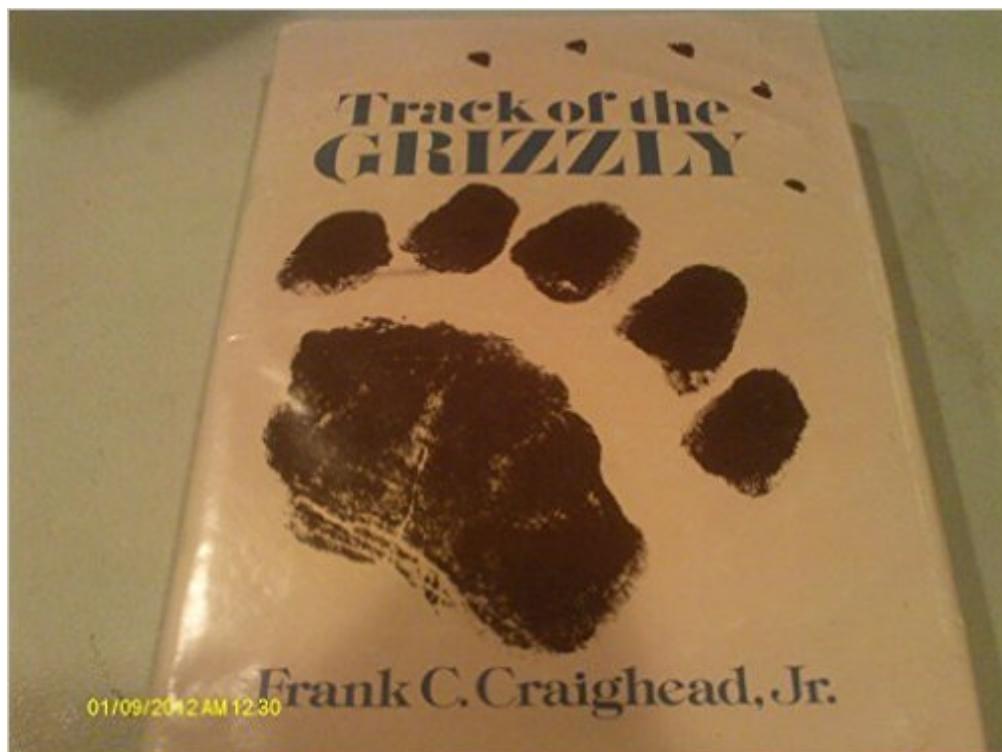


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Track Of The Grizzly



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. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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.

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