

Bird Watching Books

1. Hot Spots book - The revised and updated

Hot Spots of Sarasota and Manatee Counties is available at the monthly meetings of Sarasota, Manatee and Venice Audubon Societies. The cost is \$6. You can also purchase it by mail for \$7.75. Make your check out to:

SAS-Hot Spots and mail to:
P.O. Box 52132
Sarasota, FL 34232

The book is also available in many area bookstores.

2. The revised Florida birder's guide is now available for sale from ABA (American Birding Association). I recommend it. The hyperlink for ABA sales is below, but you will have to copy and paste it to your browser.

A Birder's Guide to Florida (ABA/Lane Birdfinding Guide Series) Code: 175 Price: \$28.95 Bill Pranty, American Birding Association, revised 1996; revised 2005

This guide, representing a total rewrite of the original Jim Lane and Harold Holt texts, describes over 250 birding sites throughout the state, virtually every one of which is shown in the 82 maps created for this edition. The bird finding text was rewritten with the assistance of nearly 70 of the state's top birders; it contains detailed instructions with exact mileages to all sites covered. The extensive Introduction and Birds of Particular Interest sections were rewritten using the most recent references to Florida's bird life. The bar-graphs contain 483 species, including the entire accepted Florida bird list and a few "non-countable" exotics that appear to be increasing in range and numbers. Also included is a list of 171 species of exotic birds, lists for the state's dragonflies, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals, and complete citations for nearly 100 publications referenced during the book's preparation. You'll want a copy of this guide to help you find Florida's specialties-Snail Kite, Limpkin, Short-tailed Hawk, Mangrove Cuckoo, and more. Available online and via Amazon.com

3. **Birder's Guide to Pinellas County (Florida)** by Ron Smith. It is available from St Petersburg Audubon Society www.stpeteaudubon.org for \$25 plus \$4 shipping.

Field guides for birds that have paintings rather than photographs of birds are better, since the paintings typically provide the key aspects of each species important to bird identification. I recommend guides that are specific to the area or region where one is bird watching. I find The Sibley Field Guides To Birds to be most helpful, in particular the guides for Eastern North America (and Western North America). For bird watching in SW Florida, I always use **The Sibley Field Guide To Birds For Eastern North America**. There are field guides for birds of Florida, but ensure that they include all species of birds seen in Florida, not just the more commonly seen birds.

Concerning binoculars, there is a vast number of choices, but most bird watchers prefer binoculars that are eight power with a field of view of 42 (aka **8 X 42**). The more expensive the binoculars the better, but beyond \$250 the differences are small. There are few quality binoculars for less than \$100.

The Audubon Society chapters of the SRQ area have meetings and field trips typically from October to May that all are welcome to join. Some may ask for a small donation to support the field trips, typically a couple dollars. Information about the activities of the several Audubon Society chapters is available at their Internet sites (see addresses below) and from time to time I send out Emails with summary information.