

Ornithologist:

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In April of 1934, when Peterson was 25 years old, his first *A Field Guide to the Birds* was published by Houghton Mifflin in Boston after Peterson had been introduced to the publisher by John B. May, state ornithologist of Massachusetts. The first edition, which covered North America east of the Great Plains, included 425 species with over 500 drawings in color and black and white by Peterson. The system of identification is visual rather than phylogenetic. Similar looking birds are assembled schematically on pages and key field marks of characteristics are identified with arrow.

The first printing of 2,000 copies sold out within three weeks and the book was immediately reprinted. There have been four revised and expanded versions since then, a reported 47 printings and more than

joined the Bronx County Bird Club. There he met nine young men who taught him the tricks of identifying birds in the field, making it possible for him, trained as an artist to pull things together and give them form in his first field guide.

From 1934 to 1943 he became a full member of the American Ornithologists Union and Educational Director of the Audubon Societies as well as art director. His educational leaflets on birds built the membership of the Junior Audubon clubs from 100,000 to 400,000 annually.

His profound understanding of

nature's wild creatures gave him a deep insight into human beings, their frailties, their longings, perhaps even their loneliness. Robert Sundell, who knew and admired him tells that Peterson often came on rigidly controlled tours in Chautauqua County, where his every moment for public appearances and lectures and publicity sessions were regulated so that all might see and hear



Peterson used this tent blind while observing birds in the wild. The tent is on display at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, located at 311 Curtis St. in Jamestown.

the great man. Peterson would always find time to deviate from the fixed schedule of events to give his complete and undivided attention to a youngster or adult who wanted his attention for some matter, which was all important to the questioner. All official business stopped while Peterson let his heart and help go out to the one who needed him most, regardless of his social status.

One wonders where Peterson's energy came from, where did he find the time to pursue his life's goal: birds, birds and more birds, which he searched for in the farthest horizons of the globe from pole to pole from sea to desert, to icy snow peaks.

Lars Eric Lindblad, eminent director of the excellent travel company bearing his name,