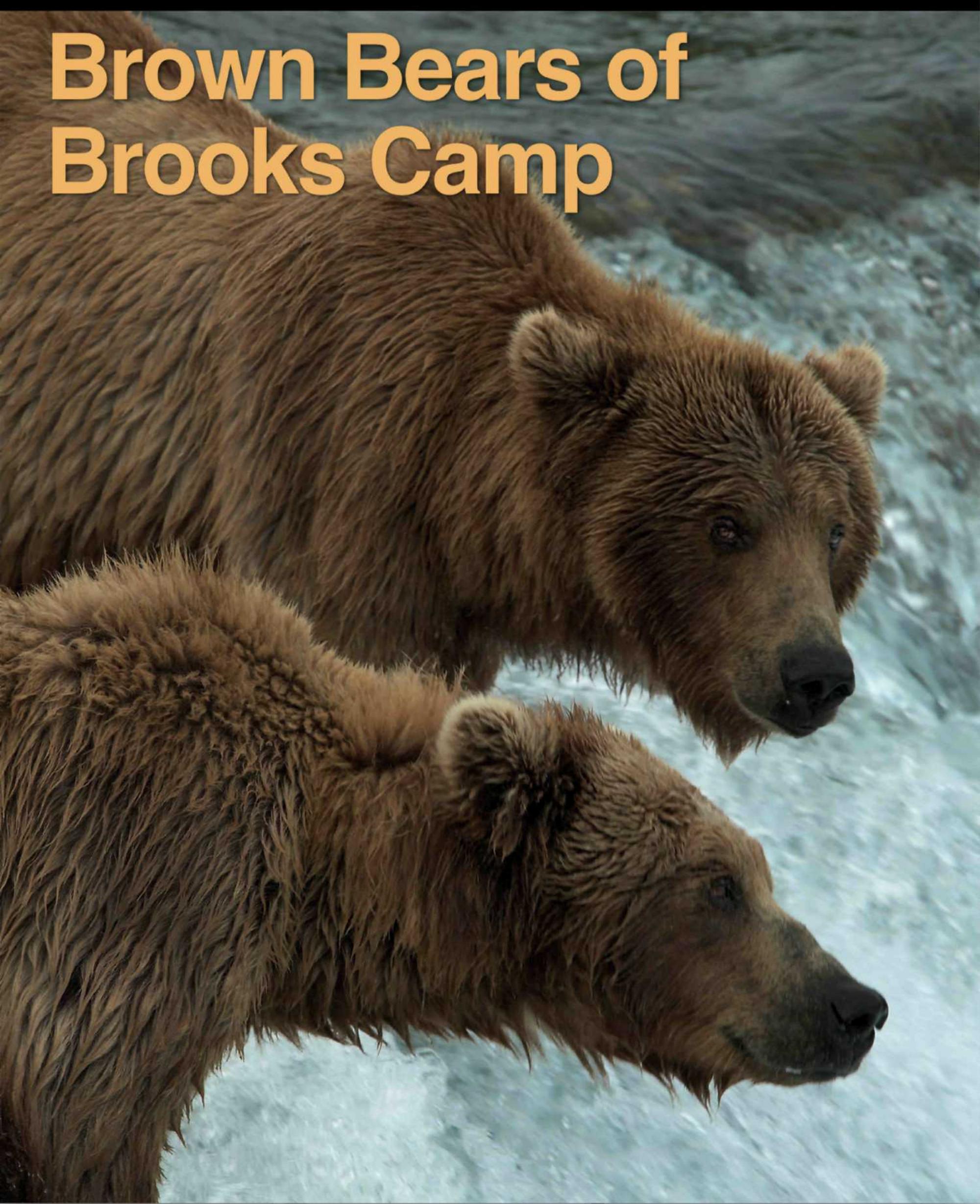


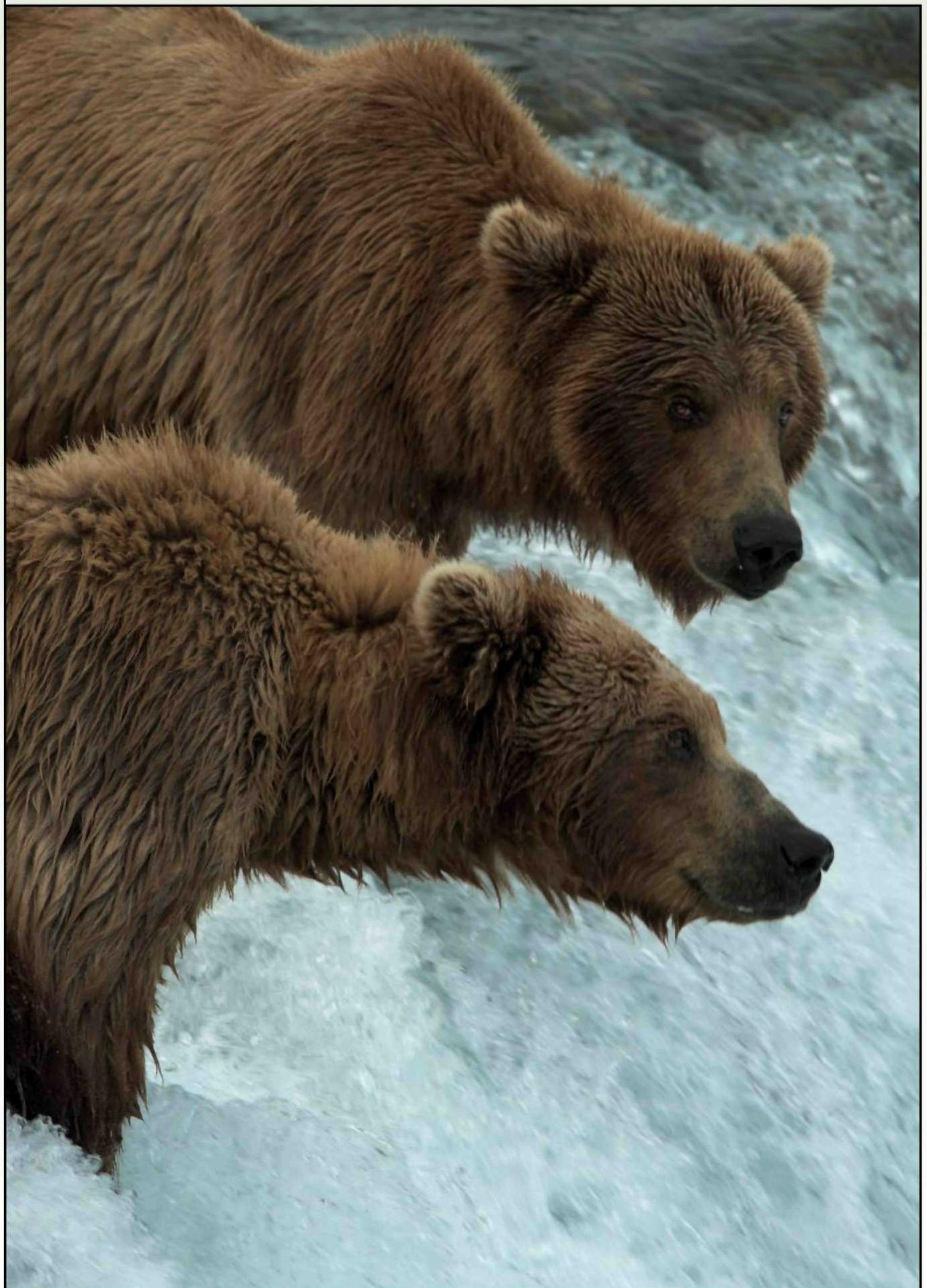
Katmai



# Brown Bears of Brooks Camp



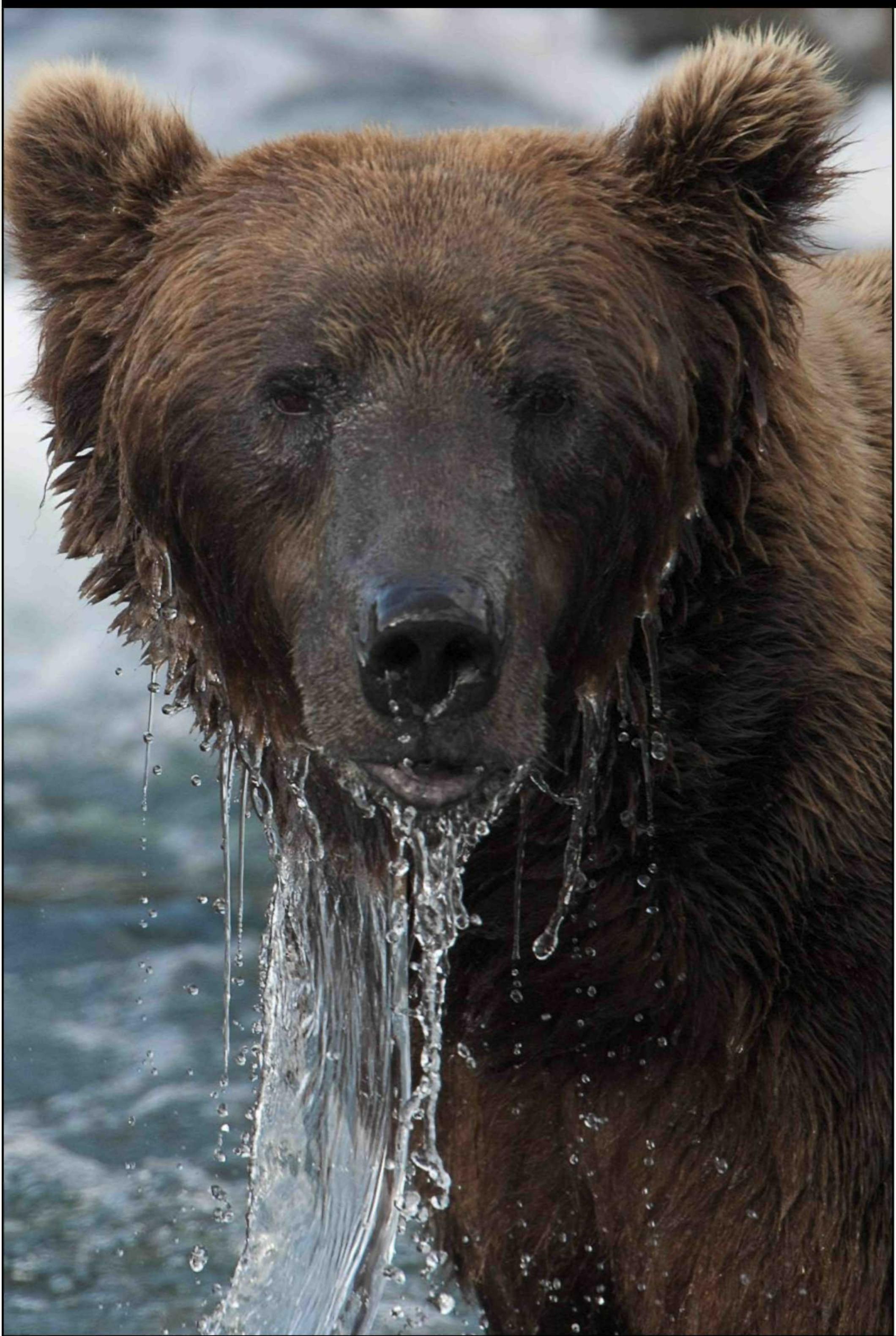
# About This Guide Book



This guide is a representative sample of the brown bears who frequent the Brooks River, and not a complete checklist of the entire population. Featured bears include those visitors most often seen, or ones who have experienced a life event common to brown bears.

This information draws on field observations conducted by biologists attempting to document long term patterns of bear use along the river. Even for observers with such training and experience, it can be difficult to identify individuals—especially the first few times they watch a bear.

Recognizing individuals is enjoyable and exciting, but watching how bears behave is equally rewarding and ultimately teaches observers more than memorizing a particular bear's physical appearance. This is especially true when bears gather in large concentrations.



Many bears in this book have unofficial nicknames. Being able to identify or name a bear does not mean it has stopped being a wild animal. At Brooks Camp people must keep at least 50 yards (approximately 50 meters) away from bears, and all bears should be treated as wild animals at all times. During a close or surprise encounter, never make decisions based on “knowing” a bear. Respecting these animals’ wildness makes the Brooks Camp experience possible, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

In this book, bears are arranged first by age group and sex, then numerically by the number biologists have randomly assigned them.

The next page is a sample entry.

## Photo



July 2002



## Photo Gallery

### Number and Nickname

#410  
Four-ton

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

#410 is a large adult female. Her appearance on her head and

### Age Classification and Sex

She has a recognizable dished-shaped face and prominent muzzle. Her claws are dark, and she lacks distinctive scars.

### Life History

This is one of the largest females frequenting the Brooks River and  
fishes almost anywhere. She has been observed fishing in Naknek Lake, the lower Brooks River, and both above and below the falls.

In 2007, she returned with two spring cubs, marking her third litter. She returned to the Brooks River Area in 2008 with the same two cubs, then yearlings, but lost one in early July.

She is arguably the most human habituated bear to be found using the Brooks River, even while caring for cubs.

#410 has been observed with people and heavy equipment operating within 15 meters. She will sleep on the trail near the bridge and in front of or underneath the wildlife viewing platforms, even with many people standing directly above. She may tree her cubs near the viewing platforms while she fishes.

# CHAPTER 1

# Brooks Camp



The rivers, lakes, and streams of Bristol Bay host the closing acts of an epic migration, one of the largest on Earth. Each summer tens of millions of sockeye salmon leave the open waters of the North Pacific, driven to return to the exact spawning grounds in which they were hatched years earlier. For several hundred thousand salmon the path leads up Brooks River, past one of the world's highest concentrations of brown bears.

Shortly after each summer solstice, **sockeye salmon** begin arriving at Brooks Camp. After leaving Bristol Bay, they swim up Naknek River, into Naknek Lake, and reach Brooks River. This is the final stop for some fish; here they will spawn and die. For others, the voyage is not quite over. Their destination lies beyond Brooks River, in the small streams and creeks feeding into Lake Brooks.

As they approach their spawning grounds, sockeye salmon reach sexual maturity. Their silver color disappears, replaced by red-colored bodies and green heads. Males' jaws become hooked, and both sexes develop teeth.

Using their tails, female sockeye excavate nest sites in the river bottom. When a male approaches, she releases eggs over her nest site. The male fertilizes the eggs with **milt**, and the female buries them in the gravel. Once

spawning is completed, a female will defend her **redd** as long as she can; males play no role beyond fertilizing eggs.

Spawned salmon are on borrowed time. Their life purpose complete, they will never return to the ocean. As summer progresses and gives way to fall, the salmon slowly weaken and die.



The eggs they leave behind lay in the redd for about four months. After hatching, the tiny **alevin** remain in the gravel until spring. When large enough, young salmon **fry** move from the rivers to the lakes, where they live two years. In the next phase, salmon **smolt** migrate to the ocean.

The salmon feast in the North Pacific for two additional years. There they grow into the large, beautiful, but doomed fish who return in their fourth or fifth year to produce the next generation of sockeyes.

