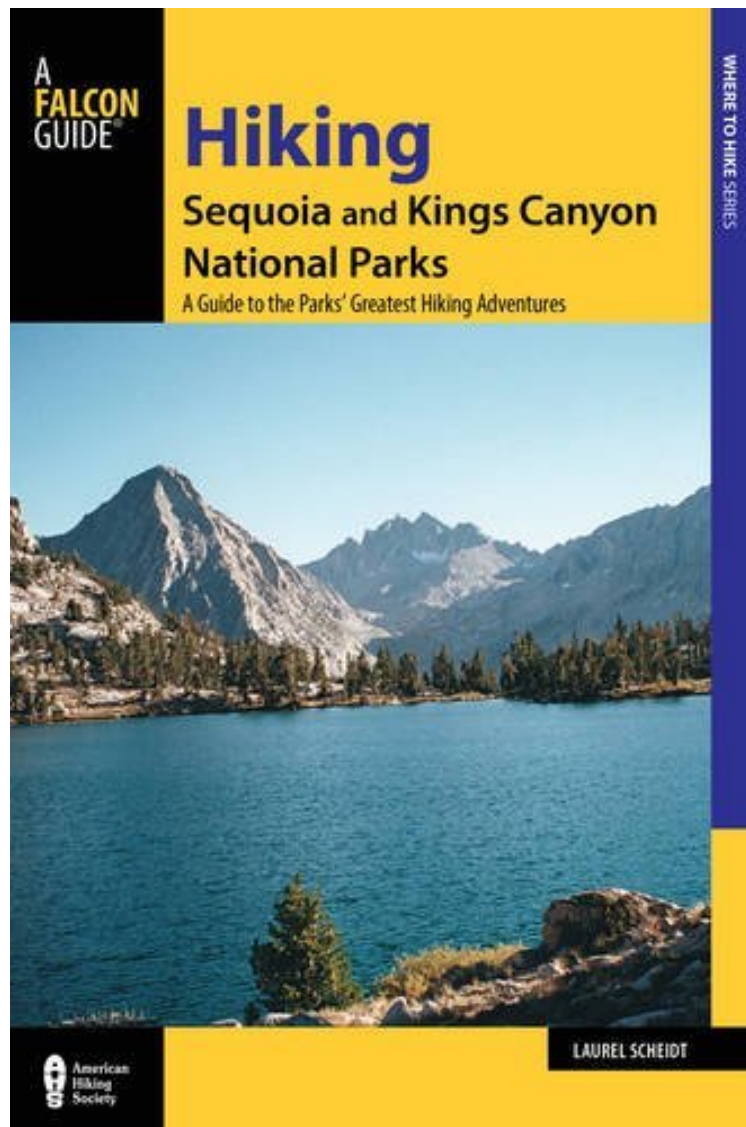


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Hiking Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks: A Guide to the Parks' Greatest Hiking Adventures (Regional Hiking Series)

