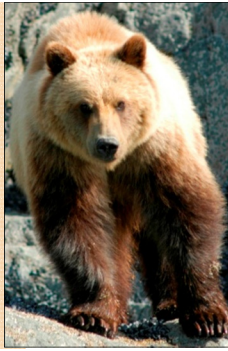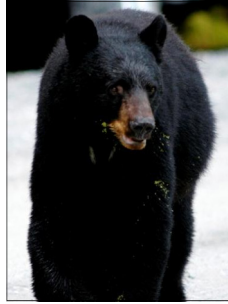## Bear Safety Basics

- **Stay alert.** Bears can be anywhere, pay attention!
- **Be visible, make noise.** Surprised bears can be dangerous.
- **Travel in groups.**
- **Give bears space!**

Bear Encounters

Bears may run, they may react defensively if surprised, they may be looking for a free meal, or they may just be passing by. Knowledge of bear behavior can help you decide how to respond.

Defensive bears may be loud and assertive. Charges, huffing, jaw popping, salivating, and slapping the ground are all indicators of stress. They may be defending cubs, a carcass, or intrusion of personal space. *Talk calmly, appear non-threatening, leave the area. If the bear charges, stand your ground.*

Non-Defensive bears tend to be silent. Often they just want to walk past you. Or they may be curious, hoping to get your food or fish, or very rarely predatory. *Stand your ground! If the bear approaches, group together and yell.*

Carry Bear Pepper Spray!

Bear spray works! Research shows that bear spray effectively deters both defensive and non-defensive bears.

Bear spray is safe for people AND bears. No one has been seriously injured using bear spray to deter a bear. Bear spray does not make bears mad or aggressive, and no bears have been killed by bear spray.

Bears in Alaska

Bears in Alaska have only a short season to find enough food to survive the winter. Both black and brown bears fish on rivers and streams in Alaska from spring through fall. Encounters with bears are common for anglers during this time.

Understanding bear biology and behavior will increase safety for you and the bear during these encounters.

Brown/Grizzly Bear *Ursus arctos*

- May be blonde, brown, or even black.
- Dish-faced.
- Large shoulder hump.
- Long straight claws for digging.

Brown bears may defend personal space, charge, or even attack if surprised.

Black Bear *Ursus americanus*

- May be black, brown, grey, or even white.
- Roman-nose.
- Small shoulder hump.
- Short curved claws for climbing.

Black bears may defend personal space but usually flee rather than attack if surprised.

Bear Safety for Anglers

Use Your Wits... Keep Your Fish!

Smart Angling in Bear Country

Stand by your fish. Keep your harvested fish in a bear-proof container, in a pack on your back, or on a stringer within 12 feet of you. If a bear approaches, take your fish and leave the area or group together and stand your ground.

Don't lose your lunch. Keep all of your possessions, especially food and garbage, under direct control at all times.

Splashing fish attract bears. If a bear comes near you, stop fishing. Always be prepared to cut or break your line to prevent a bear from getting the fish.

Keep the stream bank clear of fish remains. Bleed and gill harvested fish in moving water immediately after catching. Wade or throw fish remains into deep swift water. Chop large pieces into smaller pieces and throw where bears cannot access them.

Bears are attracted to strong smells. Gas, coolers, motor oil, cleaners, even rubber rafts may be bear attractants. Keep them close.

In Glacier Bay
Special Regulation:

All fish caught in the **Bartlett River** in Glacier Bay must be kept within six feet of the angler and packed out whole *(except gills and entrails).*

What is a problem bear?
Bears that get food or fish from people may become pushy and approach people to get fish. Bears are smart animals and quick learners. It can take just one event of getting a fish from an angler for a bear to learn to associate people with food. This bear will likely look for food from the next angler.

Problem Bears don't just happen.
If you are not in direct control of your harvested fish, or if you improperly dispose of fish entrails and carcasses, you may help create a problem bear. This can result in potentially dangerous situations for yourself and other anglers who share the rivers. In the end, problem bears are often killed.

Please Report Problem Bears:

Glacier Bay National Park, Gustavus:
907-697-2627
Glacier Bay National Preserve, Dry Bay:
907-784-3295
U.S. Forest Service, Yakutat:
907-784-3359
Alaska State Troopers, Yakutat:
907-784-3206
Alaska Department of Fish and Game:
907-465-4265
For more information see:
www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?
adfg=livingwithbears.anglersafety

www.nps.gov/glba/naturescience/bear-safety.htm