Unintentionally, some fish become meals for the largest carnivore in North America: the brown

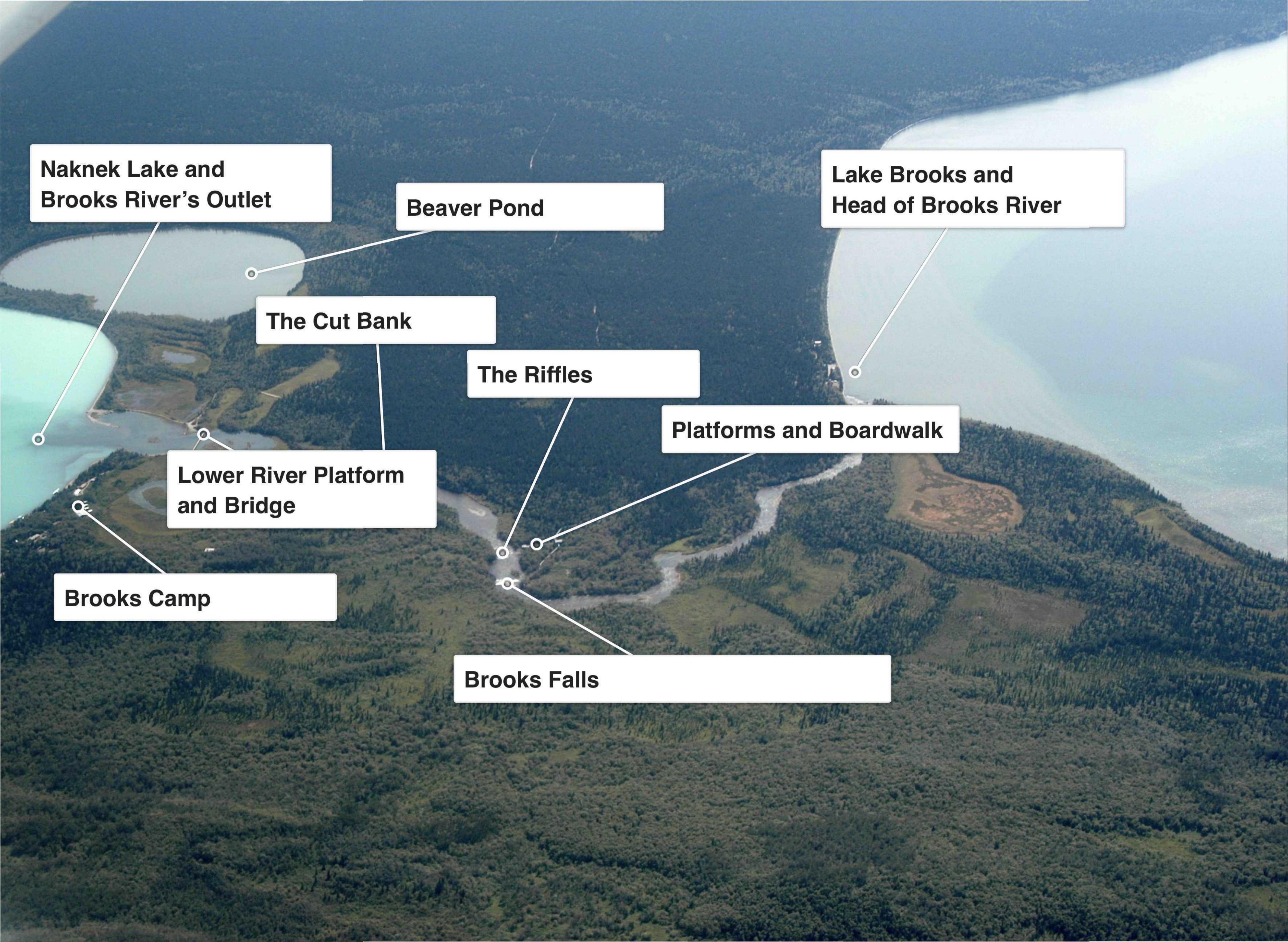


*At the peak of the sockeye salmon run, you can sometimes see over 200 salmon jumping per minute*

bears' preparation for winter as they enter **hyperphagia**.

How, where, and when bears fish along the river depends on many factors such as the time of year, salmon density, locations of spawning activity, the age and relative position of the bear within its social hierarchy, and its preferred fishing techniques.

bear. Due to Brooks Falls, the river is among the first places where migrating salmon become vulnerable; this makes the area an important food source for the lean bears of early summer. Later, in the fall, the spawned-out salmon play an important role in the



**Naknek Lake and  
Brooks River's Outlet**

**Beaver Pond**

**Lake Brooks and  
Head of Brooks River**

**The Cut Bank**

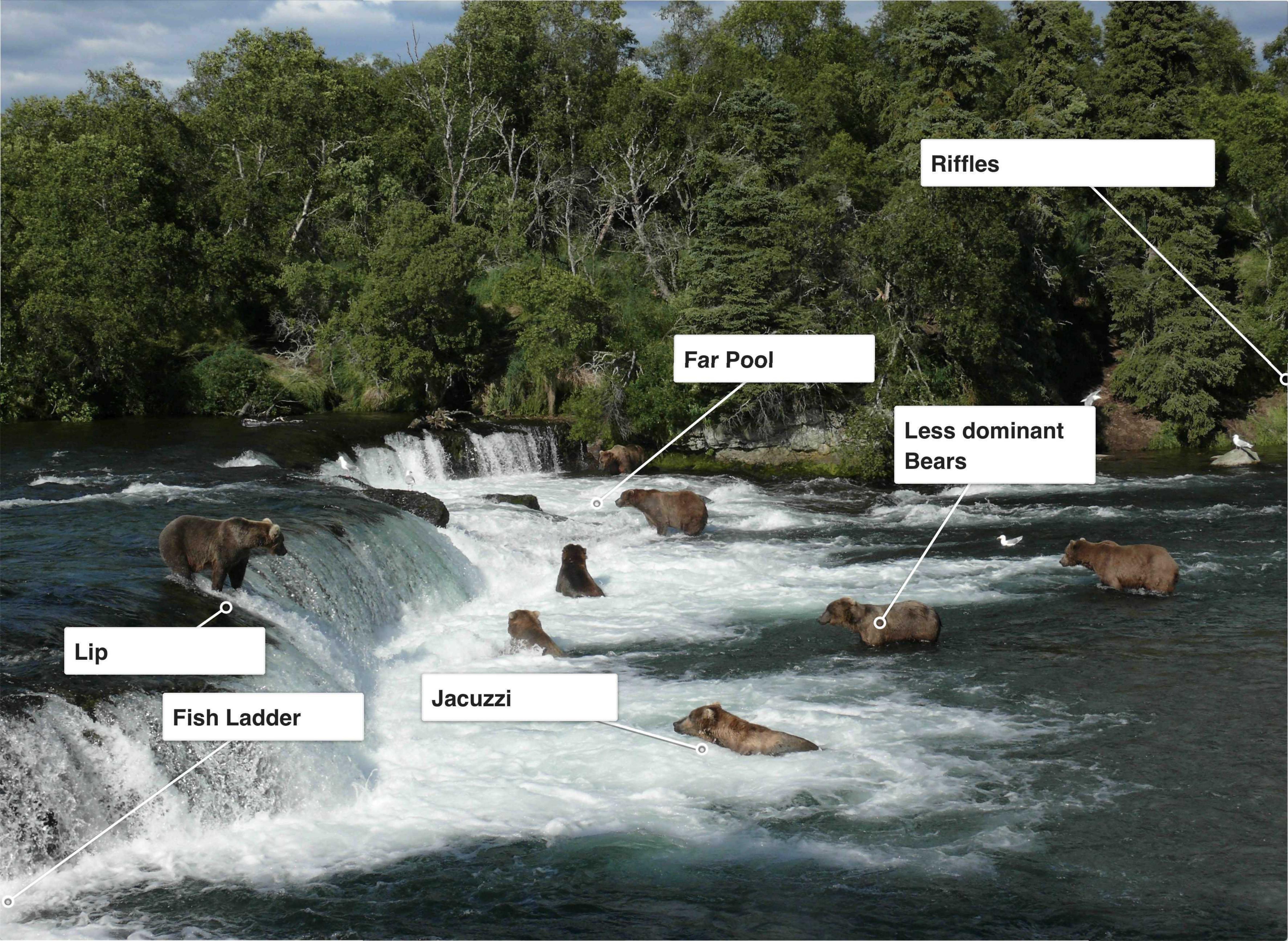
**The Riffles**

**Lower River Platform  
and Bridge**

**Platforms and Boardwalk**

**Brooks Camp**

**Brooks Falls**



# Brooks Camp

For many people, a trip to Brooks Camp is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. To protect that experience for future generations, the National Park Service requires all arriving visitors to attend a 20-minute **bear orientation**. This “bear school” teaches visitors how to behave in ways protecting both themselves and bears. The most important things people should do include:

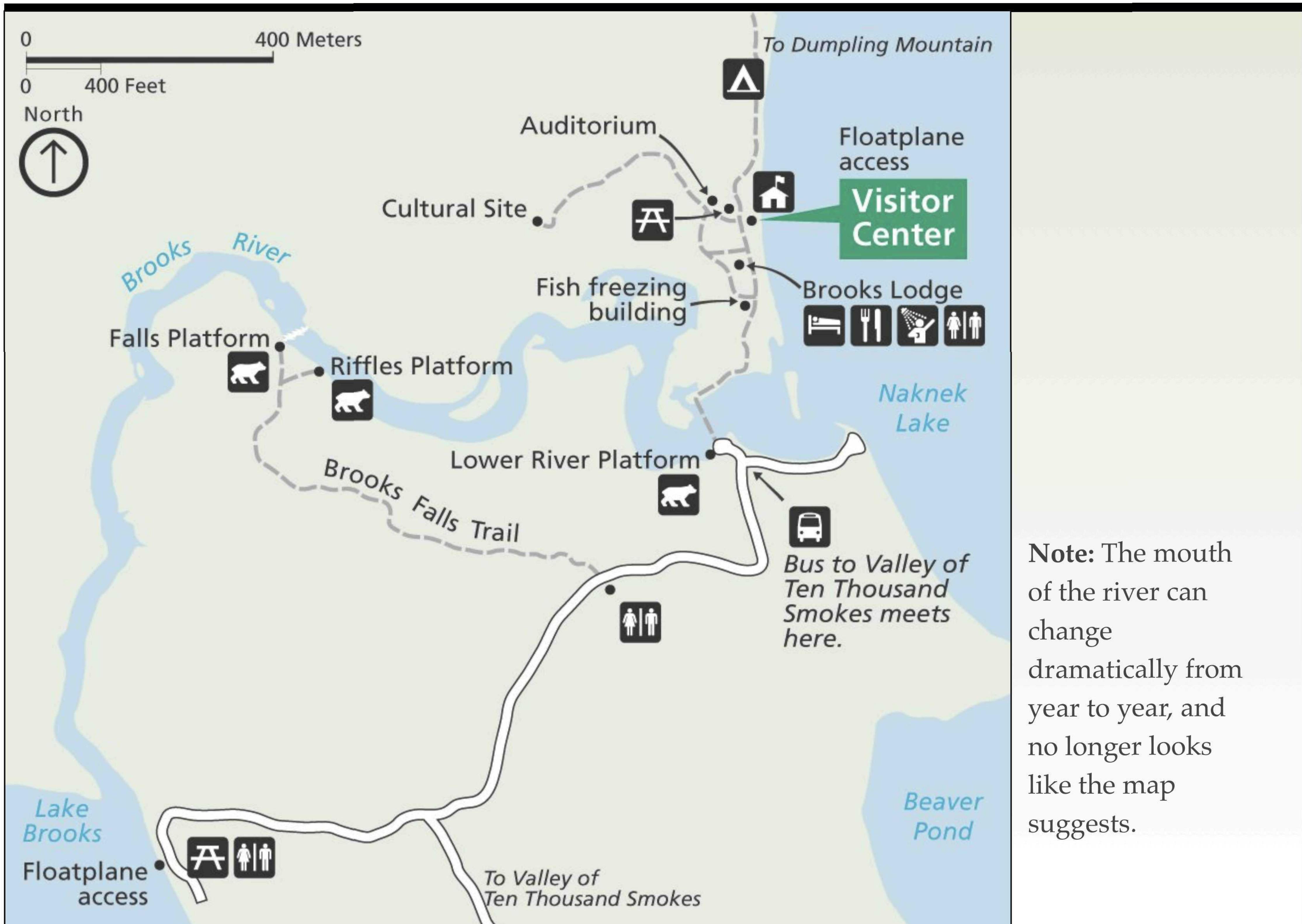
- Keeping an appropriate distance between themselves and bears. Currently, people must stay at least 50 yards (~50 meters) away from all bears in the Brooks Camp area.
- Preventing bears from obtaining human food and garbage. At Brooks Camp, people are not allowed to carry or consume food and drinks (besides water) while outside.
- Preventing bears from associating human gear with play items. While at Brooks Camp, any items

brought outdoors must be within arm’s reach at all times.

By following these rules, we prevent bears from learning behaviors that will lead them into conflicts with humans.

## Other things to consider while visiting Brooks Camp:

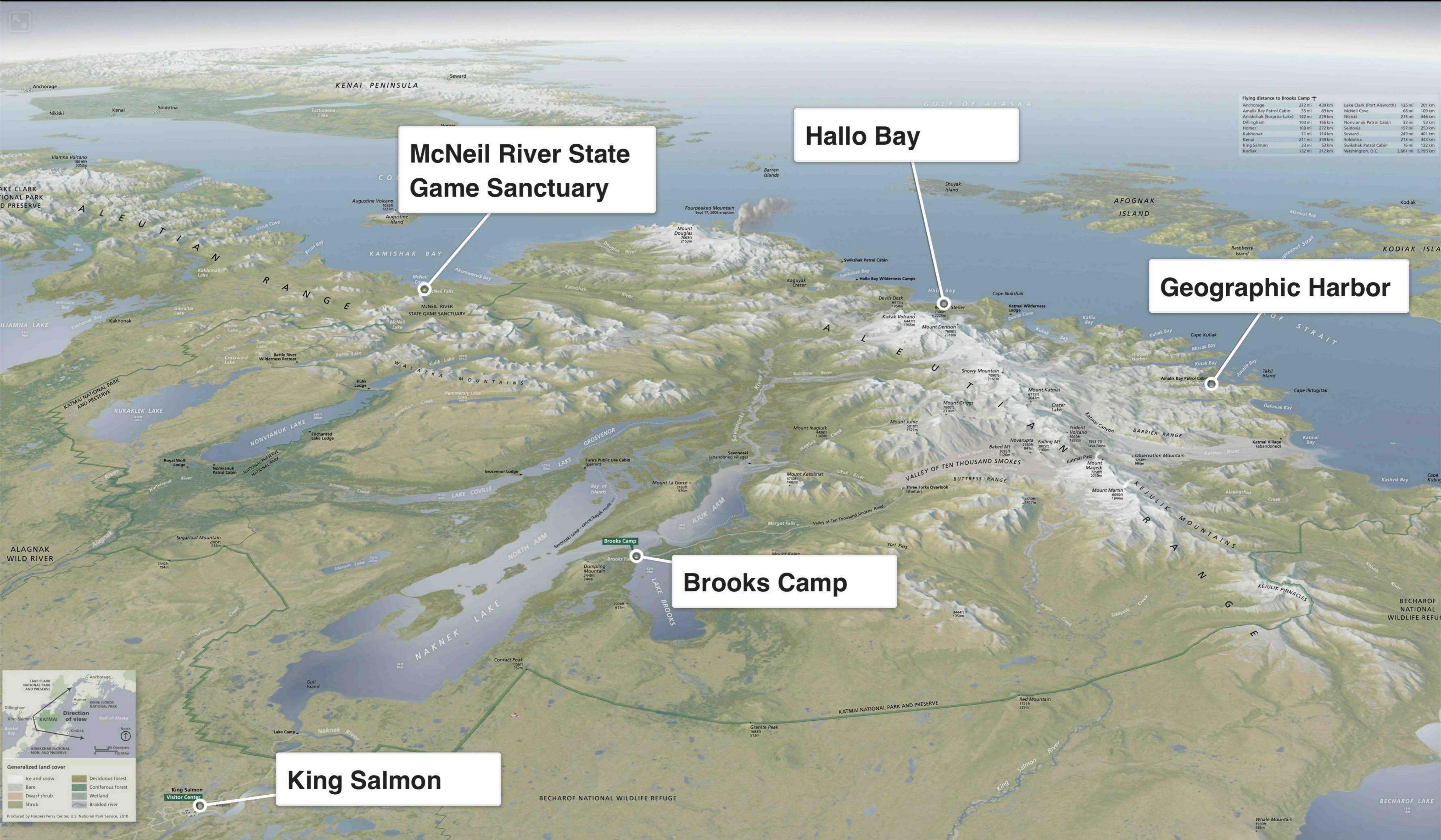
- Bears have the right of way! If you encounter a bear, you should give it the space it needs to continue fishing, walking, or sleeping. At times, bears may block access to areas such as the viewing platforms. Pack your patience and remember the bears’ freedom is what makes Brooks Camp an exciting destination.
- Peak bear viewing seasons occur in July and September. Relatively few bears use the Brooks River area in June and August. During these months, there may be days when no bears appear along the river.



Note: The mouth of the river can change dramatically from year to year, and no longer looks like the map suggests.



# Katmai National Park and Preserve



# An Introduction to Brown Bears



*This brown bear family can be distinguished from other bear species by several physical features, including shoulder humps and dish-shaped faces. Coat color is not a reliable way to identify bear species. Some brown bears can be nearly black-coated, while black bears can be cinnamon or brown colored.*

When visually identifying brown bears, there are several key things to look for. Brown bears usually have a rounded and dish-shaped face, unlike the faces of black or polar bears that usually have a more “roman” nose profile.

The fur of brown bears range from blonde to dark brown. As a general rule, their coats tend to darken with age and the season.

