. One is a Princeton edition, the other a Helm one. Perhaps because the former is a US edition and the latter a UK one. Confusion aside, and no matter if it's Princeton or Helm, anyone who goes to Kenya and looks at treetops / sky as well as the savannah needs one. The illustrations are precise (although nothing can be precise enough to allow for ID of Cisticolas in the field!) and complete; the texts are concise and, as far as I can tell, accurate. As a field guide the Princeton is quite heavy -- paper quality is good and, thus, so are the print colors -- and hefty, but you deserve that if you go birdwatching in a country with around 1,300 species. My one gripe with the guide is how the contents are organized. The page numbers listed refer to the species accounts -- pages 269 to 563 --, not the color plates. Let's say you're looking for a Hornbill. The family's account is on pg. 397. Go there to find out its color plate number. You must first visit the species account pages and from there flip back to the beginning of the book and one of the 124 color plates. Not exactly practical when you're

trying to ID a strange bird in the field. Talking of Hornbills specifically... The family is divided between "Large Ground Birds", plate 30, where the editors seem to have dumped five small genera, and the family itself, plate 63. One word of advice: although several of the higher-end hotels in the parks carry the 2005 updated Helm edition, get your copy before departing to Kenya. In .com it costs \$23 and in .co.uk it sells for £18. At the Kenyan hotel gift shops the price tag is around \$50! And, according to my Kenyan guide, the 2005 edition is no different from the 1999 one, with the same illustrations and info. The van Berlo Kenyan birds guide some other gift shops there offer is less expensive but admittedly incomplete, so not enough if you're a hard-core birdwatcher.

This guide is extremely comprehensive and nicely illustrated. However, the older, used copy I bought is VERY heavy (paperback, but..). I don't think I'll be traveling with it, but I'll try to absorb some basics ahead of my trip to these areas.

Excellent reference book for birdwatchers casual and serious. The only reason I don't give it all 5 stars is that the Index only has scientific names, not common names. The book would have been much easier to use if I could lookup a bird by its common name.

Another great guide to this part of the world's avifauna and very helpful in conjunction with the other available Princeton Field guide "The Birds of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi.

Was disappointed in the quality and colors of the illustrations and that the descriptions are not side-by-side.

I bought "Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania" and "Birds of East Africa" (which focuses on the same region) in anticipation of an upcoming trip. Both books are much larger and heavier than I expected, especially for the price, but that just reflects the wealth of knowledge and page after page of color plates. Because both are so heavy, now I need to decide which of the two to take. Because "Birds of East Africa" has range maps printed opposite the color plates, I think it will be the more useful book to have in the field. When I get home, I'll update my review.

The colors in the drawings in this book have an annoying red to brownish tone. This makes it difficult to separate species that is alike. Price is superb.

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