

behaviour, diet and/or ecology. The coloured illustrations are very well done and provide ample detail to identify a species. Additional sections include a three-page glossary and a description of 26 rare species. The rare species' descriptions parallel those of the more common fishes, but lack coloured illustrations. A three-page bibliography, 14-page index and brief biographical information on the authors conclude the book.

Although *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes: From Alaska to California* is the newest identification guide for this region, there are several other earlier guides that serve as competitors. Only one – *A Field Guide to Pacific Coast Fishes: From the Gulf of Mexico to Baja California* (Eschmeyer and Herald, 1996), part of the Peterson Field Guide series – covers a comparable number of species (more than 600). Unlike the work by Kells, Rocha and Allen, *A Field Guide to Pacific Coast Fishes* has coloured plates and black and white line drawings in the centre of the book, separate from the species' descriptions. The illustrations provide arrows that point to the most prominent identification features, which are reinforced in the species' descriptions that are located in a separate section of the book. Although this back and forth can be annoying, the Peterson Guide species' descriptions are more helpful than *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes* because of the emphasis provided on identification features, particularly the key differences between similar-looking species.

The other three guides covering Pacific coast fishes are much less extensive, each covering around 250 species, or approximately a third less than *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes*. In addition, these guides tend to be specialised for particular interests. *Ken Schultz's Field Guide to Saltwater Fishes* (Schultz, 2004) was written by the fishing editor of the magazine *Field and Stream*, and correspondingly includes species of interest to anglers. The illustrations are not as vivid as those done by Val Kells, but species' descriptions are longer. In the first edition of *Coastal Fish Identification: California to Alaska* (Humann and DeLoach, 1996) (there is also a 2008 2nd edition), the content is meant for divers. As a result, the reader gets brilliant coloured photographs of each species. Since there are only 250 species included, the descriptions are longer than in *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes*, and include a section on the species' reaction to divers. A more recent guide *Coastal Fishes of the Pacific Northwest* (Lamb and Edgell, 2010) addresses all interests, and includes special sections for catching tips for anglers, location hints for divers and beachcombers and cooking ideas for gourmets. This guide includes black and white illustrations plus coloured photographs. Unfortunately, some

of the photographs are dark, which make it hard to see species' details clearly.

In making a recommendation, if you were only to have one book I would err on the side of including more species than less. That leaves the *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes* and the Peterson Guide, which is currently out of print but commonly available. If I already own the Peterson Guide, I would still be inclined to purchase the book by Kells, Rocha and Allen because of the brilliant illustrations by Kells. No one creates as beautiful coloured illustrations of marine fishes. That said, the Peterson Guide does a better job at emphasising identification features. In short, they are both worth owning and since *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes: From Alaska to California* is currently in print and covers so many species, I recommend all libraries consider adding it to their collection.

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The Horse Encyclopedia

Elwyn Hartley Edwards

Dorling Kinderley

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2016

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The core of this book is an account of over 150 breeds of horse and pony. The entries are in three categories; heavy, lighter and ponies. Each breed has a page or double page spread. There is a side view and a rear view that are used to

indicate particular points of the breed. In many of the two-page spreads, there is a close up of the head. Facts on height, origin and colour are provided. There is a short Mission Statement; for example, “from a mixed background, the Czech warmblood has emerged as a likable and reliable mount”. An account of the breed origins, features and use are given. A picture of the breed being used is also frequently provided with double-page photographs of horses working or just running around. These include the classic Camargue horses in the sea image. Some rarer breeds, such as the Peneia of southern Greece, get only a little box in the spread for a geographically associated breed: in this example, the Pindos.

This central section is preceded by two sections. The first is an introduction to horses. This includes an account of the horse family with some detail on evolution. There is also a section on crosses with donkeys and asses. A general overview of the biology of the horse is provided. This includes aspects of horse behaviour and the interaction of horses with each other and with humans. This is followed by an account of domestication and the use of horse in war and at work. The place of horses in legends and culture is also discussed.

The breed descriptions are followed by a section on the care and management of horses and ponies: diet, pasture management, stabling, grooming and health are all covered. There is a four-page glossary of technical terms. I recently read an autobiography of a canal boatman (Roberts, 2015) which contains a lot of information of the care and management of canal boat horses. It contained one bit of jargon that puzzled me – the half leg horse. The term is not included in this book but the autobiography explained it as a horse with short legs: useful given the low headroom at many canal bridges.

There was a period when I was interested in the concept of breeds and varieties and there are many books on horse breeds (and on cats and dogs but fewer on pigs and poultry). This book published by Dorling Kindersley is, like all books from this imprint, splendidly illustrated and clearly written. The inclusion of the three general sections adds some interesting and useful information. The advice on care and health is well given. The main library markets will be school and public libraries. It would be a good present for a young rider. If you are interested in horse breeds from a more academic or genetic approach, there is also much of use in this book.

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Reference

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Mason's World Encyclopedia of Livestock Breeds and Breeding

Valerie Porter and others

CABI

Wallingford

2016

2 vols.

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To understand this work, one needs to understand what is meant by a “breed”. Clearly, we are discussing animals and there has been much debate about the definition. Some claim that a breed, whether dogs, cats, sheep, goats or any other animal, can only be known as a breed if there is a breed society to define its standards or a published herd book. This requires some common and formal consent among its breeders. Some say that the definition is “a group of domesticated animals that, when bred to each other, will consistently produce offspring that are recognisably of that breed, in aptitude as well as morphologically”. Perhaps, surprisingly, the concept of a formal breed has a history of little more than two centuries, originating in Western Europe and based on phenotype and pedigree. Often the breed name has incorporated a locality of origin, or an indication of appearance, such as Berkshire, or Lincolnshire Curly Coat, or Texas Longhorn. In most parts of the world, a breed is simply what people recognise as a local type, often given the name of the region in which it is bred or a tribe that always bred it. Breeds may have evolved by natural selection to suit the local environment or be combined with meeting practical human requirements or the requirements of the animal and what it is used for. This can be emotional selective breeding in terms of appearance, such as a particular colour or coat pattern which people prefer. Science and the understanding of molecular genetics will not undermine the local concept of a “breed”.

So where does Mason come into all this? Ian Lauder Mason was born in Ashby De La Zouch in England in 1914. His father was a corn merchant and farmer, and his mother a maths teacher. Ian went to university, studied zoology and met his future wife, Elizabeth, who was a fellow zoologist. As part of the war effort, he