Polar bears and black bears also lack the prominent shoulder hump found on brown bears. This hump is a mass of muscle thought to be useful while the bear digs for roots and other food sources.

There are also distinct differences in the footprints of brown, polar, and black bears. Consult a good field guide for an explanation of this.

The only bears to inhabit Katmai National Park and Preserve are brown bears.

Taxonomists currently consider brown bears and grizzly bears to be the same species and the difference between the two is somewhat arbitrary. In North America, brown bears are distinguished by their access to coastal food sources such as salmon runs, while grizzlies reside further inland.

Bears are eating machines, and their survival is dependent on attaining enough calories over the course of the spring, summer, and fall to sustain them through their denning period.

Hearing and vision is estimated to be equivalent to humans, but a bear's sense of smell, which is many times better than a dog's, sets them apart. Bears use scent to communicate everything from dominance to their presence in an area to receptivity to mating.

A wild brown bear's average life span is 20 years, although bears over thirty years of age have been documented.

from 45 to 59. Typically, another 5 to 10 transient bears have also been documented in each of the two monitoring periods annually.

There are several factors that may be related to the increasing trend in bear numbers at Brooks, including:

Over the past 20 years, increasing management emphasis has been placed on minimizing bear-human conflicts. Over their lives, the experience of cubs that accompanied their mothers to Brooks may consist largely of relatively benign contacts with people there. Thus, we would expect the number and proportion of adults tolerant of people to increase.

Salmon runs have been generally strong throughout the region during the past 20 years. In the Naknek River watershed, which includes Brooks River, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has reported a 20 year average **escapement** of 1.8 million fish (1989–2008). During this same period, weather conditions have been relatively mild. Bear survival and productivity may have increased as a result.

Brooks River is one of the first streams in Katmai where migrating salmon become accessible to bears (and the caloric value of bright **pre-spawned** salmon is exceptionally high). In contrast, spawning and **spawned-out** salmon are available at several streams during fall. Differences in adult male representation between July and fall may in part reflect this seasonal distribution of resources.

## Brooks River Bears Quick Facts

### How Many Bears Frequent Brooks River?

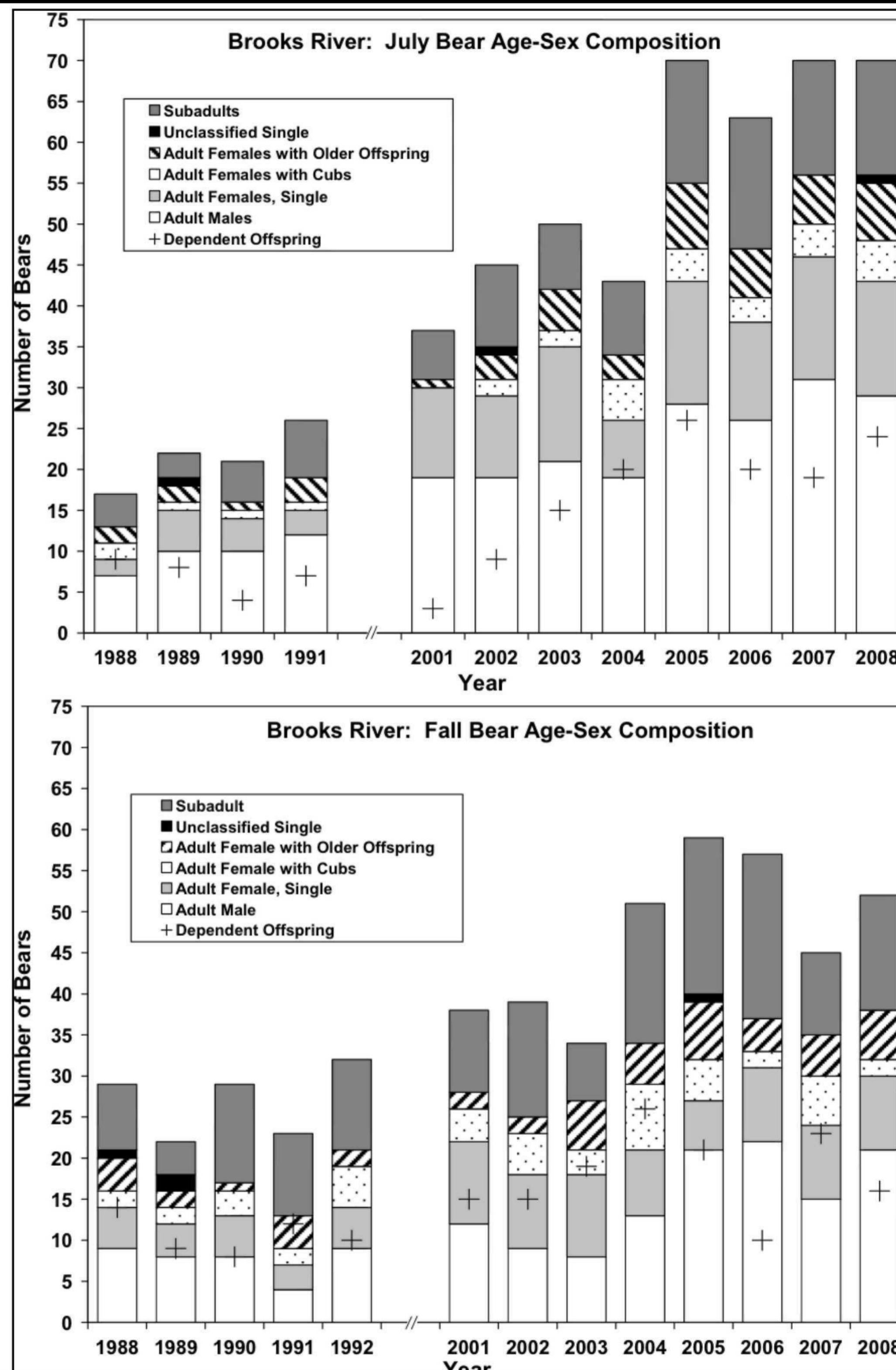
During late June through July the annual cumulative total number of independent bears identified regularly using Brooks River during 2004-2008 has ranged from 43 to 70. During September through early October, the annual cumulative total has ranged

# Do the same bears return to Brooks River each year?

Yes. Typically many of the bears that are observed each year are recognized from previous study years.

During 2008, 59 of the 70 **independent bears** identified regularly using Brooks River during July were bears recognized from previous years, as were 35 of the 52 independent bears identified regularly using the river during fall. The majority of bears not recognized during both July and the fall were subadults. Recognizing bears from year to year is difficult; therefore, these figures should be considered minimum estimates.

A number of bears are also typically recognized each year between the July and fall (late August into October) periods of bear use at Brooks. However, it should be noted that recognizing bears between these periods within a single year tends to be more difficult than recognizing animals across years within the July or the fall bear use periods. Our minimum estimate of independent bears that were seen at Brooks River during both July and the fall of 2008 is 36. Analysis of DNA samples collected from bears at Brooks River during June-July and fall of 2005–2007 may provide additional insight regarding patterns of use by individual bears.



## Monitoring Bear Use of Brooks River

Observational sampling methods are used to record data on bear and human use of Brooks River, so that the following parameters may be compared between seasons and among years: (1) bear numbers, (2) bear activity rates by age-sex class and individual, (3) age-sex and behavioral class composition of bears seen, (4) bear “arrival” dates, (5) bear fish capture rates, and (6) relative bear and human use of observation zones below Brooks Falls.



*A Biological Technician conducts a sampling session at Brooks River.*

The river from Brooks Falls down to the river mouth on Naknek Lake is divided into several observation zones for data collection. Sampling is conducted from the public viewing platforms at the

Falls and near the floating bridge, as well as from a tree-stand in the “Cutbank” area. Observation sessions are scheduled to produce balanced sampling by time of day and sample zone.  
Arrival

and departure times are recorded for each individual bear seen during an observation session, and counts of people and behavior of each bear in view are recorded at 10-minute intervals. In addition, fish caught and time spent fishing is recorded for a subsample of the bears seen.

Records of identifying characteristics of individual bears are maintained, and each bear identified is assigned a unique identification number. The age-sex class of each bear is also recorded. Age classification is a subjective determination, based primarily on size and behavior (and often on the documented identification history of the bear). Sex is determined by observation of urination posture, observation of genitalia, or presence of offspring. Photo records are maintained for as many different individuals as possible. The photo-records are an important aspect to recognizing individual bears across seasons and years, particularly when several biologists are involved in data collection.

CHAPTER 2

# Adult Males



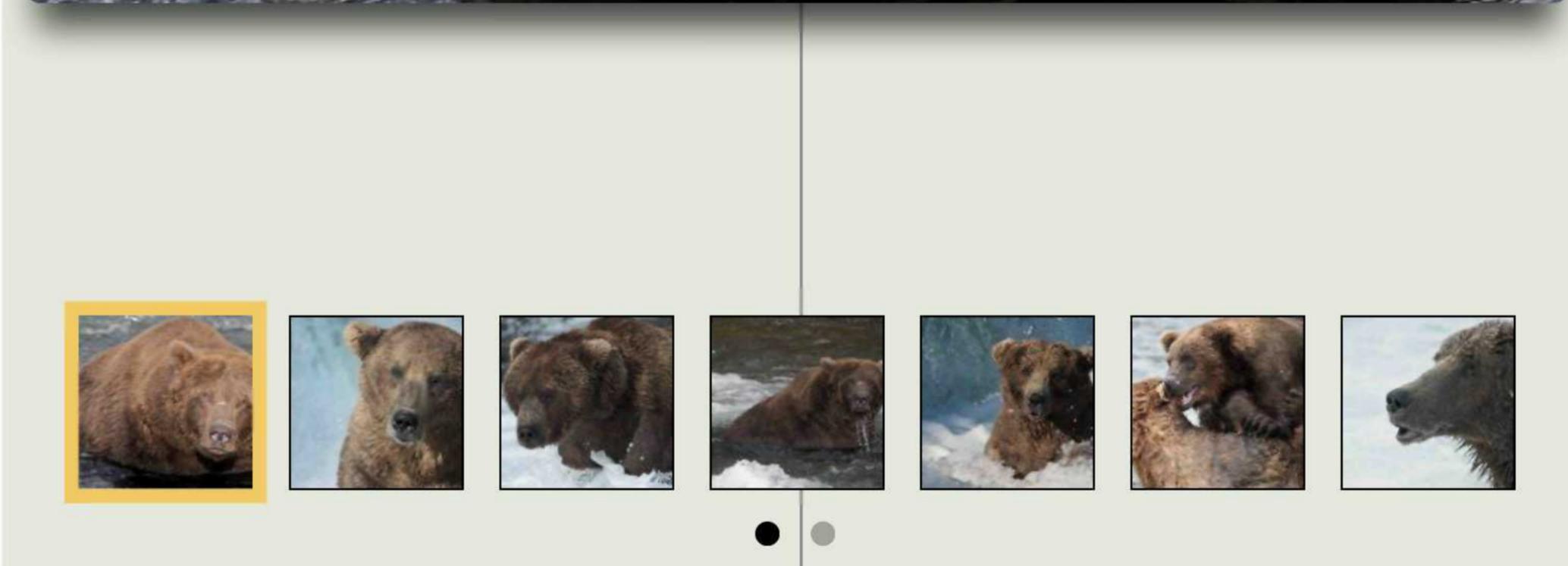
## About adult males

Due to their large size and strength, no other class of brown bear is able to compete physically with a large adult male.

They can stand 3-5 feet at the shoulder and measure 7-10 feet in length. The largest of adult males can weigh well over 1000 lbs, but most typically weigh between 600-900 lbs.

The best fishing spots at Brooks Falls are dominated by adult males. **Hierarchy and dominance** play important roles in preventing these animals from entering into violent battles.

Wounds, and their associated scars, are often received during fights with other males. These fights can be the result of competition for food resources (access or appropriation) or for the opportunity to mate with females.

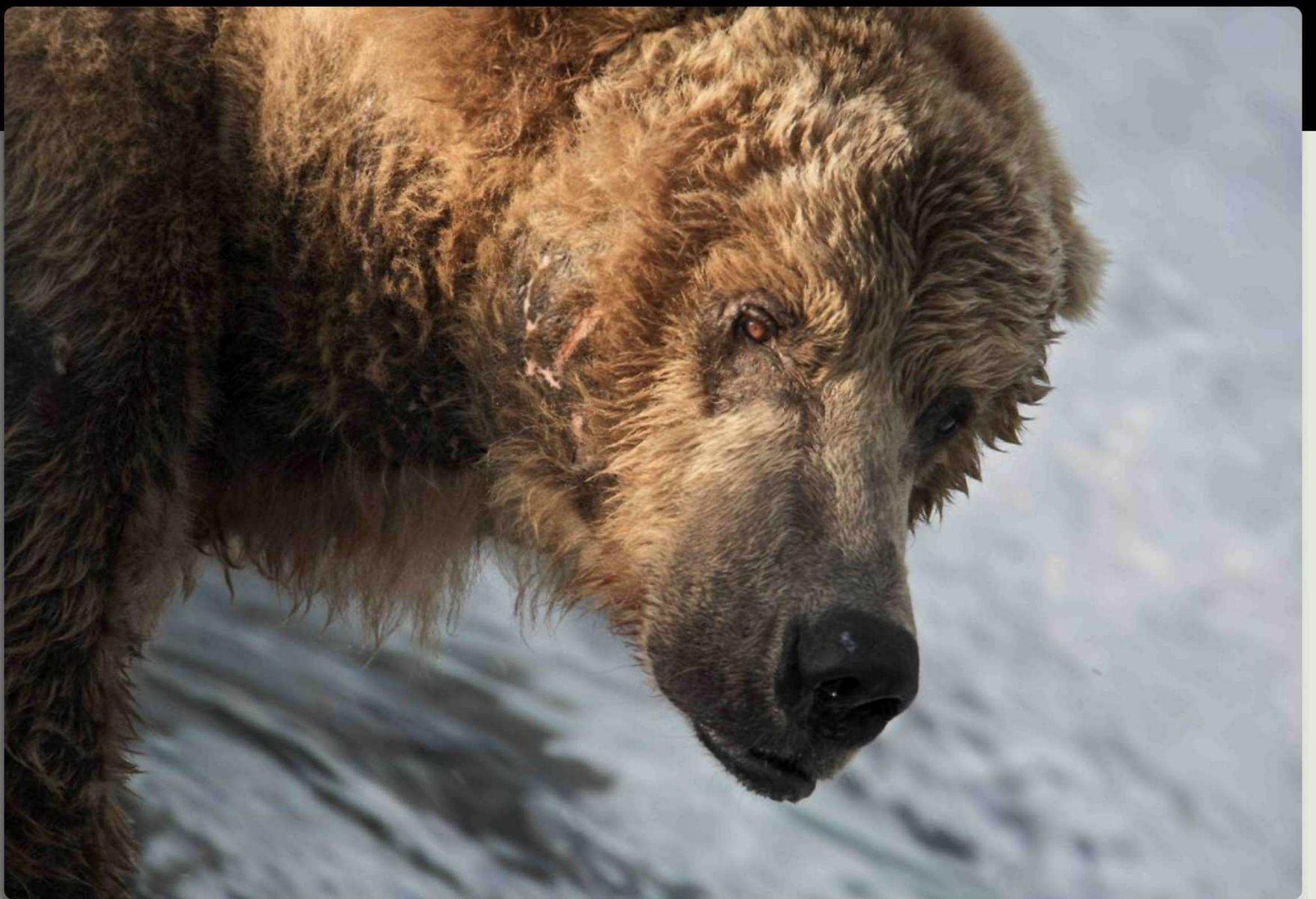


## What to look for

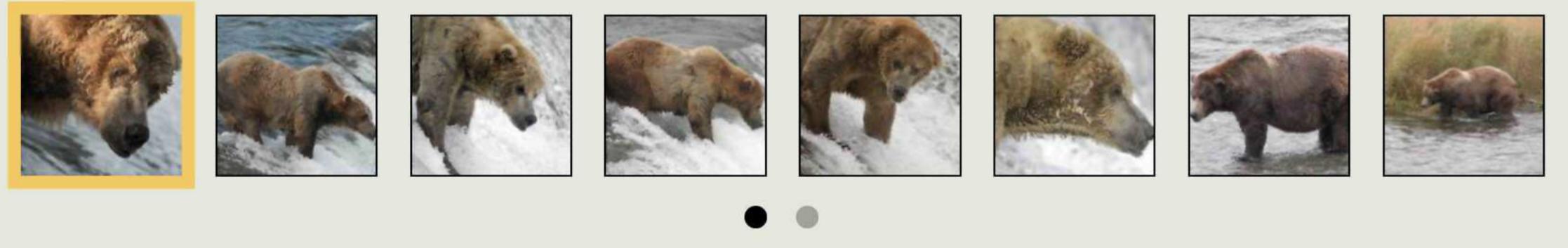
The largest bears frequenting the Brooks River area are adult males, or **boars**. Like full-grown adult females, their bodies appear filled in, their heads appear smaller in proportion to their bodies, and their ears are generally wide-set.

