

REVIEWS

America's outdoor wonders: state parks and sanctuaries.—Thomas B. Allen, Seymour L. Fishbein, Dixie Franklin, Jane R. McCauley, and Michael W. Robbins. 1987. Special publications division, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C. 199 pp. Hardcover, 120 color photographs, 29 maps. \$7.95.—The five contributing authors describe their experiences in 29 selected state parks. Parks are presented by geographical region: "Summer in southern parklands," "Northeastern woods and waters," "Along midwestern byroads," "Out in the high country," "Snow and sun in the far west," and range from Franconia Notch State Park in New Hampshire to Na Pali Coast State Park in Hawaii. Of six southeastern parks described, two are in Florida: Lake Kissimmee State Park and Bahia Honda Recreation Area. The book features the more unrenowned state parks that are often obscured by national parks or private tourist attractions. However, Niagra Reservation State Park and Adirondak Park also are included.

From a people-oriented perspective (I guess that's what parks are for) authors emphasize the diversity among parks. A forward by Gilbert M. Grosvenor, President and Chairman of the Board, National Geographic Society, claims the book "brings you vistas of natural beauty, and introduces you to people having a whale of a good time in them." This "whale of a good time" within park confines ranges from "a camper finding a solitude enriched by birdsong and river music" to "reggae bands" and "throngs of squealing teenagers" (the *wonder* here being—why would I want to visit?). The book provides some interesting information on the unique features of each park. For example: local history (Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, Illinois), horse racing (Kentucky Horse Park, Kentucky), rock collecting (Rock Hound State Park, New Mexico), skiing and camping (Chugach State Park, Alaska), and scuba diving (Point Lobos State Reserve, California). Park management problems, history, conflicts of use, and local support and involvement are discussed. Although I have visited only three of the parks covered in this book, I think the authors successfully conveyed the mood or "feeling" of each.

This coffee-table book is prepared in the usual slick style characteristic of National Geographic Magazine, i.e., many beautiful photographs and an enjoyable text. However, given the National Geographic Society penchant for cartography and the obscurity of the parks, I was disappointed with the quality of map that accompanied each account. The maps are simple state or regional outlines with the park indicated by an out-of-scale black square. Some authors admittedly had difficulty locating parks they were to write about. This book will be of no help to future visitors trying to find their way.

Park wildlife is mentioned in most of the 29 accounts but, in general, is given superficial treatment. Birding enthusiasts will find little information here. In the account of Brazos Bend State Park in Texas, pg. 16, the quote used from an "early naturalist" to describe an alligator's hiss ("resembles very heavy distant thunder") was instead probably a description of an alligator's bellow.

Overall, if you like reading National Geographic Magazine you will like this book. It is somewhere between a tourist guide and a series of "what I did on my summer vacation" type stories. With its attractive cover, enjoyable text, quality photographs, and fair price, "America's outdoor wonders" is a worthwhile purchase for someone with diverse interests planning a vacation, be it real or vicarious.—**Michael F. Delany**, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Wildlife Research Laboratory, 4005 South Main Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

Florida Field Naturalist 16: 76, 1988.