

Park Ranger

Protect public land and the people on it. Part teacher, part law enforcement, part search and rescue.

TYPICAL PAY

\$74,060

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$51k to \$101k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

National and state parks, wildlife refuges, visitor centers, backcoun...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, earth science, history and public speaking. Get outdoors and get a first aid and CPR card.
- 2 Get a degree** 2 to 4 years
Natural resources, biology, environmental science, forestry, history or park management. Most competitive applicants have a bachelor's degree; some jobs accept an associate degree plus experience.
- 3 Volunteer or intern** Summers during school
Park volunteer programs, student conservation internships and campus trail crews. Federal hiring rewards documented experience heavily.
- 4 Work seasons** 1 to 4 seasons
Apply for seasonal ranger jobs through the federal job site. Expect to do several before a permanent position opens.
- 5 Permanent position** When a job opens
For protection rangers this also means a law enforcement commission earned at a training academy, plus fitness and background screening.

Pros and cons

- + Your office is a national park
- + Federal benefits and a pension once you are permanent
- + Genuinely varied work: teaching, science, rescue, enforcement
- Years of seasonal work with no benefits before a permanent job
- Federal projections show employment in the closest occupation declining
- Remote postings far from family, friends and affordable housing

Optional boosts

Emergency medical training. Law enforcement commission. Wildland fire qualification. Search and rescue or swiftwater training.

Good to know

More than 400 places, not just the famous ones

The National Park Service runs over 400 parks and offices. Most are not Yosemite. They include battlefields, seashores, urban historic sites, monuments and trails, and rangers work at all of them.

Nearly every job goes through one website

Permanent and seasonal federal park jobs are posted on the government's official employment site, which has more than 16 million registered accounts. Applications there are scored against written cr...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Fish and Game Wardens (33-3031.00)

National Park Service: Work With Us

USAJOBS, the federal government's official employment site

Office of Personnel Management: 2026 General Schedule pay table

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/park-ranger>



Scan for the full clicker