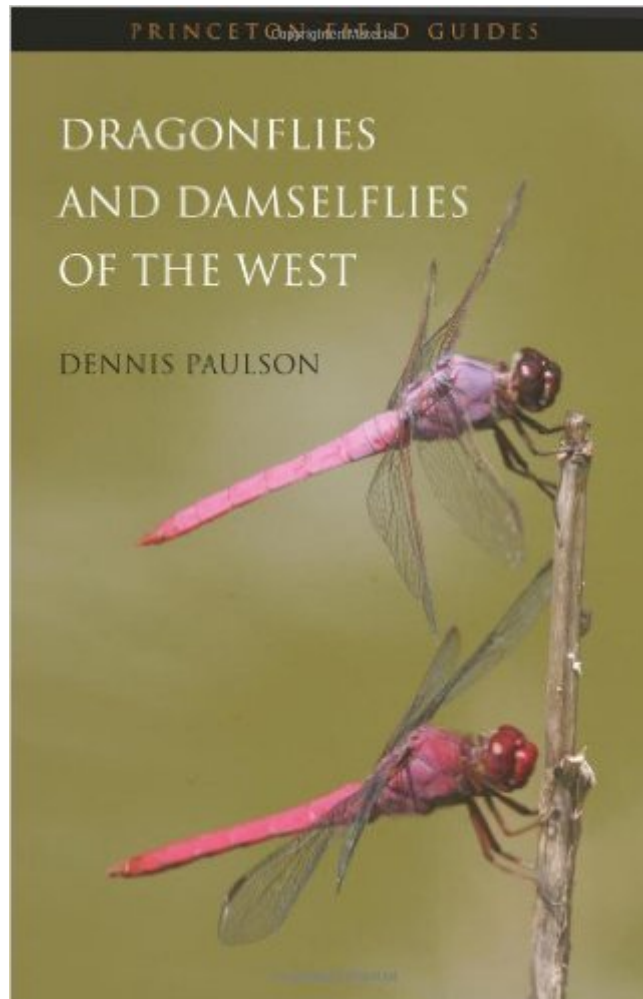


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Dragonflies And Damselflies Of The West (Princeton Field Guides)



Synopsis

Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West is the first fully illustrated field guide to all 348 species of dragonflies and damselflies in western North America. Dragonflies and damselflies are large, stunningly beautiful insects, as readily observable as birds and butterflies. This unique guide makes identifying them easy--its compact size and user-friendly design make it the only guide you need in the field. Every species is generously illustrated with full-color photographs and a distribution map, and structural features are illustrated where they aid in-hand identification. Detailed species accounts include information on size, distribution, flight season, similar species, habitat, and natural history. Dennis Paulson's introduction provides an essential primer on the biology, natural history, and conservation of these important and fascinating insects, along with helpful tips on how to observe and photograph them. Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West is the field guide naturalists, conservationists, and dragonfly enthusiasts have been waiting for. Covers all 348 western species in detail. Features a wealth of color photographs. Provides a color distribution map for every species. Includes helpful identification tips. Serves as an essential introduction to dragonflies and their natural history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Basics: 2009, 535 pages, softcover, 850+ color photos of all 348 species in western US and Canada, range maps This is an exceptional book for any dragonfly enthusiast with a focus on identification. This is the most complete and best quality of any related book available. As noted in

the title, the "West" refers to all species found in (a) Alaska, (b) Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Nunavut and all provinces west, and (c) N/S Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and all other states west. This region encompasses 348 species, all of which are shown in this book. All photographs are in color and of very good quality and size. All but 4 or 5 of the species are shown with at least 2 photos. Many species have 3 or 4 photographs. The photos show differences between male and female, adult and immature, and variations due to pruinoses and heteromorphs. These photographs will be very helpful with the identification of most odonata you encounter - except for those frustratingly similar species. This is where the detailed text will be very informative and useful. The text, ranging from 1/2 to a full page for each species, consists of 6 distinct sections. The bulk of the material is found in Description, Identification, and Natural History. A single, yet potent, sentence is given to each of the other three sections of Habitat, Flight Season, and Distribution. The identification section does a good job of comparing similar species, giving pointers of how to differentiate between the finer points. The description of each can often be very detailed, which might be a bit too detailed for the novice or a person with a passing interest to know what to call that dragonfly flitting around the garden.

There are serious amateurs who have a tremendous curiosity about dragons and damsels. There are those who need a quick reference book with photographs that make ID easier. And then there are those whose interest waxes and wanes with the dragon and damsel season (summer around here). At times, I'm all three, but primarily my interest peaks when the meadowhawks come back in droves or the darners, darters, and skimmers are present because of an abundance of water (as we had in this part of the San Francisco Bay Area in 2010). Mind you, there are 7-9 months when the damsels and dragons are gone, so no matter how my interest peaks while they're present, I forget much of what I've read and knew the previous year. Kathy Biggs book is a handy pocket book that I can carry with me, but I've come to know just enough so that I can wait to get home and look up what I've photographed. Unlike some, I only carry field guides when I'll be gone away from home for a week or more. Then, after a day of shooting (photographically speaking) I need a field book. Dennis Paulson's book is really a bit heavy for a field guide (though I've seen field guides that weigh up to 3 pounds!), but it's thorough and absolutely necessary if you're going to be in the Sierras or the deserts or in other areas where the dragons and damsels are not what you normally see at home. What you see at home you should be able to remember. But when you run into a pinkish-purple dragonfly that you've never seen before, THIS is the book. It's laid out beautifully, and when you track down the pink-purple dragonfly (a Roseate Skimmer which we do not have near

my home), there is a great description of habits and ranges.

Paulson's guide to dragonflies and damselflies (collectively known as odonates) of western North America is stunning to behold; one could spend a lot of time happily drifting through the beautiful photographs. Additionally, the text is incredibly informative. However, for a summary of this book's contents, I can not do better than the review by "Soleglad"-- I hope I got the reviewer's tag right -- of this book. However, I'd like to emphasize that this book is not just for the "serious" amateur or professional. I am not a serious dragonfly person. I enjoy looking at them, love photographing them when the opportunity presents itself, but I don't spend much time identifying them "in the field," and I do not go to specific places to seek them out. Nonetheless, I found this book fascinating. The introduction includes a myriad of interesting facts about these insects, and this helps you appreciate these beautiful animals all the more. The "field guide" portion of the book contains a large number of mostly superb photographs. The text in this portion of the book can be, initially, a bit hard to understand for us "lay-people," but if you wish to identify a dragonfly or damselfly, some technical description is necessary (and there is an excellent glossary with drawings to explain terms). My Point: This is NOT a guide solely for "experts," but for anyone who wants to identify dragonflies/damselflies, in their yard or on vacation (in western North America). It is also visually pleasing and contains far more general natural history background than most field guides. There is no guide currently out that is anywhere close in quality. My sole "negative" point is that it is nearly impossible for a photographic guide to put as many species per page as guide using drawings.

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