Laurel Scheidt

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Laurel Scheidt : Hiking Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks: A Guide to the Parks' Greatest Hiking Adventures (Regional Hiking Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hiking Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks: A Guide to the Parks' Greatest Hiking Adventures (Regional Hiking Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Cater to your hiking skill level
By Emily Cornish
This book was perfect for searching and finding hikes to accommodate the wide variety of hiking skill levels we had in our group. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in any and all levels of hikes for Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. 17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. A Lot of Good Hikes, and a Lot of Padding.
By Fritz R. Ward
In this, the third edition of Falcon's Hiking Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, author Laurel Scheidt gives readers both more and less than what they might hope for in a book of this size. Yes, you will find some spectacular hikes, with an emphasis on longer treks including some routes that simply are not mentioned in other guidebooks. You will also find a fair amount of redundancy, a point reviewers complained about with the first two editions of this book. It is still not corrected in this edition.
First the good stuff. Like all titles in the "Hiking" series from Falcon, this one is full of beautiful color photographs which, on the glossy paper Falcon uses, are plate quality. If you want to see why these parks are so popular among hikers, just perusing the pictures in this book will give you a hint. But this is not a coffee table book. It is a genuine hiking guide, with long and detailed descriptions of routes, excellent sketch maps showing all connecting trails and points of interest, an elevation profile, and a good dose of natural and human history of interest to the trails you are walking on. Who could ask for more? But there is more, and much of it is very good. Scheidt includes treks like the North Fork trail and Redwood Meadow which simply are not mentioned in most guidebooks, and she also has a broad mix of trails, ranging from short easy treks like the 0.5 miles to Black Wolf Falls, to potential week long backpack trips. She also offers variations on common trails which do appear in other guidebooks. Yes, you can hike a modest loop around Zumwalt Meadow, one of the most popular trails in King's Canyon National Park, or you can do the variation she offers, starting your trek at Roaring River Falls, hiking up the Canyon on a trail you will likely have all to yourself, and then circling the meadow with the other tourists in the area.
So what is not to like about this book? It really all boils down to redundancy, or the tendency of the author to give three or more separate write ups for what is essentially the same trail. Thus hikes 50 to 54 are essentially the same trail (hike along the valley floor to Bubbs Creek; Hike along the valley Floor to Bubbs Creek trail and then hike to Junction Meadow; Hike along the valley floor to Bubbs Creek and keep going past Junction Meadow to Vidette Meadow, less than 3 miles beyond; hike along the valley floor to Bubbs Creek trail and keep going past Junction Meadow and Vidette meadow to upper Bubbs Creek, but not quite to Forester Pass, etc.) What makes this really irritating is that much of the same route is also covered in the author's write up of the Rae Lakes Loop. And this is hardly the only instance of the author essentially padding the book, a practice that makes this title larger and more expensive, by including hikes on the same trail. We have the High Sierra Trail to Bearpaw Meadow, the High Sierra Trail to Hamilton Lakes (just beyond Bearpaw Meadow), the High Sierra Trail to 9 Lake Basin, just beyond Hamilton Lakes, and the High Sierra Trail to Big Arroyo, beyond 9 lake basin.... Gracious. Why not simply one write up of the High Sierra Trail, Crescent Meadow to Mount Whitney. You can note intermediate destinations along the way. I've read and reviewed hundreds of hiking guides over the years and occasionally you will find a writer who essentially offers the same trail to different destinations once or so in a book. But Scheidt does so repeatedly, adding to the bulk of the book. It also prevents her from offering more selections to explore the eastern end of these parks by way of some trails that enter via Inyo National Forest. (To her credit, Scheidt does include the Mt. Whitney Trail, a classic every hiker should do.)
So in conclusion, you get a lot from this book: nice trails not found elsewhere, beautiful pictures, and slightly longer routes exploring classic park hikes that offer some seclusion, even in the most popular sections of Sequoia and King's Canyon. But you also get a lot of repetition and padding in a book that really doesn't need it. I purchased the third edition hoping the padding would go away. I guess I will continue to hope for better with the fourth edition. This book and these parks deserve it.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Probably the best available, but still irritating
By mrsteele
This is possibly the best guide book to hiking in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, but it's still a book that's truly in need of revision. Let's get the more minor irritants out there first.
- The lack of regional maps. SEKI is an enormous place. There is a single map at the front showing where the different hikes are, and the book then breaks everything down into 10 regions, but there are no regional maps included. This is incredibly frustrating because it is not clear at all from the first map where all of the trail heads are. Including regional maps in sections seems to be the standard in most hiking guides now, but not in this book.
- the lack of Day Hikes and a guide to them. Most of the highly rated and recommended hikes in this book are either backpacking hikes or very long (12+ hard miles) day hikes. This might be due to a true lack of good shorter hikes, but it's compounded by not being able to easily locate them. Despite having a section up front devoted to highlighting hikes in different categories (i.e. 'Trails to Avoid if You Don't Like To Ford Creeks') there is no list of 'Best Day Hikes'. Honestly, I find this inexcusable.
- The lack of change (or accumulation) in altitude for hikes. Hikes include a graph of the altitude of the trail, but nowhere does it include the total climb for a hike, which, again, seems standard for most hiking guides.
- The redundancy. As noted by another reviewer, there is a tendency to split sections of longer hikes in different numbered hikes, which repeats all of the information about how to find the trailhead, the contacts, the permits, etc. One could argue that this is because the book is designed to be able to rip out a hike and have all of the info with you, but multiple longer hikes simply refer you to other hike numbers for the first section of trail, so if you want to do the longer hike you'll have to rip out both of them anyway. This is a really silly and inconsistent design.
Beyond those

irritants I also found that the book is in serious need of updating. Despite being dated 2016 I found several hikes where the trails seem to have changed (including the Giant Forest) and one trail where there is no mention of a bridge that has been in place for years, but was washed out this spring. There is also absolutely no mention of the shuttle system that is in place in SEKI or the driving/parking restrictions that are in place on weekends. None of these changes are new to 2017 to my knowledge. The guide includes enough information beyond hiking instructions that it leads you to believe you could plan most of your trip using only this resource, but that would be a big mistake. I would still recommend this book because it's the most comprehensive guide to hiking in this region, but it is frustrating to use and in need of an update. Pick your hikes from here and be sure to check other sources as well.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, situated in California's rugged Sierra Nevada, boast some of the most spectacular landscapes on the continent: towering groves of giant sequoia trees, crystalline trout rivers, jagged peaks and alpine meadows, and Mount Whitney, the highest mountain in the lower 48. Discover over 80 of the best hikes in the parks, from easy day hikes to challenging backpacking trips, accompanied by colorful photos and trail maps. This book is a personal guide to the wonders of the California Sierra.

About the Author Laurel Scheidt is a veteran hiker and the author of *Best Easy Day Hikes Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*.