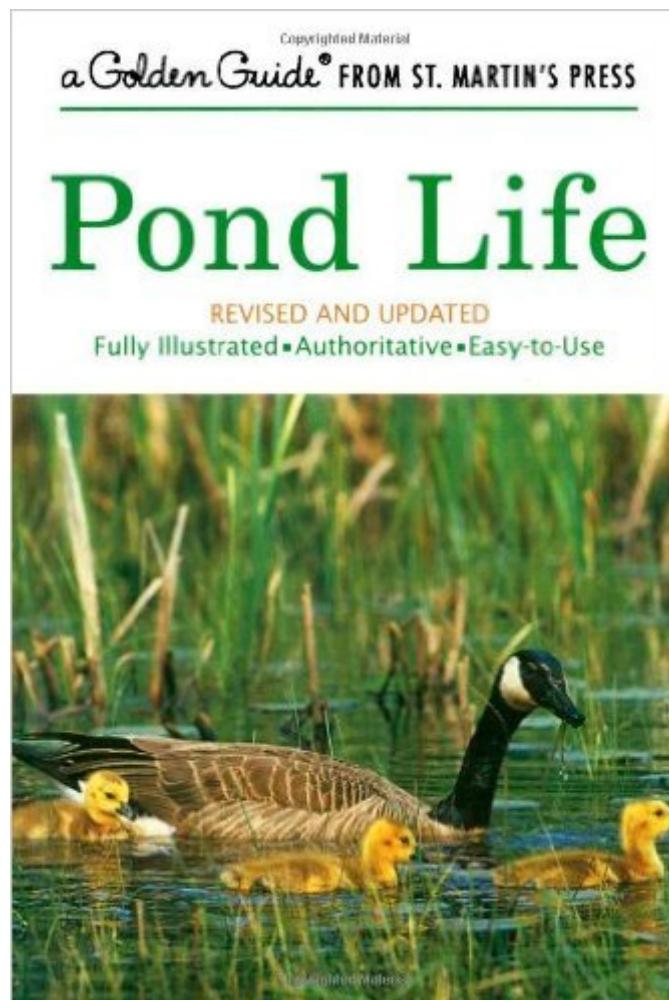


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Pond Life (A Golden Guide From St. Martin's Press)



Synopsis

This guide describes and illustrates, in full color, the plants and animals that live in or near ponds, lakes, streams, and wetlands. It includes surface-dwelling creatures as well as those of open water, the bottom, and the shore and tells how various animals and plants live together in a community. Plus suggestions for: Where and when to look Observing and collecting specimens Making exciting discoveries

Book Information

Series: A Golden Guide from St. Martin's Press

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (42 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Golden Guides are often described as books for children just discovering the natural world. While the series is eminently usable by young naturalists, Golden Guides are solid introductory field guides. One of the strengths of "Pond Life" is its comprehensive scope covering everything from protozoa to plants to mammals. Indeed, it provides more good basic information on identifying types of water plants than any other source I know complete with measurements and color illustrations.

The same applies to its coverage of invertebrates as well, though the minor objection of the previous reviewer concerning its scanty treatment of protozoa is a valid one. I would add to the strength of "Pond Life" its portability, which packs a plethora of information into a small package. Another weakness (of the Golden Guides in general) is its datedness to the 1950's and 60's. This does not affect its basic science in most cases, though it is strange (albeit nostalgic for some) to see the equipment suggested for pond watching.

Pond Life is like a general biology introduction to life found in ponds. All types of life are covered, albeit in very brief introductions. Plants and animals (microscopic to mammals to birds) each receive tertiary coverage. The book does not get into specifics on how wetlands function relation to other ecosystems, and such coverage would have been useful, but the overall emphasis is still relevant. The book is likely not intended to be read from cover to cover, as it is a field guide. Field guides are really meant to be brought along in a pocket for easy reference when making field identifications. In this respect, I am a big fan of other field guides in the series. This volume and its companions should be readily available at nature centers, but the price is low enough for people to purchase it for their own libraries. What it lacks in detail it makes up for in compactness and readability.

This little book is a bargain if you want to identify aquatic plants, animals, etc. commonly found in US lakes & ponds. All color plates and well put together.

This is far different from other books in the same series that I have come across. While all of the Golden Guides contain some information beyond that needed for identification, this book has much more of an emphasis on broadly educating readers about the intricacies of pond life. Taking on an entire ecosystem, Reid has given himself plenty of space to talk about the various types of pond habitats, the nature of water and how that fits into the picture, and the different seasons as they affect pond life. I found all of these sections to be highly informative, with the Golden Guide trademark of sophisticated knowledge being passed on in manageable chunks. Reid doesn't talk down to the reader in the slightest; any young reader will sense that this guidebook is appropriate for amateur scientists of all ages. Even the identification section is more word-laden than other Golden Guides, and much emphasis is put upon identifying different families and classes of organisms, rather than being limited to species identification alone. No family that lives within striking distance of a pond should be without this handy little book. At the very least, it can provide a couple of magical afternoons exploring this amazing habitat together.

I use this book to introduce scuba diving students to freshwater plants and invertebrates. Both the illustrations and the descriptions are good. I've been unable to find a better book for this purpose. On the other hand, the coverage of fish species is limited, (eg. Smallmouth bass are missing!), and the illustrations mix fish of greatly differing size on the same pages.

I'm very much a nature lover. When this book arrived, I saw the small size (about 6" x 4") I felt a little disappointed. I thought at least it would be something 'cute' for my kids, but would be far too basic for me. NOT AT ALL! I'm learning things I had no idea about. Did you know there are FRESHWATER JELLYFISH! I didn't! Do you get energized learning about things in the natural environment? If so, you might really want to give this book a try. The book does not go into tremendous detail about each critter or topic covered, but does so enough to grasp the subject matter, and further research if you're interested. As I did with freshwater jellyfish - for which I now have bookmarked videos of them. Another thing I liked, my attention span is not all that good. In my day, you got a smack on the back of the head, now they call it adhd.... I found the book easy to read and follow. It's not like the longwinded boring educational type of book. You can flip through, find pictures of stuff you want to learn about and read - you don't have to read in a cover to cover manner. Very cool book, very nice surprises reading it!

Typical of the Golden Guides, this book is written for audiences of all age levels, from elementary school through college. The style and tone are appealing and allow the reader to seek any level of depth. The drawings and illustrations provide useful complementary information to the text. Somehow, the author has managed to make the phylogenetic and zoological information accessible to a general reader. This book would be equally at home on the shelf of a middle school student taking his first biological sciences class or a college student studying limnology or stream ecology. Information on identification of organisms is generally sufficient, but not overbearing. Some of the material is dated, such as the use of the phylum name Coelenterata rather than Cnidaria, but the nonexpert will be unaffected by this. As an added bonus, the Golden Guides are priced extremely attractively.

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