Looking for genitalia is the easiest way to identify male bears, but you can also sex adult bears by watching them urinate. Adult males will urinate forward between their hind legs.

When male bears are shedding in the early summer, numerous scars are often visible.



July 2009



## Bear 6

### Headbob/Bullet

#### ID Marks and Hints

#6 has an orangish-blond coat, his left ear is flopped over, and has a dog-like muzzle. He also has a thin lower lip and dark claws. Overall, he has an old appearance.

He can be confused with #211 who also has a droopy lip and ear, but #211 is darker, stockier, lower to the ground, and has a more barrel shaped torso.

#### Life History

Bear #6 is one of the oldest and most recognizable bears in Katmai due to his preferred fishing spot at the top lip of the falls. He was classified as an adult in 1988 and is believed to be one of the oldest bears frequenting the Brooks River.

Despite his old age he often displaces younger males at the top of the falls. In July, he fishes the lip but will also fish in the far pool and the jacuzzi, and he will occasionally steal fish. He is often seen fishing in, or sleeping on the banks of, the lower river late in the season.

When fishing at the top lip of the falls, #6 typically stands in one spot waiting for fish to jump within range rather than shifting locations. He can sometimes be observed holding his head out with his neck extended, then raising (bobbing) his head upward once or twice in quick succession as if sniffing the air.

After being observed for more than 20 consecutive years, he has not been seen since 2010.

**Bear 16****Cinnamon**

July 2009

**ID Marks and Hints**

#16 has a cinnamon-brown coat with blonder ears, a drooping lower lip, long white claws, and an old face. This bear has no distinctive scars, but he does have scars on the side of his head and shoulders. In 2011 he was extremely thin, with his rib and hip bones clearly visible. He walked with stiff, slow movements.

**Life History**

He is among the oldest bears, if not the oldest, in the Brooks River area. Bear biologists classified him as an adult in 1988, placing his age around 30 and well past an adult male brown bear's life expectancy. Until recent years, he held a high position in the hierarchy. He returned to Brooks River every year from 1988 to 2011.

In 2011 he appeared physically unable to catch salmon and was not observed actively fishing. At the falls he regularly begged other bears for fish scraps, and was often able to obtain leftover fish parts. When not begging he often rested near the Falls Platform or on the small island nearby. Although it appeared other bears would "give" #16 fish, such compassion is believed to lie outside a bear's capacities. It is likely that some bears, notably #747, learned to tolerate #16 because of his advanced age, poor physical condition, and submissive posture. This increased his chances of scavenging leftover fish from other bears. In some respects #16's advanced age and dramatic fall to the bottom of the hierarchy are sad reminders of the harsh realities wild animals face. Yet #16's continuing presence at Brooks Falls, when other bears of his age class and status have died or otherwise failed to return, demonstrate his survival skills.

**Adult Male**

**Bear 24**

**BB**

## **ID Marks and Hints**

#24 is a large, long-legged, tall, and dark bear with white claws.

His coat is dark brown with hints of blonde around neck. Large areas of his hind quarters are usually bare when shedding. He has a narrow, straight "Roman" nose giving his face a black bear-like profile. He is missing a chunk of flesh from his nostrils and numerous scars can be visible, but none are distinctive.

## **Life History**

During the past 10 years, #24 has been one of the largest, most dominant bears seen along the Brooks River. He has only been observed at Brooks from late June through July.

He is patient when fishing, preferring to catch fish at the pool and cascades on the north side of the falls.

Bear #24 has a reputation of being hyper-dominant and has been observed killing other bears. He was displaced as the dominant Brooks bear in 2006 and 2007 by #864 . He is less aggressive towards other bears than before his encounters with #864, but is still one of the most dominant bear visitors may see.

Since 2008 he has only been observed once, in the early summer of 2009.

DNA analysis has confirmed that he is the father of #790 and #854.



*June 2003*





*September 2011*



## Bear 32 Chunk

**Adult Male**

### ID Marks and Hints

#32 is young, medium sized male. His coat is medium brown and has darker spots around his neck and shoulder. A scar above his right eye, as well as his large hindquarters, are distinct features.

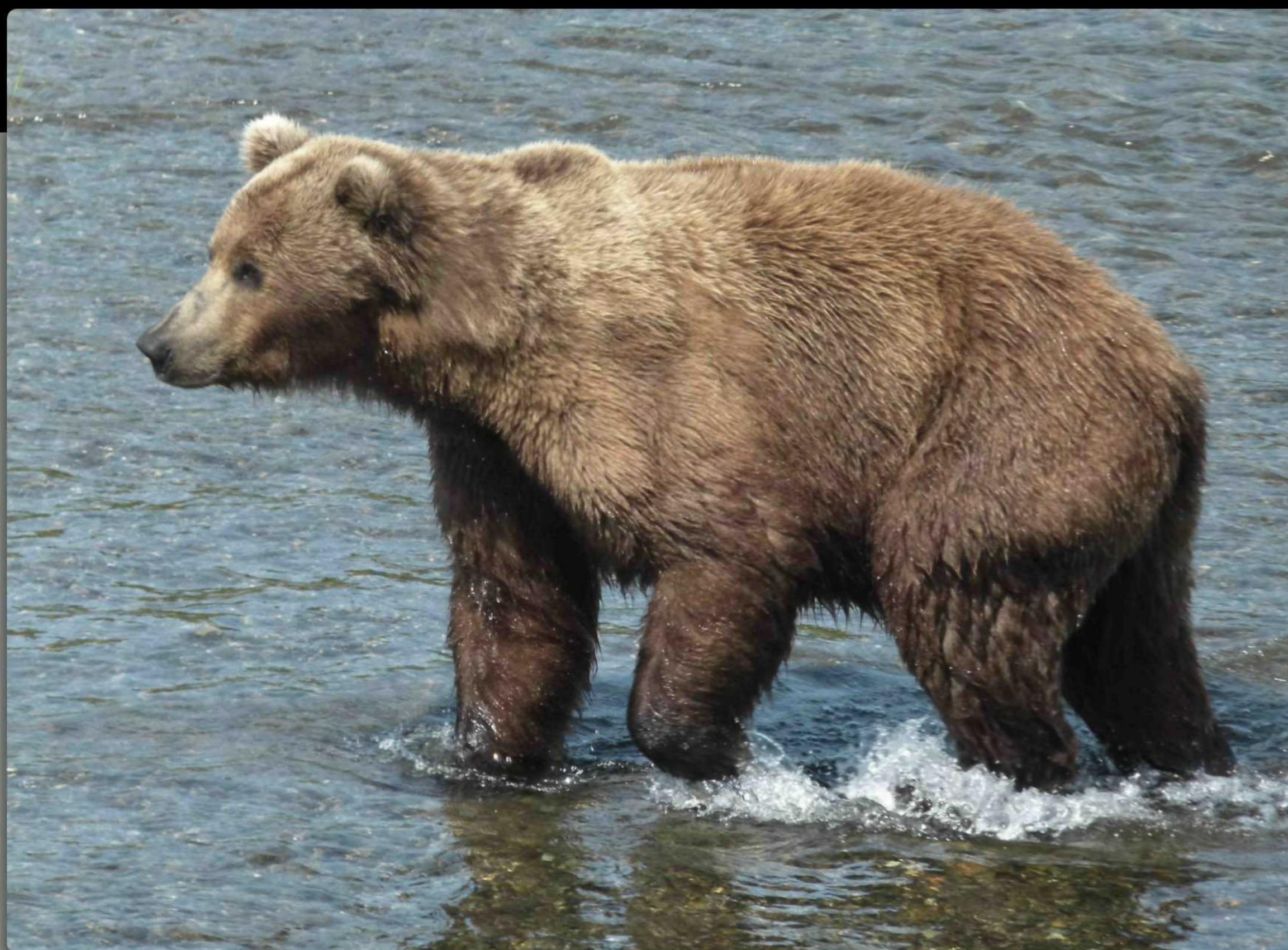
### Life History

#32 was first identified as a sub-adult in 2007, and since reached adulthood. He remains subordinate to most other bears, and is often begging or scavenging fish scraps. When fishing, he often stands up to get a better view.

He has fished the falls and the lower river. He was one of the few bears in the Brooks Camp area during June 2012. During this time he appeared to be courting #130.

**Adult Male**

## **Bear 45 Tatonka**



*July 2011*



### **ID Marks and Hints**

#45 is an adult male with a medium brown coat. He is most recognizable by his sloping body shape, which gives him the appearance of having lower back legs than most bears. He also has a distinct face, characterized by close eyes and a short, upturning muzzle.

### **Life History**

First observed as an adult in 2007, #45 is a regular visitor to Brooks Falls during July.

However he is usually seen moving back and forth between the Falls and the Riffles, and his behavior suggests that he is intolerant of bear viewers and anglers.

**Adult Male**

**Bear 51**

**Diver Junior**

## ID Marks and Hints

#51 is an adult male with large, oval ears and a blonde coat. He has a long, roman muzzle that tapers nearly into his forehead. In 2011, he received a deep wound to his left hip that may be visible as a scar during shedding.

## Life History

Although #51 is nicknamed Diver Junior, there is no known relation between this bear and the famous “Diver.” However, he is one of the few bears who dive completely underwater when fishing. Bears #402 and #403, who are siblings that both dive, look similar to #51 in some ways. It is unknown if these bears are related to one another.

Visitors may see #51 walking quickly below the Falls Platform to and from the fish ladder, where he appears to fish most often.



*June 2011*



**Adult Male**

**Bear 83**

**Wayne Brother**

## ID Marks and Hints

#83 has a medium-large body with a light brown coat. He lacks prominent scars but has some on his head and neck.

In July a round whitish scar may be visible on the left side of his face.

## Life History

#83 is a young male first classified as an adult in 2008. This is another adult bear that matured along the Brooks River. He is the offspring of #438 and the sibling of #868.

Even though #83 and #868 undoubtedly shared many of the same learning experiences as cubs, they differ in their fishing styles. In July, #83 he can be seen fishing below Brooks Falls in the jacuzzi and the far pool. In contrast, his sibling #868 is often seen fishing the lip. In the fall, #83, like most bears, fishes the cut bank and lower river.

In 2012 he arrived at Brooks Camp with a large, round wound to his right shoulder. This wound was deep enough to expose the muscle underneath. It should result in a distinct scar.



*July 2008*





July 2010



## Bear 89 Backpack

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

#89 is a medium-small young adult. He has a distinctive face with dark, round eye-rings and a straight muzzle.

His coat is usually very blonde, but it does darken in the fall.

### Life History

As a cub, #89 was very recognizable and as a result he is one of the few bears whose mother is known. He is the offspring of #435 and was first observed as an independent 2.5 year old bear in 2008.

For a young bear, he seems tolerant of other bears, even at Brooks Falls. He will come to Brooks Falls in July, but is not yet able to compete with other bears for fishing spots. Instead, #89 will scavenge fish from older bears.

As a yearling cub in 2007, his front leg appeared broken and he limped noticeably throughout the summer. By the early fall, his leg appeared to be healed. The injury was not noticeable in 2008, which was his first summer as an independent bear.

During early July 2012, he was frequently observed traveling and playing with #130.

**Adult Male**



*July 2010*



## Bear 92 Enigma

### ID Marks and Hints

#92 is a medium large, long bodied male who has a uniform light brown coat, tan claws, dark eye rings, and a slight lip droop. His ears are blonde and triangular.

### Life History

#92 is a **non-habituated** bear, and visitors should not expect to see him. He will fish at Brooks Falls but is rarely present when people are on the Falls Platform; he also appears to avoid other bears.

Many bears using Brooks River show some level of habituation towards humans, but some like #92 do not. This bear has been observed reacting to loud noises or sudden movements from people on the Falls Platform. When people are present at Brooks Falls, he rarely approaches the platform side of the river. It is important to give bears like #92 the opportunity to feed in the absence of people. This is the primary reason for the seasonal, nighttime closure of the Falls Platform and boardwalk.

**Adult Male**

## Bear 211 Backbite



July 2009



### ID Marks and Hints

#211 is large and dark with a uniformly colored coat.

He has a distinctive **muzzle** and profile. His head is wide with a thin muzzle and a slightly drooping lower lip. His claws are dark and his right ear droops.

This bear lacks a prominent **shoulder hump**. He has numerous scars on back, face and head, but none are distinctive.

#211 can be confused with #6, especially in September and October, but #211's barrel-shape, medium dark fur, and lack of a prominent shoulder hump set him apart.

### Life History

Bear #211 was first described as an adult male in 1996. He is another July regular at Brooks Falls and also returns to the Brooks River in September.

When fishing, he prefers to sit in the "jacuzzi" below the falls and will often sit in the water to eat his fish instead of losing his fishing spot.

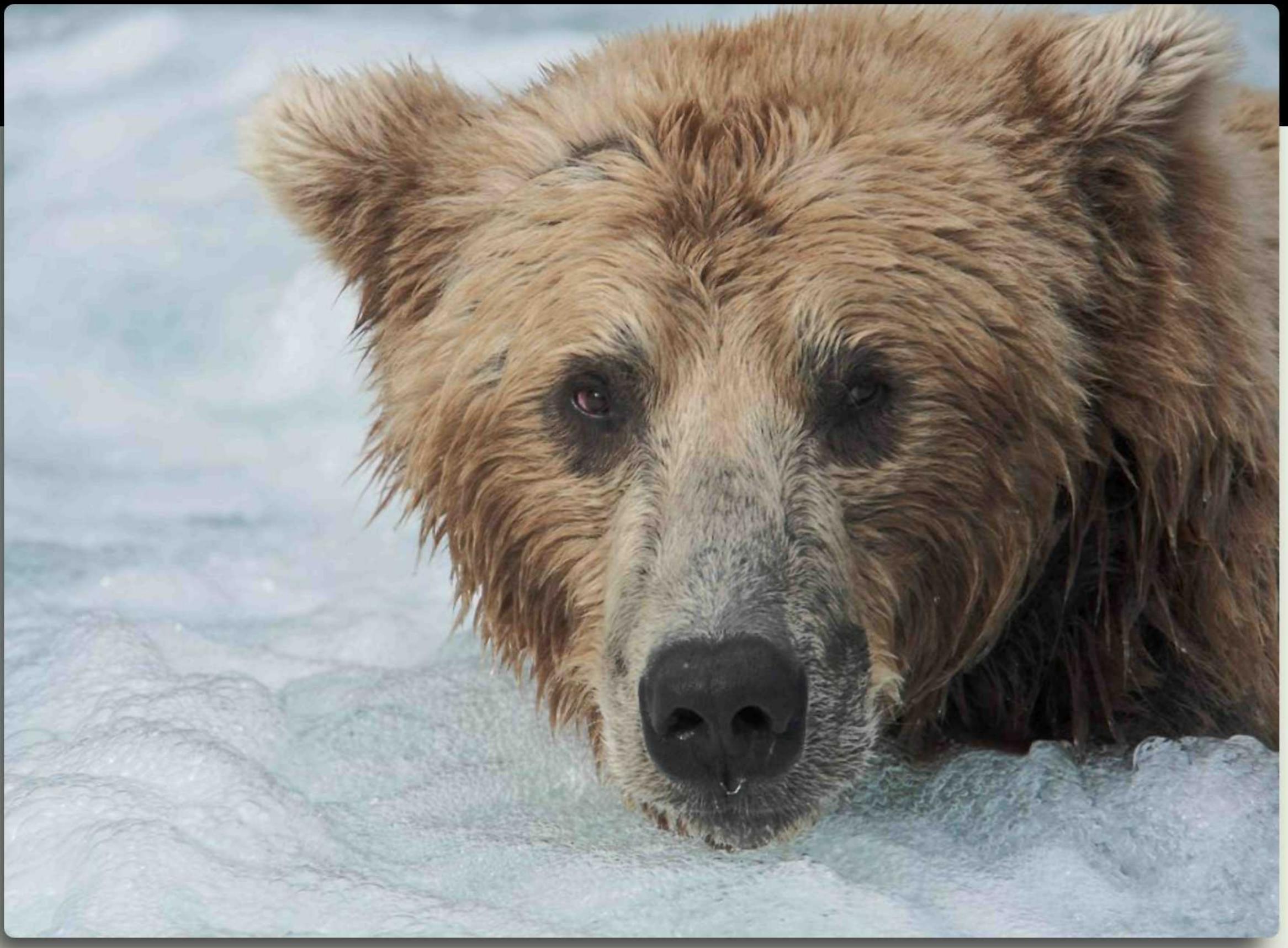
He can also be observed napping in the water above Brooks Falls after fishing for salmon.

