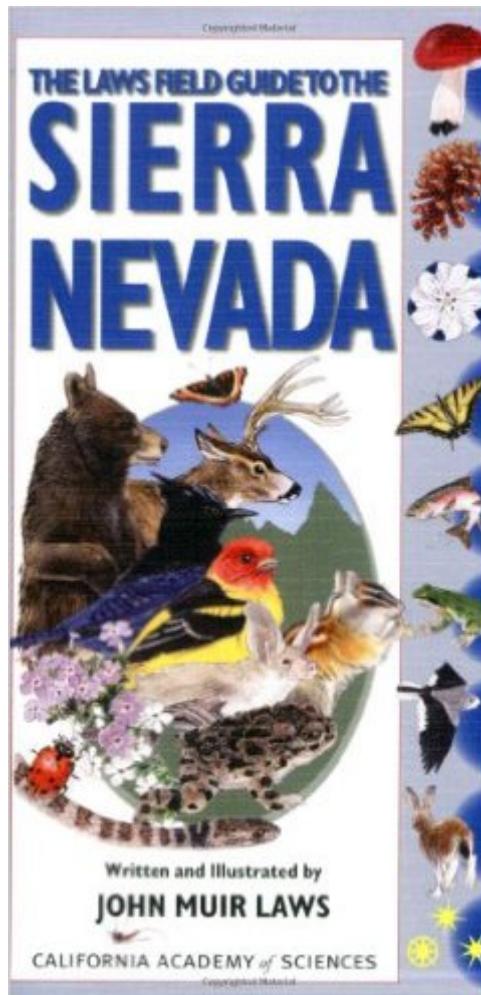


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# Laws Field Guide To The Sierra Nevada, The (California Academy Of Sciences)



## Synopsis

The most comprehensive field guide to the natural wonders of the Range of Light! In this groundbreaking and meticulously field-tested guide, the rich variety of Sierra life--trees, wildflowers, ferns, fungi, lichens, fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals, and insects--comes alive. Easy-to-use features include: - Intuitive organization, color tabs, and simple keys - Similar-looking species side by side - Over 2,800 full-color illustrations - Range maps of species that are otherwise difficult to distinguish - Index of common and scientific names - Lightweight and compact--ideal for backpacking Impressively detailed and comprehensive, the guide includes: - More than 1,700 species - Descriptions of behavior, adaptations, and interactions between species - Species and topics not found in most guides, including aquatic life, spiders and webs, plankton, plant galls, bark beetle galleries, animal tracks and evidence, seasonal star charts, weather patterns, and cloud formations Published in conjunction with the California Academy of Sciences.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A ton of useful information on a range of subjects (plants, animals, mushrooms, insects, weather, tracks, scat, star charts, etc.). Beautifully illustrated and easy to navigate. The text snippets have a very personal, conversational, at times even humorous tone, which make it a pleasure to consult. At 17.5oz (496g), it's a little too heavy in my opinion for backpacking, but a good companion for all other occasions. The knowledge, thought and passion that went into this publication really burst off the pages.

Absolutely the best field guide I've encountered. Besides being compact and easy to use, the illustrations are absolutely stunning. This book is ideal as a quick reference for either the backyard naturalist or the avid backpacker. After buying this book you'll quickly become addicted to flora and fauna identification!

This is a gem, a comprehensive field guide to Sierra flora and fauna. John Muir Laws spent many summers drawing from life in all corners of the Sierra, and the results are enchanting. The book includes insects, tracks, stars, scat, and mushrooms as well as plants, birds, and animals. Though there isn't space in this slim volume for detailed information on each organism, the tidbits of natural history trivia scattered throughout are tantalizing. I take this one guide on every hike, and it rarely fails me. The color tab system makes it easy to find things quickly without searching the index. When I get back, I can refer to other guidebooks like *Sierra Nevada Natural History* for more information.

I hate this book. For years I have been telling fellow natural history writers that the field guide model is stagnant, boring and dull, and anyone who wastes his time writing one could be doing something more useful, like picking up trash on the roadside. I have insisted there is nothing new and interesting that can come out of additional field guides -- it has all been done and overdone. So what happens? This guy Laws comes along and makes me a liar. And even a fool. He does a field guide that sparkles. That identifies everything you run into. That is based on paintings better than I can do. That is organized in a uniquely instinctive way. And worst of all, that puts together the whole unlikely package with all the charm and humor that Laws expresses in person. That's why I hate this book. Everybody should buy one to see if they hate it too.

Imagine hiking with a wise old professor of natural history, a young companion still bubbling with enthusiasm at the joys of nature, and a talented artist with a gift for capturing it all in paint. That is what hiking with the Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada is like. Virtually everything visible that lives in the Sierra Nevada and even far beyond can be found here, and when it is too dark or stormy to see living things, there are star charts and explanations of the weather. The guide is conveniently arranged into groups of organisms, from fungi through plants and animals, including mammal scats and tracks. Species that are likely to be confused are shown near each other with distinguishing features pointed out. The author, John Muir Laws, also provides frequent short lessons in natural

history. What makes the book special, of course, are the 2700 paintings by Laws, many so detailed that one has to look closely to see they are not photographs. And all of this is in a 366-page book that fits easily into a day pack and is so well constructed that it will survive the many years of steady use that it will surely get.

This field guide is perfect for the hiker and camper or general nature lover who lives near the Sierra Mountain range in central California or who intends to visit that region. The author has drawn almost all of the animal, flower, insect and bird life to be found in the Western and eastern Sierra mountain range in beautiful color by hand. To identify the various life forms you simply look under the various topics and you no doubt will ID that strange bug or plant. You can trust the author and his work is among the best selling of the genre. This is one of the most readable guides to life in the Sierra's and the artwork is first rate. This little guide is perfect for the rucksack crowd in terms of size and weight. This guide has limited written commentary as the artwork is the key to this field guide. This is a well-designed book, making for effortless page-turning and the writer/artist really get into the detail of the creatures shown. You will enjoy your quick hike much more and will have a dramatic change of atmosphere as you reference the life surrounding you in these mountains of great beauty. I recommend this guide highly.

The title of my review pretty much says it. When this book first came out, I just thought "Wow! I wish I knew all that stuff!" I already knew Laws' work from his thin book on Sierra Birds (largely or entirely included in the present field guide). It is slim, has fewer species than most and almost no text (owing no doubt to Laws legendary dyslexia), but time and again I find that his thin book was the easiest to use and most likely to allow me to find and ID a bird. This is just the next ten steps - reptiles, bushes, flowers, birds, bugs (lots of bugs), mosses, and even constellations. If I were going to recommend just one book for hiking the Sierra, this would definitely be it.

John Muir Laws imparts a stunning resonance to all he paints. His work is thoughtful, complete, and inspired. Your fun with this book will be absolutely never ending. My granddaughters, my eighty year old father, my best friend, all LOVE this book. Imagine a guide that includes everything from constellations to the nest forms of miniature wasps to the most showy birds and fish! Just leafing through the book makes me feel blessed to live in the Sierras. Elisa Stancil

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