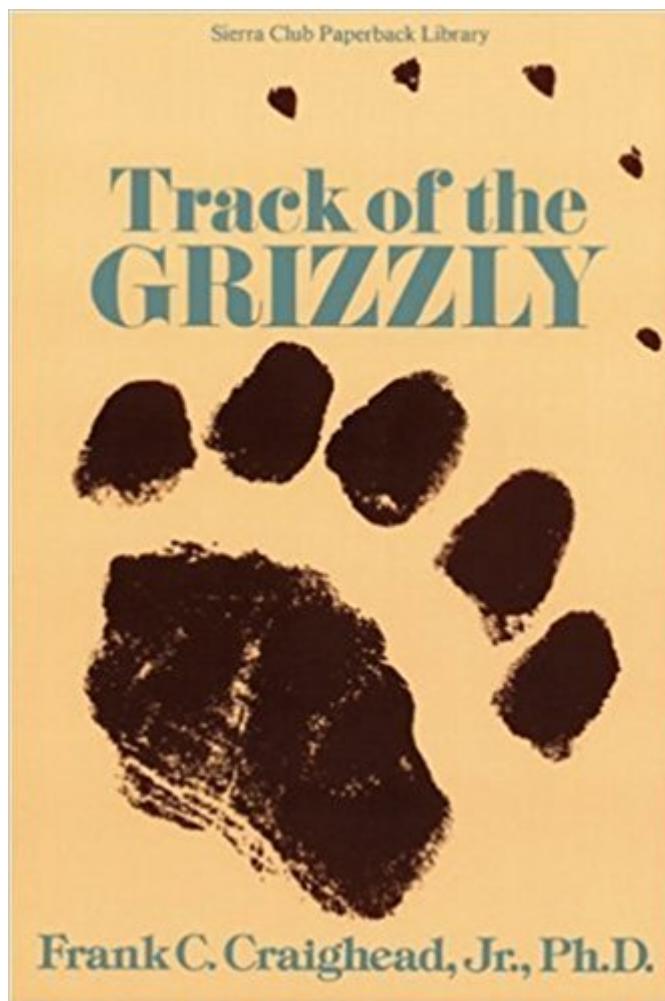


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Track Of The Grizzly



Synopsis

Track of the Grizzly is the culmination of one of the most ambitious wildlife studies ever undertaken—the Craighead field study of the grizzly bears of the Rocky Mountains, carried out in Yellowstone National Park and the huge surrounding ecosystem, spanning three states. The grizzly once roamed North America as a coequal with early humans, its range stretching from the Mississippi to the Pacific and from Mexico to the Arctic. Today only remnant populations live in the contiguous United States; the Yellowstone grizzly community is the largest, but is ever threatened by proximity to people: their towns, camps, and garbage dumps. Over a period of thirteen years, beginning in 1959, Frank Craighead, his brother John, and their colleagues lived in the backcountry close to their subjects. Combining firsthand knowledge of the bears and their habitat with radio-tracking and other scientific techniques, they tracked hundreds of grizzlies to discover their social organization and seasonal movements, their breeding and feeding habits, and their life spans. This fascinating, seminal book provides an intimate and detailed portrait of the greatest carnivore in our hemisphere, a lesson in wildlife mismanagement, and a close-up look at the life and work of wildlife biologists in the field.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Sierra Club Books; 1st edition (August 12, 1982)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0871563223

ISBN-13: 978-0871563224

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #740,188 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Field Guides > Mammals #110 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Bears #248 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Mammals

Customer Reviews

"This is a fascinating account of a splendid, awe-inspiring, and much-maligned animal. It will take its place with some of the most important natural history books published in the last 20 years."--Gerald Durrell

Frank C. Craighead, Jr., is recognized as the world's leading authority on the grizzly. He has held numerous posts with the National Geographic Society, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Department of the Interior. He is the author of numerous technical publications and co-author of *A Field Guide to Rocky Mountain Wildflowers*.

This book tells the personal side of a major study of grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park in 1959-1968. It doesn't tell you much about the scientific motivation for the study or for the team's activities. Based on the stories, the plan seemed to be, "Let's put radio collars on grizzly bears and see how much stuff we can learn." They were particularly interested in finding winter dens and trying to monitor temperature of the den and the vitals of the bears. But the Craighead brothers don't seem to be very self-conscious about what they're doing, and why. Their scientific ethics and social attitudes are also very much grounded in the 1950s, for whatever that's worth. There's a lot of information about Yellowstone grizzlies in here, though of course a lot of later scientific progress has been made. Some of the other reviewers mention how valuable this information can be if you're traveling in grizzly country. I'd recommend against reading the book that way. The science is old, and grizzly behavior varies by location. Barren ground grizzlies in the Arctic, salmon-based bears on Kodiak Island, berry- and moth-eating bears in Glacier NP, and pine nut-dependent bears in Yellowstone are bears of a different color (sometimes literally). Read this book as a bit of the history of science. The final chapter and the epilogue cover the controversy with the Park Service over grizzly bear management. This ultimately led to the Park refusing to allow the Craigheads to continue their research. Craighead is understandably bitter and defensive, but also mostly in the right. Because the Park Service refused to listen to the Craigheads, human-bear conflicts were unnecessarily high for a decade, and we lost more than one-third of the grizzly population. We also had at least two human fatalities that took exactly the form that the Craigheads predicted. These accounts of the conflicts with the park service are the most interesting part, and most lastingly relevant, of the book.

Fascinating read. So fortunate to find this book.

not a novel, but very informational 2 grizzlies

Wonderful review of one of the classic field studies and its implications for conservation.

A very readable, enjoyable book. It was published in 1979 so I'm sure there's more and newer information on the bears, but this is a great starting place. Its author (and his brother) are famous for their early grizzly studies.

Are you thinking about backpacking in grizzly country? Well, then you need to learn a bit about the biology and behavior of the bear. While on a trip to Alaska this year, I did some reading and learned that grizzlies are largely nocturnal, feeding mostly at night and denning up during the day.

Craighead's book confirms this, and provides a lot of other useful information. He and his brother did research on the Yellowstone grizzly population for around a decade, but park management rejected their expert advice when grizzly management became a hot political issue after two tourists were killed by bears in 1967. This aspect of the book is of course dated, and there is no update on the current state of the Yellowstone grizzlies, but nevertheless this is an excellent book for anyone planning a wilderness trip. "Learning to Talk Bear" by Roland Cheek is a good companion book to this one.

A very well written and entertaining book about the Craighead's multi year study of the Grizzly Bears of the Yellowstone Eco system. The book while written by a Biologist, is very entertaining and an easy (light) read....not a scientific paper. If you want to understand what Grizzly Bears are REALLY like, and want to understand this interesting animal- this is your book. It's a great book to read if you visit the Yellowstone area and are somewhat "Bear-a-phobic" as a result of the sensational bear attack books. I was reading this book in Yellowstone this summer when I had my 1st bear incident in the 15 years I have been coming to the park. Armed with good information the "incident" became an interesting encounter with another one of YNP's great animals. This is a book worth buying and keeping in your library.

A shortened and less scientific version of the Craighead's classic study of the Yellowstone grizzlies. For any one who wants to know more about grizzlies, this book is a must!!!!

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