He has not been observed since 2010.

**Adult Male**

## **Bear 218**

### **Ugly**



*July 2009*



### **ID Marks and Hints**

#218 is a medium large bear with a dark blonde coat that is lighter towards his head. When shedding, his coat will be patchy with dark, bare spots. He has blonde, wide-set ears. His dark eyes contrast with his coat and #218 has a short blocky nose. He lacks distinctive scars, but can have numerous small ones. His claws are dark.

In late September 2010, he had a large wound on his left rear leg. In 2011 he had a large, round scar in this area.

### **Life History**

#218 uses some of the most efficient fishing techniques at Brooks Falls. He has been observed fishing successfully almost anywhere, but seems to prefer fishing the lip and in the jacuzzi.

After catching many fish, he will often eat only the fattiest, most calorie rich parts of the fish (brains, roe, skin) and leave the carcass for scavenging bears and other animals. When first described as a young adult male in 2001, he fished anywhere he could fit in, but was easily displaced by larger bears. More recently he has become one of the more dominant bears at Brooks Falls. He is responsible for the 2007 scar on Bear 489's left hip.

This bear seems to be entering his prime. In 2009 he arrived at Brooks Falls with numerous, small wounds presumably received while fighting other bears. Few other bears can now displace him from his preferred fishing spots.

In 2011 he mated with Bear #94.



July 2006



## Deceased

# Bear 219 One-toe

Adult Male

## ID Marks and Hints

#219 was distinctive and easily identified in mid-summer. He had numerous, large scars on head, face, neck, body.

His claws were white and he was missing the outermost claw on the left front foot, hence the name.

His coat in early summer was reddish-brown. In the fall, his coat was dark brown and most of his scars were not visible.

## Life History

In October 2008, during an event rarely seen, bear biologists observed #219 dying in the Brooks River from unknown but apparently natural causes. His body eventually washed into Naknek Lake and disappeared.

#219 is another bear that apparently never habituated to humans and rarely approached the Falls Platform when people were present. Late summer and fall, he was sometimes seen in the lower river.

He fished the riffles downstream of the Brooks Falls and regularly stole fish from other bears. Some of his scarring reflected this behavior.

DNA analysis confirmed that he is the father of #608.



July 2010



## Bear 234 Evander

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

This bear is tall and thin with tan claws and a short, blocky muzzle. However, the key to recognizing #234 is by looking at his ears. He is missing his left ear.

Also, look for his light brown to blonde coat which is sometimes ragged in appearance.

### Life History

Bear #234 is one of the easiest bears to recognize along the Brooks River due to his missing left ear and prominent fishing location on the lip of the falls. He lost his left ear late in 2001 or in the spring of 2002.

He is predictable in his fishing activities, almost always fishing the lip of the falls and less frequently in the far pool.

Like #6 and #16, he appears to be one of the oldest bears that frequent the Brooks River area. In 2009 and 2010, he showed visible signs of aging. In 2009, he arrived looking very thin with a swollen front paw. Visitors with binoculars could often see that his teeth were worn to the gums.

In the past, most bears that fished the lip of the falls yielded space to #234 when he approached, but this appears to no longer be the case as #234 more readily yields to younger, more dominant males.

He has not been seen since 2010.



July 2008



Bear 247

## Snaggletooth

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

#247's most identifying characteristic is his distinctive, protruding lower-left **canine tooth**.

Overall, he is a medium-sized bear with a rectangular muzzle, tan-tipped claws, a brown coat and wide set ears.

He is sometimes confused with #420. However, #420 is much larger and has several protruding teeth on the right side of his lower jaw.

### Life History

Bear #247 is distinctive because of his large, protruding canine tooth. As early as 2000 observers at Brooks River reported that his namesake tooth had "been this way for many years" and it does not seem to affect his ability to fish.

He fishes the far pool against the cliff and never seems to approach the platform side of the river. #247 is not seen in areas of high human use.

Although it can never be known for sure, his distinctive tooth is probably the result of a fight with another bear.

Video footage taken of this bear in October 2009 showed him looking thin and slow moving. Unseen injuries and illness can often prevent bears from feeding properly during the critical autumn months. Thin bears in the fall, like #247, may even starve to death in their den.

He has not been observed along the Brooks River since 2010.

**Bear 274  
Overflow***July 2011***ID Marks and Hints**

#274 is young adult male. He is large for his age, and has long legs. His coat is blonde but quickly sheds out, leaving a dark brown color in its place expect for a golden crown along the top of his head and ears. He is the offspring of #438 who, along with other offspring of hers, sheds in the same pattern.

**Life History**

Classified as a 4.5 year old subadult in 2011, #274 appears more confident around larger adults than other bears his age, often approaching them much closer than other young bears would dare.

He has attempted to fish the lip, fish ladder, and jacuzzi, but appears to be too inexperienced to have much success. He has had better luck fishing at the Riffles, or from scavenging scraps from other bears. In one notable moment, he managed to steal a fish from #856 when that bear confronted another male over its approaching the jacuzzi. Seeing that #856 had left his fish unattended #274 swooped in, picked it up, and ran quickly downriver before the dominant boar turned around.

**Adult Male**

## **Bear 418 Jack**



*July 2008*



### **ID Marks and Hints**

This bear has a compact, medium-large body and a brown coat that becomes lighter towards the front of his body.

#418's claws are dark. He also has a small, but distinctive, scar above his right eye and a short, stocky and dog-like muzzle.

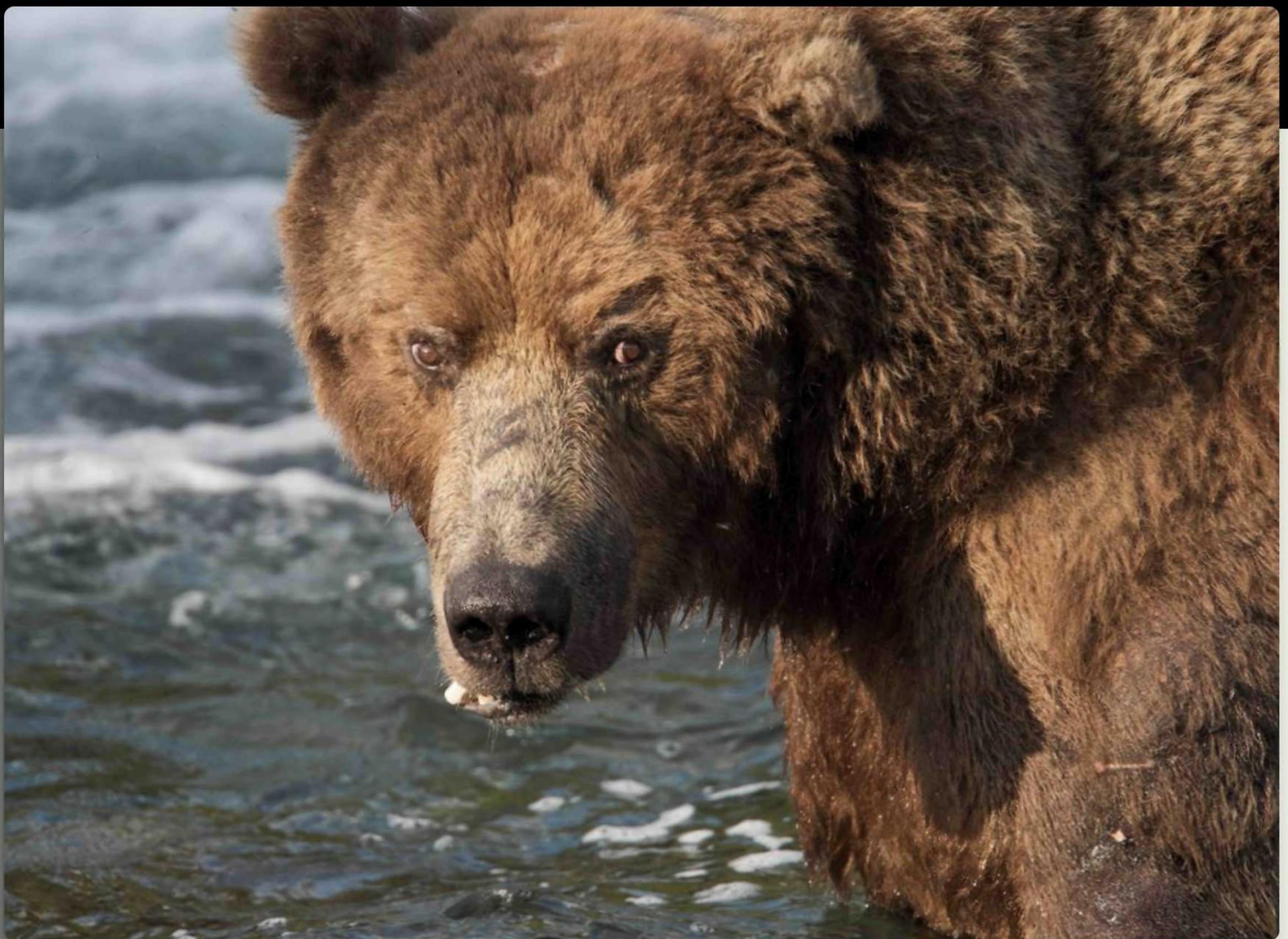
### **Life History**

Bear #418 was first recognized as an adult in 2001.

While fishing, #418 often plunges quickly into the river. He usually fishes the jacuzzi and far pool.

Even though he regularly fishes Brooks Falls in July, #418 had not been observed in the Brooks area during the autumn months. However, this pattern was broken in recent years, and #418 has returned for brief visits in October 2009, October 2010, and September 2011. He was not observed in July 2012.

**Adult Male**



*July 2009*



## **Bear 420 Genghis**

### **ID Marks and Hints**

#420 is easy to identify due to his protruding teeth on his lower-right jaw.

He is a long, large bodied bear with a blocky muzzle, rusty brown coat, tan-brown claws, and a floppy left ear.

He can be confused with Bear #247, but that bear is smaller and only has one protruding canine tooth on his left jaw.

### **Life History**

#420 is aggressive around other bears and regularly steals fish.

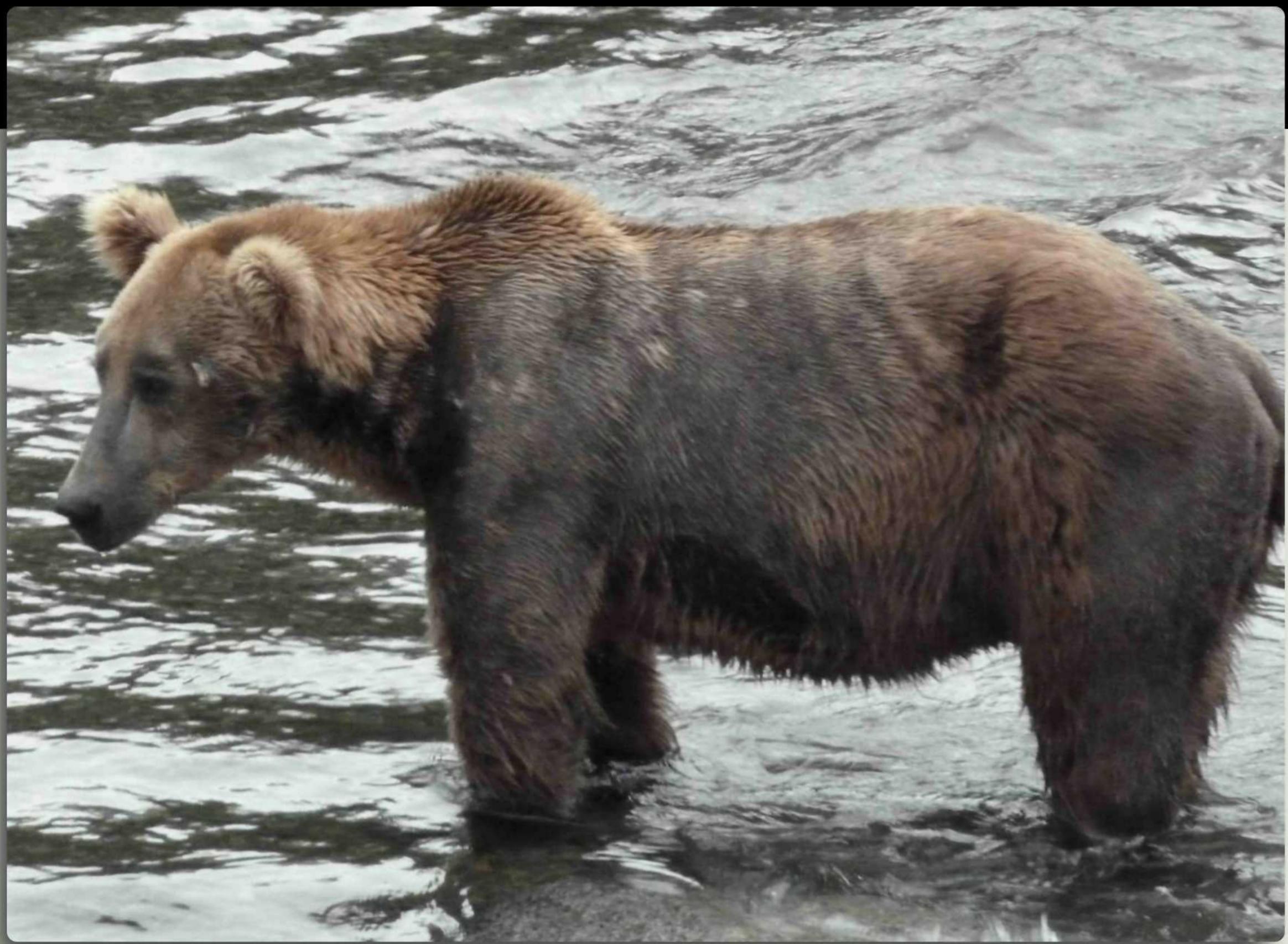
In 2005, he was seen with a very large, open wound on the left front leg that has since healed and scarred over.

In 2007, he returned to the Brooks River with a broken lower jaw and large, open wounds on both sides of his body.

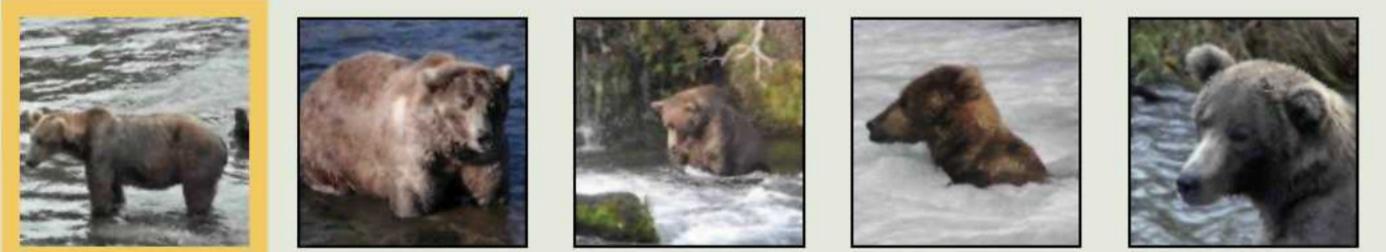
The jaw injury appeared to affect his ability to chew and swallow fish that he caught. However, he showed signs of rapid healing, both from the jaw injury and the wounds on his body. In 2009 and 2010, he was one of the most dominant bears fishing at Brooks Falls.

Even though #420 is aggressive around other bears, he does not appear to be **habituated** to humans and rarely approaches the Falls Platform side of the river.

He hasn't been seen since 2010.



July 2010



## Bear 480 Otis

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

#480 has a dark blonde coat, tan tipped claws, and some scars on both sides of his neck. His ears are wide set. His muzzle is long, straight, and narrow.

In the fall months, he has a walrus-like body and a relatively thick, wrinkled neck.

### Life History

#480, along with #218, uses some of the most efficient fishing techniques at the falls. He prefers the jacuzzi, but unlike many other bears, he is often tolerant of numerous other bears around him while he eats. These bears wait patiently for him to finish and eat any leftover scraps.

