

Book Reviews

Book Review Editor's Note: We are continuing to use the current currency codes. Thus Canadian dollars are CAD, U.S. dollars are USD, Euros are EUR, China Yuan Remimbi are CNY, Australian dollars are AUD and so on.

ZOOLOGY

A Field Guide to Common Fishes of the Pacific Northwest

By Andy Lamb, Bernard Hanby, and Phil Edgell. 2015. Harbour Publishing, Box 219, Madeira Park, BC, Canada, V0N 2H0. 7.95 CAD, Plasticised pamphlet.

Many years ago I went on a trip that included my first whale watching excursion. I did not want to take a mammal book, but I needed something to help with cetaceans. I took a kitchen recipe card and drew diagrams and sketches of the whales and dolphins I had a chance of seeing. This fit in my shirt pocket and worked out well. I still have this card. A few years later I converted the pencil sketches to ink drawings and plasticised the card with shipping tape. Many years later I discovered that people had begun publishing commercially plasticised cards.

The latest addition to these cards is a guide to Pacific fish. Most of us are not licensed scuba divers with expensive underwater cameras, so are not likely to photograph deep sea fish. I have a small point-and-shoot that is waterproof and I have taken a number of fish photos by hanging off the dock or boat and lowering my camera in to the water.

So I was surprised by how many of the fish, shown in this pamphlet, that I have seen. Some I have watched from a ship's side as they swam around the bow. Searching rock pools (always fun) has added more. Others I have seen as the catch in indigenous fishermen's boats. I have also visited some local fish markets. Of course, I have eaten several species.

The 105 photos, by Hanby, are simply wonderful. How he got a Wolf-eel to pose not once, but twice could only be accomplished with immense patience. Incidentally the Wolf-eel has been described as having a face only a mother could love or fierce looking. I prefer these authors's more kindly description as "resembling a Muppet puppet." Other fish, like the Tiger Rockfish, would be more universally called beautiful. Each photo carries a short note on the fish's biology. The authors use five symbols to denote fish that can be caught by anglers, seen by divers, are commercially harvest, are good to eat, and can be found in pools, off docks, and boats. This last symbol is important for visitors as they indicate that over 50 per cent of the species can be seen by a land-bound naturalist.

This is another delightful, lightweight guide from Harbour Publishing (Harbour has recently published *A Field Guide to Seaweeds of the Pacific Northwest*). As I expect to be on the west coast next February, I will be using this pamphlet in the field soon. It is a good purchase for any naturalist and fisherman and another ideal stocking stuffer.

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