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# Park Scientists: Gila Monsters, Geysers, And Grizzly Bears In America's Own Backyard (Scientists In The Field Series)



## Synopsis

America's National Parks are protected places and have become living museums for as many as 270 million visitors per year! In addition, researchers are able to perform long term studies of a wide number of subjects from salamanders the size of thumbnails to gigantic geothermal geysers. These parks are natural laboratories for scientists. Did you know that Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming sits on top of an active (and very large) volcano? This volcano is monitored and studied on a daily basis, not only as a means of protection (though it seems a long way off from erupting) but also as a way of understanding how the environment changes and influences what goes on deep underground. The scientists profiled in *The Park Scientists* also study grizzly bears in Yellowstone, the majestic Saguaro cacti in Arizona, and fireflies in Tennessee -- and suggest many ways for the average reader of any age to help out. The emphasis here is twofold: the great science that happens everyday in these important, protected spaces, and the fact that you can visit all of them and participate in the research. It's backyard science at its biggest and best in this resourceful addition to the *Scientists in the Field* series!

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4 "This entry in this popular series focuses on the study of selected plants, animals, and geologic formations in three of our most famous national parks, which are akin to "natural laboratories and living museums." It all begins in Yellowstone National Park, where hydrothermal activity and its effects are astutely explained. Next, the history, current status, and study of the famous park grizzly bears are carefully detailed. Exploration and examination of giant saguaro cacti and the elusive Gila monster are the focus in the section on Saguaro National Park, which includes a description of "BioBlitz" through which everyday citizens and students can assist in park research programs through 2016. The Great Smoky Mountains is home to more than 30 species of salamanders, and they, plus the equally fascinating fireflies of the region, are targeted in the final chapters. Pertinent, attention-grabbing, full-color photographs and captions, maps, infrared images, and diagrams accompany the fascinating, informative text in each section. Featured experts provide primary-source information for each topic covered. The introductory map of all national parks is missing two in Colorado, but that is a quibble. Overall, this is a well-written, unique, carefully organized treat for nature lovers and investigators." Diane P. Tuccillo, Poudre River Public Library District, CO

The National Park System is often known as the nation's own backyard due to the possibilities it provides for leisure, recreation, and scientific study. This entry into the long-running Scientists in the Field series celebrates this by focusing on three specific parks: Yellowstone, Saguaro, and the Great Smoky Mountains. Drawing on real-world issues such as monitoring hydrothermal systems, determining the age of giant cacti, and predicting climate change, Carson chronicles exactly how scientists work in these locations. Citizen scientist volunteers, evolutionary ecologists, park rangers, and geologists are just a few of the types of scientists detailed in the book, representing a wide range of age, experience, and expertise. Much discussion centers on the gear the scientists use and the process of their studies. Photographs of stunning landscapes, natural wonders, and people at work adorn an appealing graphic layout. With a conservationist bent, Carson describes just how accessible these real-life "natural laboratories and living museums" are and how each individual can act with the same spirit of inquiry as the scientist-explorers detailed here. Grades 4-7.  
--Erin Anderson

Great book, very informative

Park Scientists: Gila Monsters, Geysers, and Grizzly Bears in America's Own Backyard by

Mary Kay Carson with photographs by Tom Uhlman explores three of America's National Parks: Yellowstone, Saguaro, and Great Smokey Mountains. Our national parks are places of relaxation, adventure, and enjoyment for citizens. They are also living laboratories in which scientists can study the natural world from the geysers of Yellowstone to the fireflies of the Great Smokey Mountains. Each of the three sections of the book focuses on a particular locality and opens with a fact sheet that provides basic information about the park's history and environments before joining scientists as they delve into some of the most notable features and creatures. Readers receive an in depth look at how rangers, geologists, biologists, herpetologists, and entomologists - alongside citizen scientists and volunteer researchers survey, study, and work to preserve the wonders that attract thousands of visitors each year. Meticulously researched, carefully organized, and smartly written, this Scientists in the Field entry offers detailed looks at the experience of a diverse group of men and women as they pursue their scientific endeavors. Stunning color photography ranges from dynamic panoramas to exquisite close-ups. Maps, charts, graphs and drawings augment the text. Future scientists in grades 4-8 will find a wealth of experience and encouragement here.

Park Scientists takes you into Yellowstone, Saguaro, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Parks. In each park you go on a journey with two different types of park scientists. You learn about grizzlies and geothermal events in Yellowstone, saguaro cacti and Gila monsters in Arizona, and synchronous fireflies and red-cheeked salamanders in the Smokey Mountains. This book has info that you just can't get on a tour with a park ranger. I've been to all three of these parks and I learned quite a bit from this book. I like that the writing style is easy to understand, fun, and conversational. The pictures are awesome. In each park, as the author describes an event, you feel like you're right there with the scientist! Extras - there's a nice map in the book showing the location of all the National Parks, as well as definitions of scientific words in a "Words to Know" section.

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