In September, he is one of the few bears that can successfully fish at Brooks Falls. Late in the season, he is often seen fishing the far pool.

Despite the fact that #480 is neither as large nor aggressive as other male bears, during July 2011 he was rarely displaced from his preferred fishing spot in the jacuzzi. Even #856, arguably the most aggressive bear in 2011, rarely attempted to challenge #480 for this prime location. In September, #856 and other bears seemed less tolerant of him and/or more willing to challenge him over positions at Brooks Falls. This pattern continued in July 2012, and larger bears regularly displaced him from the jacuzzi.

**Adult Male**

## Bear 489 Ted



August 2009



*Bear #218 attacks Bear #489.*

### ID Marks and Hints

#489 is easily recognizable because of his large, distinctive scar on left hip.

This is a medium-large bear. His coat is light brown and often patchy when shedding, but is darker in September. He has a slightly drooping lower lip, dark eye rings, and dark claws.

His ears are large, upright and triangle shaped. His nickname, Ted, is short for “triangle-eared.”

### Life History

Bear #489 was classified as a subadult when first identified in 2001 and has grown into a mature adult since then.

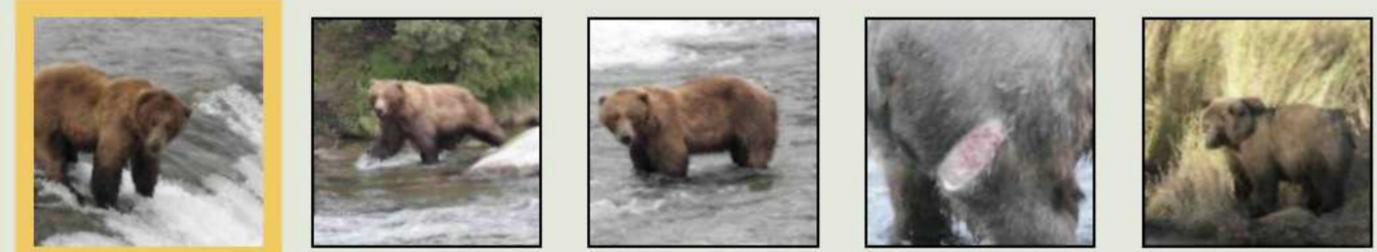
In 2007, he received a wound on his left hip during a brief altercation with #218. While the wound he received looked vicious, it has since healed and scarred over, and is this bear's most identifiable mark. This is yet another example of a bear's remarkable ability to heal.

Through 2008-2011 he was one of the very few bears regularly seen fishing the river in mid-August. During these periods he has repeatedly entered Brooks Camp, something most adult males appear to be uncomfortable doing.

#489 often begs fish from other bears, sometimes very vocally. He is one of the few adult males to show this behavior. Other bears will not give #489 fish, but this technique does put him in a good position to access discarded fish remains.



July 2007



## Bear 604 Little

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

In July 2007, #604 had a large open wound on his right hind leg. He is a medium-sized bear with wide set ears and a straight "Roman" nose.

#604 has a brown coat with a darker head and dark claws. He has longer fur under his chin resembling a beard.

### Life History

First classified as a 2.5 year old subadult in 2002, #604 was easily recognized in 2007 because of the large, deep wound on his right hind leg. The wound was deep enough that muscle tissue was visible through the skin and fatty layers.

After receiving this injury his behavior changed and he became a more passive bear, often begging for scraps.

According to observations by bear biologists and DNA analysis, he is the offspring of #236 and sibling of #608.

This bear fished lip of the falls and scavenged for scraps below falls. Before receiving his large wound in 2007, he was infrequently seen at Brooks during the autumn months. He has not been observed along the Brooks River since 2007.

**Adult Male**

## **Bear 634 Popeye**



*July, 2009*



### **ID Marks and Hints**

This bear has a medium large body with large (furry) and dark forearms. His coat is brown, grizzled, and generally uniform with blondish ears.

#634's muzzle is short and upturned. He lacks distinctive scars

### **Life History**

Bear #634 was classified as a subadult in 2002 and then as an adult in 2003.

In May of 2004 he appeared on the beach at Brooks Camp with a severe limp.

He fishes the far pool and the lip of the falls. #634 will aggressively steal fish from smaller bears, especially early in the salmon run.

He occasionally wanders through the lower Brooks River area, including through camp. This is one bear that may be seen near Brooks Camp in May and early June. In 2012 this pattern was broken, and #634 was not observed.

# Bear 747

Adult Male



August 2009



## ID Marks and Hints

#747 has a medium-brown coat with reddish shoulders. His coat regularly sheds out in an erratic pattern and during the fall months it is a full dark brown. Early in the summer, he often has a noticeable shed patch on his forehead.

His ears are round and peg-like. He has dark claws, short muzzle, and a medium-small, stocky, and squat body.

## Life History

First classified as a subadult in 2004, #747 is now considered an adult bear.

He is successful at fishing and is a regular visitor to Brooks Falls in July. He also fishes the falls in September and October.

#747 does not appear to be wary of people on the viewing platforms near Brooks Falls, but is rarely seen in other areas with high numbers of people. #747 also seems to be very tolerant of other bears, like #16 and #489.

Since 2007, he has noticeably grown in size and as a result is not easily displaced from his favorite fishing spots below Brooks Falls.

He was badly clawed during several fights in 2012; these may result in scars.



July 2009



**Bear 755**

**Scare D. Bear**

**Adult Male**

## ID Marks and Hints

#755 is a medium-small bear with a light golden brown coat, darker head, and a tapering muzzle. His dark eye rings can be a distinctive feature early in the summer.

In the fall, his coat is a uniform brown with contrasting, light colored ears.

## Life History

#755 was classified as a subadult when first observed in 2004. Even though he fishes at Brooks Falls regularly, he has never become habituated to humans or other bears.

He seems to be wary of humans and usually will not approach the platform side of the river when people are present. He has been observed running away from the riffles area when people approach.

#755 will fish at the falls during daylight hours when the platform is full of people, but rarely leaves the far side of the river at those times. If he does approach the falls platform, he moves quickly behind it, never in front. Sometimes, however, he will fish the lip of the falls when only one or two people are on the platform.

In recent years, he seemed less willing to yield space to other adult bears. This may indicate that he is becoming more habituated towards other bears and / or more dominant as he matures.



July 2009



## Bear 814 Lurch

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

#814 is a medium-large adult with a flopped over or cropped right ear, and a distinctive scar above his right eye.

In June and July, his back has a pronounced saddle and is sometimes noticeably shed out.

Late in the summer, his new coat is a uniform dark brown, and his scars might not be visible.

### Life History

#814 was described as a young adult male when he was first identified in 2005. In 2008 and 2009, this bear has shown increasing signs of dominance by stealing fish and displacing other bears from fishing spots.

He was observed killing #435's spring cub in June 2009. It is unclear why adult males will sometimes kill cubs as the cub is not always eaten. Certainly in some situations hunger plays a role, but at other times a cub may be killed and not eaten.

Motivation to mate with the cub's mother is another hypothesis as to why some males perform **infanticide**. During the situation in 2009 #814 took the cub into the woods away from the river, so it is unknown whether or not he ate the cub.

# Bear 856

Adult Male



July 2010



#856 separates #402 from her cubs,  
ultimately killing one of them.

## ID Marks and Hints

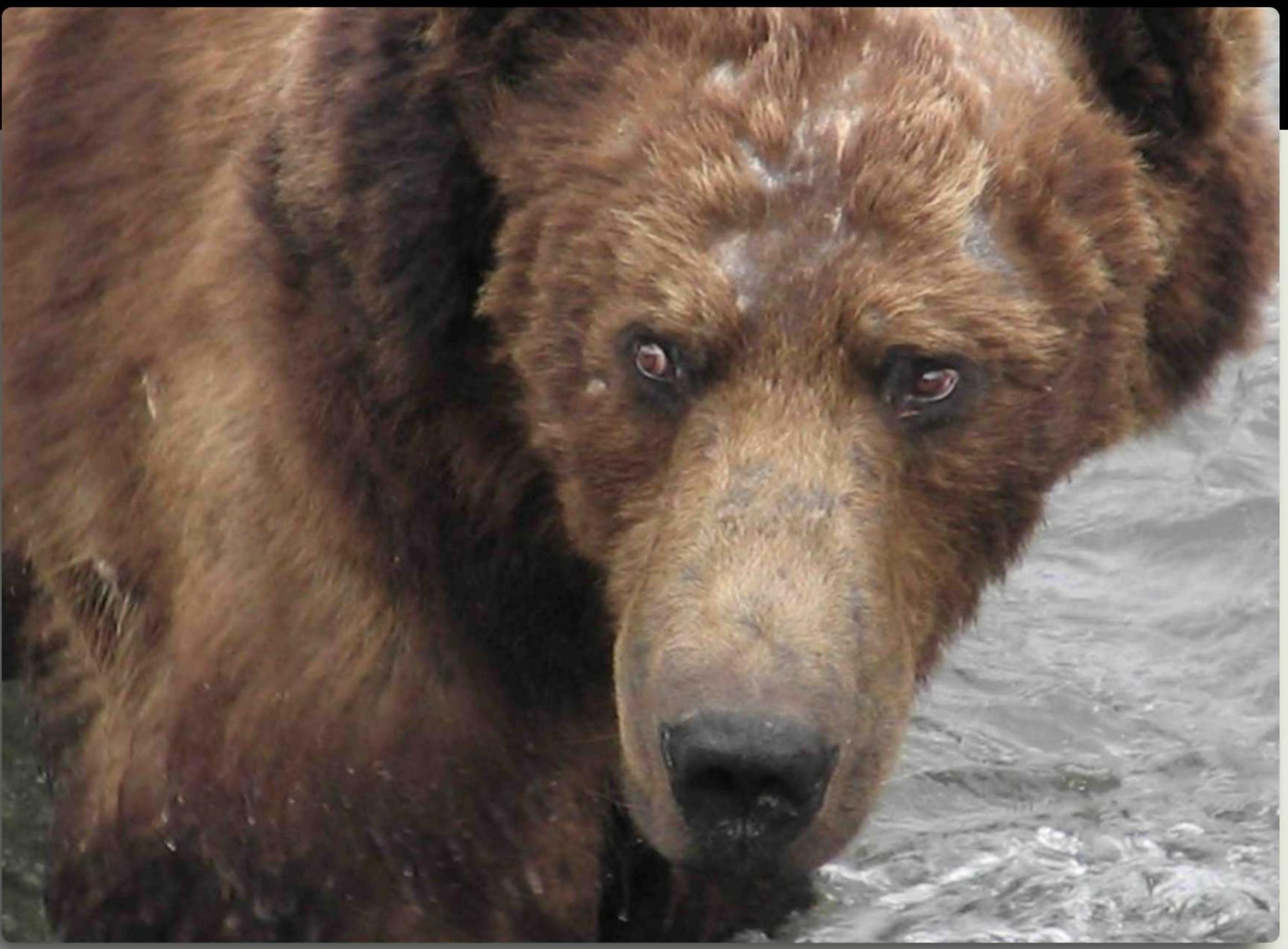
#856 is a large adult. He has a uniform brown and grizzled coat. His ears are blonde and wide-set. His forehead is wide, furred, and has a noticeable shed pattern in July. His face and front legs may have numerous small scars. He returned in fall 2011 with a L-shaped scar below his right eye. Unlike most bears, #856 is often seen repeatedly licking his lips while he fishes the lip and walks around Brooks Falls. Between fall 2010 and the spring 2011 he grew significantly in size.

## Life History

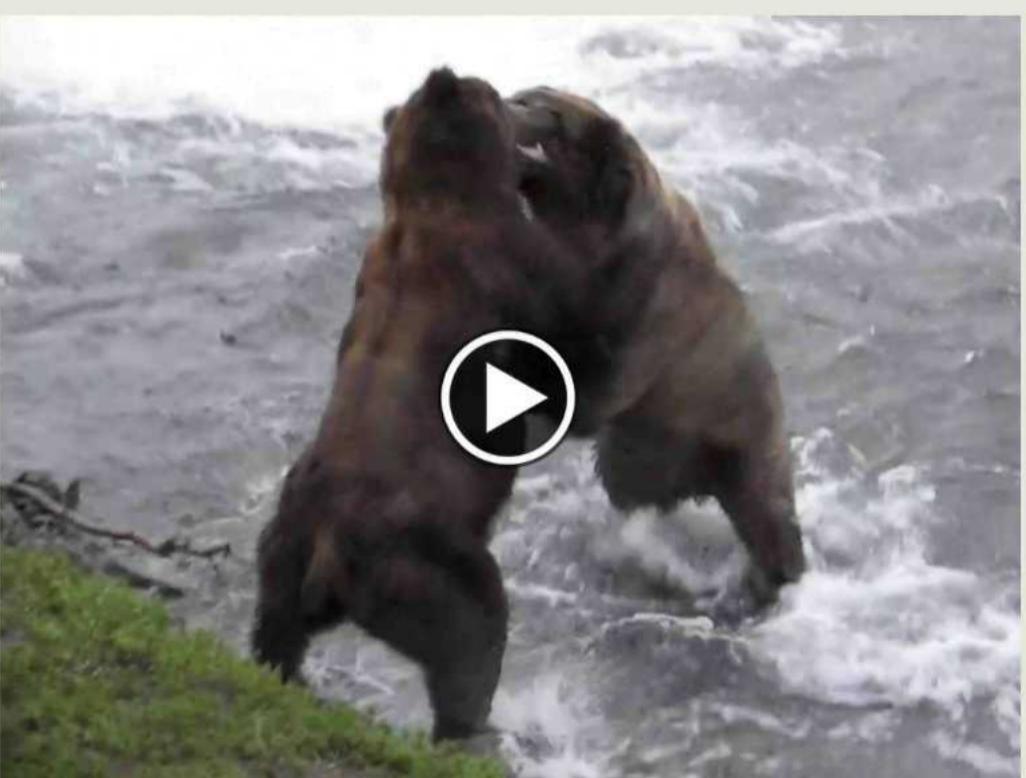
#856 was classified as a young adult in 2006. Since 2011, he has been the largest, most dominant bear along the river; most other bears yield space to him. He will occasionally fish the lip, but prefers the jacuzzi. He is one of the few males bears in the Brooks Camp area in June.

During July 2011 he courted and mated with #94. In Katmai, most male bears do not have the opportunity to mate with females until they are in their early to mid teens when they are large enough to outcompete other adult males for access to females. However, the hierarchy can change quickly, even within the same season. Therefore most bears, like #856, are adapted to take advantage of their position in the hierarchy.

In mid July 2011, #856 managed to separate #402 from one of her spring cubs; he later returned and killed it. Like the infanticide committed by #814, the reason for this behavior is unknown. In this instance #856 and #402 mated in 2010. Therefore, it is possible #856 killed his own offspring. On the other hand, these two bears mated again in 2012.



July 2006



*864 and 24 in a particularly violent fight.  
Who do you think won?*

## Bear 864 Norman

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

This is a very large male, but his body does not appear to be filled out.

#864's coat is dark brown, his muzzle is blocky and scarring is usually visible on his forehead.

The whites of his eyes are often visible giving him a distinctive look.

### Life History

Bear #864 was identified in July 2006, but was certainly a large, mature adult at that time.

When present, he is arguably the most dominant bear along the Brooks River in July, even fighting and displacing #24. Bear #864 doesn't acknowledge other bears while fishing.

Visitors should not expect to see this bear. In 2007, he was only observed by bear biologists on overnight surveys, and was not observed at all since 2008.



July 2011



## Bear 868/62 Wayne Brother

Adult Male

### ID Marks and Hints

**Note:** This bear is identified as #868 in July and as #62 in September.

#868 has medium body with a light brown coat, a grooved, a medium length muzzle, and four darker spots near his right front leg. His ears are wide set, triangular, and white.

When shedding, he has a distinct bikini- shaped patch around his tail area.

### Life History

Bear #868 is a young adult male. He was first classified as a sub-adult in 2006. He resembles his mother, #438, and is the sibling of #83. Another sibling from this litter is rarely seen. While only #83 and #868 are regularly seen in the Brooks area they have fished Brooks Falls at the same time.

He fishes at Brooks Falls, the Riffles, and the lower river but seems to be less successful than #83. In late July and early August he may be seen around Brooks Camp and the lower river.

# Bear 879

Adult Male



Fall 2008



## ID Marks and Hints

#879 has a tall, medium-large body and a medium brown coat. His muzzle is long and straight. He has triangular, upright ears and a long neck.

## Life History

This young male is a "Fall" bear who has not been identified in July. He may fish other streams in the summer, choosing to use Brooks River only later in the season. Alternatively, he may use Brooks River in July but is unrecognizable upon returning in late August or September.

Like the salmon they depend upon, brown bears go through dramatic physical changes over the course of a few weeks. As they gain hundreds of pounds and change coats, it can become difficult to distinguish individuals from one another or match those individuals to bears observed earlier in the season.

CHAPTER 3

# Adult Females



## About Adult Females

Like adult males, the bodies of adult females look filled in, their heads appear smaller in proportion to their bodies, and their ears are generally wide-set.

Genitalia is usually difficult to see on female bears, but you can still sex adult females by watching them urinate. Female will urinate backward from their hind legs.

Occasionally, scarring can be an identifier of females. During spring and early summer, scarring is sometimes present be on the back of a female's neck. These scars can be the result of male bears biting them during copulation.

The presence of **cubs** is an absolute indicator that you are looking at a female. Male bears play no role in raising young.



*Bear 236 and yearling cubs in July 2008*



## What to look for

Adult females, or **sows**, generally weigh one-half to three-quarters as much as males, but can still grow to weigh between 400-700 lbs. at maturity.

In the Katmai region, female bears generally reach sexual maturity between six and eight years of age, but they may not produce their first **litter** until several years later. Mating takes place in late spring and early summer. However, fertilized embryos will not implant in the uterus until a female dens for the winter.

This "**delayed implantation**" may allow the female's body to determine the size of the litter. A female may have no offspring at

all if her body didn't receive the nutrition it needs over the course of the summer and fall.

In the Katmai region, females typically keep their cubs through two summers, and less commonly through three summers.

# Bear 94

# Adult Female



Fall 2010



## ID Marks and Hints

#94 is a small adult female with a uniform medium brown coat, a tapered muzzle that turns up at the nose, dark eye rings, and spade-shaped, proportionally large ears.

## Life History

#94 was classified as young adult female in 2008. In July 2011 she entered a courtship with #856 lasting several weeks. Courting is a process through which adult males habituate adult females to their presence before mating. During this courtship the pair spent extensive time along Brooks River's north bank, in the area between the Cultural Site Trail and the Falls. As #856's consort, #94 approached the falls much closer than she would have as a single bear. When #856's protection ended with the courtship, she did not approach the falls closer than the Riffles area.

Courting brown bears are promiscuous. While #856 fished at the falls, #94 mated with other bears. During 2011 she mated with at least four males: #45, #218, #747, and #856. However, she had no cubs with her when first seen in 2012. Whether she lost cubs, or simply failed to give birth, is unknown.



**Bear 128**  
**Grazer**

**Adult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

#128 is a medium-sized adult female with a light, dirty blonde coat and dark patches around her eyes. She has large, oval-shaped, and widely spaced ears.

She fishes the lower river, the Cut Bank, and the Riffles.

## Life History

#128 is another bear who has learned to associate people with fish. This is a behavior shared with other females like #438 and #854. She will rapidly approach anglers who have a fish on the line. Anglers should give this bear extra space in the river and stop fishing well before she is within 50 yards.

July 2010





May 2010



## Bear 130 Tundra

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

#130 is a small adult with a medium-blonde coat and round ears of the same color. She has dark brown claws that are lighter on the tips and slight eye rings. Her most distinctive feature is a scar above the left eye.

### Life History

#130 was classified as a 2.5 year-old subadult female in 2009. She fishes the cut bank and lower Brooks River; occasionally she visits the falls but does not fish there. This young bear shows signs of habituation towards people, especially around Brooks Camp, but she usually avoids other bears and people when surprised.

She is the offspring of #409. While #130 was still being raised by her mother, she received a bloody wound above her left eye that resulted in her recognizable scar.

While young, she has shown interest in mating. During 2011 she followed a courting pair around Brooks Camp for several days; shortly afterwards she attempted mating with another sub-adult. These activities probably reflect the curious and playful nature of sub-adults rather than serious attempts at reproduction. In 2012, #32 appeared to be courting her. She played frequently with #89.

She is regularly seen in June, suggesting that the river may be her home territory. Female sub-adults tend to remain in the area where they were raised; males generally disperse to other locations but may return to concentrated food resources such as Brooks Falls after reaching adulthood.



July 2007



## Bear 216 Marilyn

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

#216 is a medium-sized adult female. She has a prominent shoulder hump, a shaggy and dark blonde coat, and blonde ears.

Her muzzle is straight and the long hairs on her chin gives it a bearded appearance.

### Life History

#216 fishes at the falls and the lower river area, and appears habituated to humans.

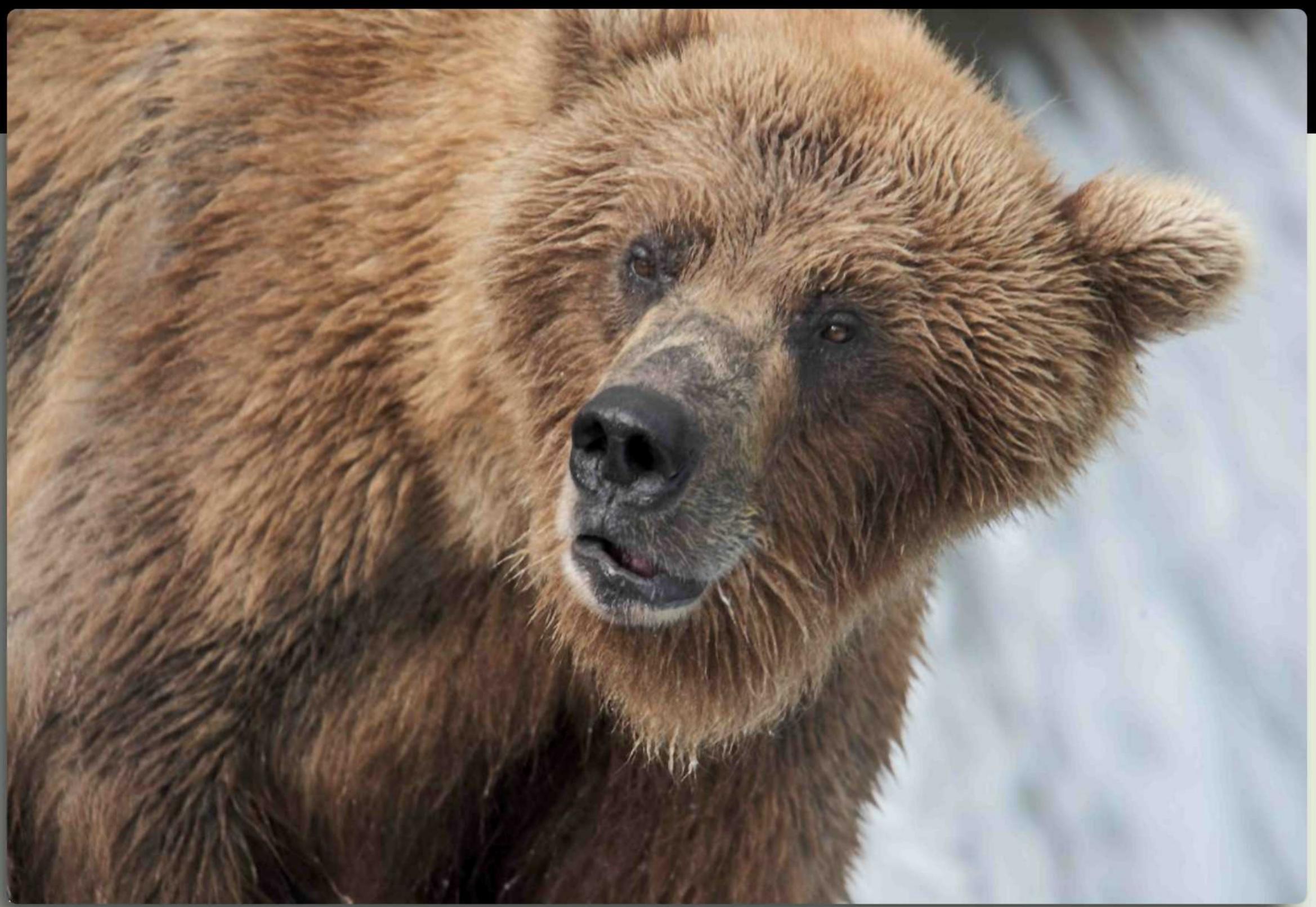
She can be aggressive towards other bears and has been observed bluff charging bears beneath the Falls Platform.

She is suspected to be the mother of females #790 and #854.

Beginning in 1998, #216 has raised several litters of cubs, but only keeps them through two summer seasons. She has not been observed caring for cubs into their third summer.

In 2005, she arrived at Brooks with four spring cubs. By the end of the summer season in 2006, she had only two left from this litter. She was pursued and courted by several males in 2007.

She was seen from 1996-2008, but has not appeared since..



**Bear 236**

**Adult Female**

**Milkshake**

## ID Marks and Hints

#236 is a large adult female. She has a relatively large shoulder hump and in past years a round, filled in body. Her coat is medium blonde.

She has the classic grizzly/brown bear dish-shaped face, a rectangular muzzle, and lighter, wide-set ears. Her large teats are usually easy to see, especially when she is raising cubs. She appeared thin and unhealthy in the fall of 2011, possibly from the results of aging or an unknown illness/injury.

## Life History

Bear #236 is one of the older adult females to frequent the Brooks River. She was first identified in 1997 caring for two spring cubs. She will fish the lower river and the lip of the falls.



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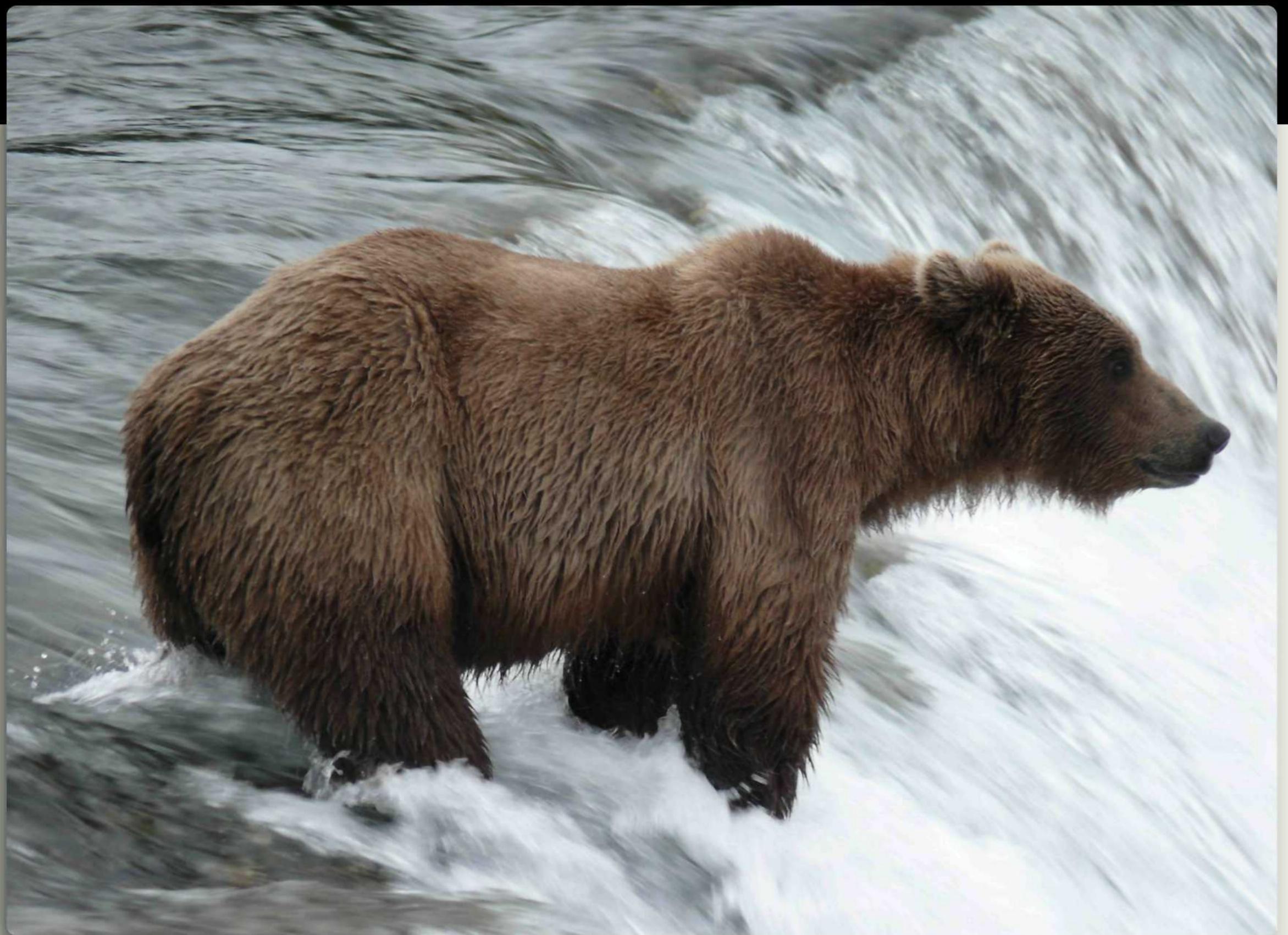
*July 2009*

Records from the past 20 years indicate that she is one of the most fertile and successful female bears to use the Brooks River. DNA analysis has confirmed that she is the mother of #604 and #608. In 2003, #236 was seen with four spring cubs, which is unusual for any sow. Remarkably, she returned in 2010 with more four spring cubs, her fifth known litter.

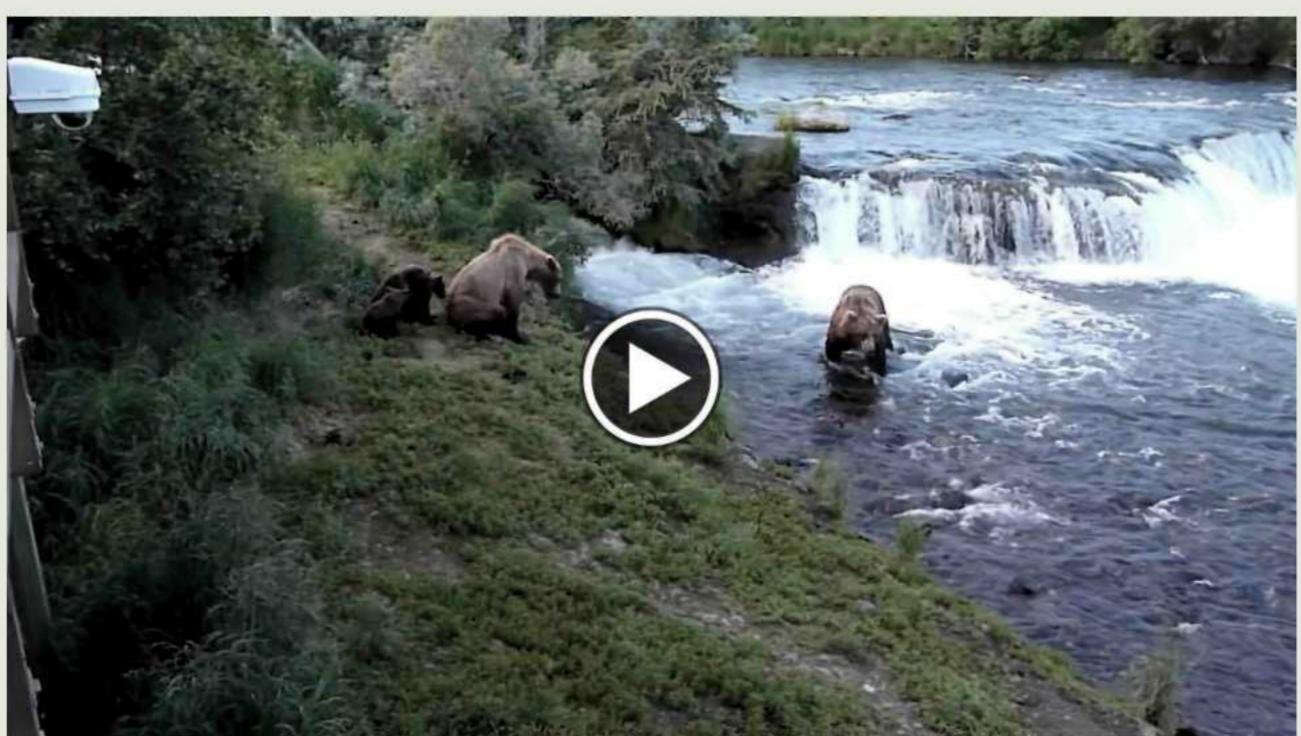
By the end of August 2011, she has lost the entire 2010 litter. In almost every instance the specific cause of a cub's death remains unknown. #236 probably lost her cubs to a variety of factors. As one of the older sows with cubs in the Brooks River area, a lean salmon run in 2011 may have taxed #236 beyond her physical limits and left her unable to support and defend cubs.

# Bear 402

# Adult Female



July 2010



*# 856 separates # 402 from her cubs,  
ultimately killing one of them.*

## ID Marks and Hints

A medium-sized adult, #402 has a short, dark blonde coat of fur. Her face is crescent shaped with a straight profile.

## Life History

#402 has had four known litters, one of which she raised into their third summer. In 2007 she arrived at Brooks River with a single spring cub, but soon lost it. She then went back into estrus and several males pursued her, most prominently #218. In 2008, she had three spring cubs. In 2011 she arrived at Brooks River with three more spring cubs; by the end of September only one cub from this litter remained. In 2012, she was single. Based on her relative weight, it appeared she likely lost this last cub early in the fall.

She fishes the lip and in the lower river; sometimes she will dive the jacuzzi. She is among the few females who will fish at Brooks Falls with spring cubs. After a prolonged confrontation there with #856, she and her smallest cub became separated. During this time the cub was completely defenseless, yet other male bears ignored it. #856 later returned to the falls and killed the cub.

DNA analysis confirmed that #402 and #403 are siblings. These bears share a mother, physical features, and some behavioral characteristics. Both will dive for fish, a fairly rare technique.



July 2004



## Bear 403 Egberta

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

A large female, Bear #403 has a blonde coat that darkens to reddish-brown in the fall.

Her facial profile reveals a straight “roman” nose resembling a polar bear rather than the classic dish-shaped face of a brown/grizzly bear. She resembles #402.

### Life History

Bear #403 was first identified as a 2.5 year old in 2000. As a subadult and young female, she became successful with multiple fishing styles, most uniquely diving.

Along with submerging herself completely underwater to find salmon and roe, #403 fishes the lip of the falls.

She will also steal fish. #403 has intimidated sub-adults and smaller adult bears into giving up their fish, and has obtained fish from the lines of anglers.

#402 and #403 are siblings, and while #402 frequently uses the Brooks River area, #403 has not been seen at all since 2008.



September 2010



## Bear 408 CC

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

This is a medium-small adult female with a dark blonde to blonde coat.

#408 has light blonde ears and a long and slightly upturned muzzle. She will fish the riffles below Brooks Falls and in the lower river area. She has a crooked claw on her left front foot, hence her nickname.

She can easily be confused with #409 who also has light blonde ears and a similar body and shape.

### Life History

#408 was first identified as a young adult female in 2001. Her behavior that year hinted at subadult, but she was observed being pursued by male bears and had scars on the back of her neck, possibly from mating.

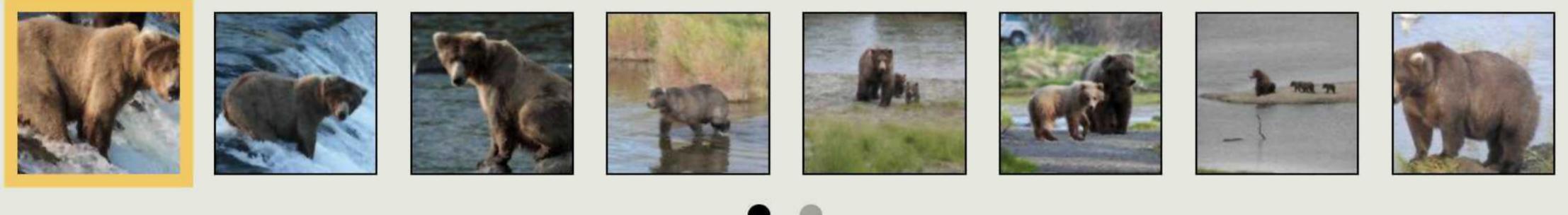
She was first observed with cubs in 2005. She was very attentive to these three cubs and occasionally charged other bears that were simply walking by. She raised this litter into their third summer.

She fishes the lower river and riffles areas.

Both #408 and #409 are remarkably similar in appearance, especially late in the season. It is suspected that these two bears are siblings.



July 2009



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## Bear 409 Beadnose

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

#409 has a long, straight muzzle with a slightly upturned nose and a medium-large body.

She has a light to medium-brown coat with wide-set, blonde ears.

She is often confused with bear #408, especially in September and October.

### Life History

#409 was classified as a subadult in 1999 and is frequently seen along Brooks River. Like #410, she appears habituated to the presence of humans and will use areas near people to rest, travel and feed.

#409 had her first known litter of one cub in 2004, and she could be seen with the cub latched onto her back as she swam across the river. She returned in June 2007 with three spring cubs, but was soon observed with only two cubs. She raised the two survivors through 2008. One bear from this litter is now recognized as #130.

From 2009-2011, #409 was single and this may be a major reason why #409 has grown into one of the fattest females to be seen in the fall. Her size can easily be compared with females caring for cubs. Raising offspring is very energetically taxing for bears. Females with offspring must sacrifice body fat to raise cubs. #409, in recent years, has been able to devote more energy to her own survival as her overall size indicates.

In 2012, she returned with three spring cubs.

# Bear 410

## Four-ton

Adult Female



July 2002



### ID Marks and Hints

#410 is a large adult female. Her coat is medium brown with a grizzled appearance on her head and neck.

She has a recognizable dished-shaped face and prominent muzzle. Her claws are dark, and she lacks distinctive scars.

### Life History

#410 is one of the largest females frequenting the Brooks River and fishes almost anywhere. She has been observed fishing in Naknek Lake, the lower Brooks River, and both above and below the falls.

In 2007, she returned with two spring cubs, marking her third litter. She returned to the Brooks River Area in 2008 with the same two cubs, then yearlings, but lost one in early July.

She is arguably the most human habituated bear to be found using the Brooks River, even while caring for cubs.

#410 has been observed with people and heavy equipment operating within 15 meters. She will sleep on the trail near the bridge and in front of or underneath the wildlife viewing platforms, even with many people standing directly above. She may tree her cubs near the viewing platforms while she fishes.



**Bear 415**

**Adult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

A medium-small adult female, #415 has a brown, uniform coat and a short straight muzzle. She has no distinctive scars.

She almost continuously bobbles her head when fishing the lip of the falls.

## Life History

#415 isn't easy to identify by appearances alone. Pay close attention to her behavior.

Despite her small stature, she is very aggressive with other bears. When fishing the lip of the falls she will often back down larger male bears to retain her preferred fishing spot. In the fall she will often chase #480 out of the far pool.

She returned in 2012 with three spring cubs, her second litter.



*July 2006*



**Bear 435**

**Holly**

**Adult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

#435 has a medium-small body with a distinctive light blonde coat.

Her ears are large and lighter than her coat. She has a dished face and short muzzle. Her dark eye rings are distinctive early in the summer.

## Life History

#435 was identified as a young adult female in 2001. She can be a nervous mother around other bears. During the summer of 2006, she repeatedly treed herself and her cub in the middle of Brooks Camp in response to other bears. This cub is now recognizable as subadult #89.

In 2009, she returned to Brooks River with one spring cub. In late June, this cub was killed by #814.

She is among the most proficient fishers using the Brooks



*October 2002*



July 2008



**Bear 438**

**Flo**

**Adult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

#438 is a medium-small female with a light brown or blondish coat. She has wide-set and large blonde ears.

Her muzzle is grooved and she has distinctive white claws.

## Life History

#438 was first classified as an adult female in 1999, but older records suggest she was likely raising yearling cubs in 1997.

She raised her first confirmed litter into their third summer. In 2010, she kept her most recent litter into their fourth summer. It is rare for bears in Katmai to care for cubs for this long.

In 2004, #438 and her cubs directly approached an angler with a fish on his line. Within 30 minutes, the family group moved downstream and they obtained a bagged fish from an angler who had dumped it on the beach as the family rapidly approached.

In 2009, she and her two cubs obtained garbage from the incinerator building at Brooks Camp. After receiving this reward, they frequently investigated the buildings near camp and were difficult to haze away.

Help keep bears from learning these behaviors. Store all food and garbage securely. Stay alert at all times and stop fishing well before a bear approaches within 50 yards.



July 2003



## Bear 468 Reggie

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

This is a medium-sized and sometimes fat adult female. #468 has a brown, uniformly colored coat. Her wide-set ears appear lighter in color by September.

Her facial features can be easy to recognize. She has a drooping lower lip, long muzzle, and a prominent brow ridge.

### Life History

#468 was first observed and classified as an adult female with one spring cub in 1999. In 2007, she returned to the Brooks River with one spring cub marking her third litter. She is the mother of #708.

#468 will fish the oxbow, lower river area, and far pool at falls. She has not been seen since 2009, when she infrequently used the river.

# Bear 608

Adult Female



July 2007



## ID Marks and Hints

#608 has a medium-small body and a dark blonde coat with lighter head. The fur around her neck often gives her mane and forehead a fluffy appearance. She has dark claws and a long muzzle.

## Life History

#608 is a young female and was first seen independent as a 2.5 year old bear in 2002. DNA analysis indicates that she is the offspring of #236 and #219 and the sibling of #604. Along with #604, #608 was raised in the Brooks River area.

She frequently fishes the lower river and uses the area around camp. However, she is a defensive mother around bears and people. She has had two known litters, the first in 2006. She kept these two cubs into their third year. In 2010 she returned with two more spring cubs, whom she was observed caring for as yearlings in 2011.

She and her first litter of cubs obtained play rewards in the form of unattended property on the lodge porch, cabin porches, and from boats. There is good evidence that she obtained play rewards from humans as a cub.

While #608 is not a “problem” bear, her past behavior, especially with cubs, highlights the importance of maintaining appropriate distances as well as storing all equipment properly so that bears don’t learn to associate our possessions with toys.

She was observed only briefly in 2011, during early July.



July 2009



**Bear 700  
Marge**

**Adult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

#700 is a small adult female with a short brown coat. The fur on her face and legs is usually longer than her body.

She has a sharp muzzle and dark claws. Her triangular ears sometimes appear very large, especially early in the summer.

## Life History

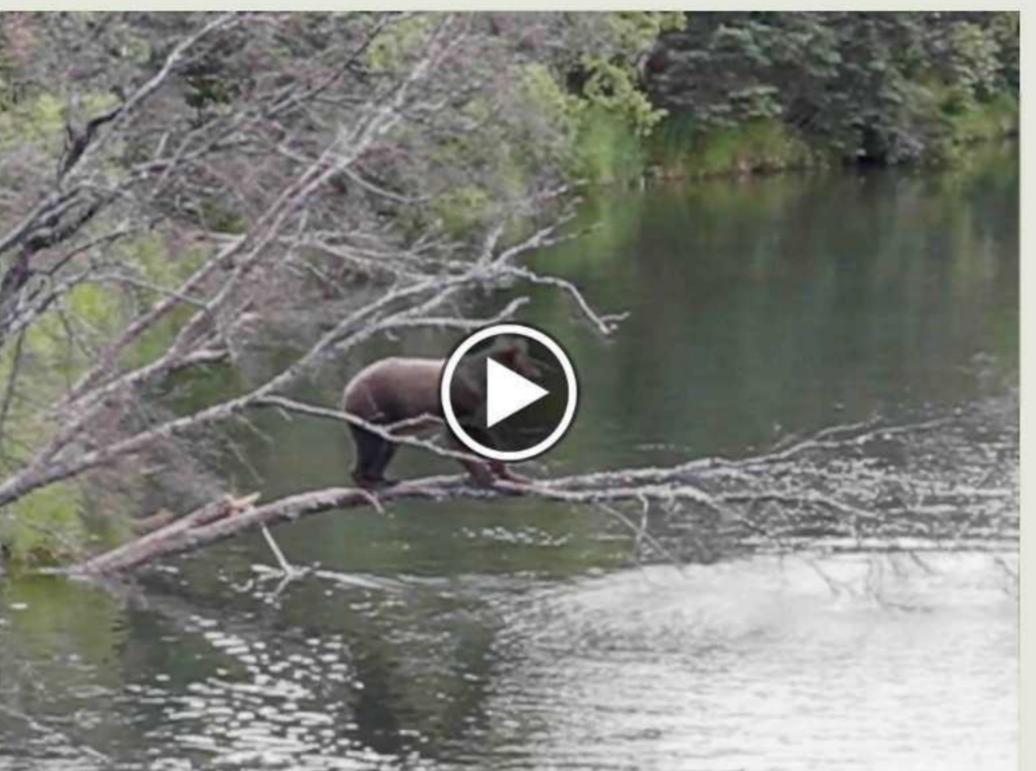
#700 is a young female who was first identified as a subadult in 2003.

She is apparently wary around other bears (but relatively habituated to people) and kept cubs underneath the falls platform or treed them nearby while she fished. She acts very skittish around the falls in response to other bears.

She raised her first litter into their third summer. In 2008, this family was more often heard than seen as her cubs were particularly vocal when begging for salmon.



July 2010



*Bear #708 demonstrating the value of play.*

## Bear 708 Amelia

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

This bear has a small, rotund body. She has a light brown coat, dark claws, and a straight and short muzzle that resembles #468.

Her ears are perched high on her head. During the fall months, she often has longer and more reddish fur on her neck and shoulders.

### Life History

#708 is an adult female and was first identified as an independent 2.5 year old bear in 2003.

She is another female that appears to be habituated to the presence of people and the activity around camp, often passing directly through camp if not discouraged.

She can be seen fishing from the falls downstream to the lower river and often stands on her hind legs for prolonged periods to scan the river. Recently, she has approached anglers in a manner that suggests she has obtained fish from them.

In 2008, she arrived in the Brooks River area with one spring cub (#284). While caring for this cub during the fall months she fished the head of Brooks River, possibly to avoid other bears. This is a marked behavioral change from years past.

#708 is believed to be the offspring of #468.



June 2010



## Bear 744 Dent

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

#744 has a small, thin body. Her summer coat is blonde to light brown in color. She often sheds most of her coat by the end of July.

She has large, triangular ears, dark claws with lighter tips, and her head and feet appear large in proportion to her body.

### Life History

Bear #744 is a small adult female regularly seen along the Brooks River. She was first identified as a subadult in 2004.

She appears to tolerate other bears, even large males. She will approach large males at the falls in hopes of picking up any fish scraps they leave behind. She is very successful fishing the lip.

She has not been observed with cubs, but has showed signs of estrus.

#744 seems habituated to people and is often seen on the beach in front of camp and near the bridge.



July 2007



**Bear 790**

**Weevil Bear**

**Adult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

This is a medium-small, young adult female with skinny legs.

#790 has a long, shaggy light brown coat, a straight facial profile, and small ears in proportion to her head.

Resembles #216 and is often confused with #854.

## Life History

DNA analysis has identified both her parents and one sibling. Her mother is #216, Marilyn, a productive sow who was observed along the Brooks River every year from 1996-2007; her father is #24, who was once the largest and most dominant bear seen along the Brooks River. Neither parent has been observed in recent years.

#790 is the sibling is #854.

She has not been seen since 2009.



June 2007



## Bear 854 Divot

Adult Female

### ID Marks and Hints

#854 is another small, young adult female. She has a golden blonde coat in July which darkens by late August.

Her muzzle is short and straight. She has scars on both hips. In July, #854 often has a noticeable shed patch on her forehead.

### Life History

Bear #854 shares a similar life history as her sibling #790. Her mother is #216 and #24 is her father. She was classified as a subadult in 2004.

She is still young, but like #790, she has showed signs of estrus during the past several years. This is one bear that is occasionally seen near Brooks Camp in May and early June.

#854 has learned to associate people with fish. In the lower Brooks River, she will often sit or lie on the shore while people fish nearby. She often looks like she is resting and not paying attention to the water, but when someone hooks a fish, she quickly enters the water in pursuit of an easy meal.

Anglers should be especially careful around bears and remember that the sound of a splashing fish is the sound of food to a bear. Each time a bear takes a fish from someone's fishing line it reinforces that behavior. The bear is then more likely to approach people in the future with the idea of obtaining food.

# CHAPTER 4

# Subadults



## ID Marks and Hints

Subadults are small to medium sized bears that often appear skinny or gangly. Like adolescent humans, subadults appear to have not yet grown into their body, which sometimes gives them the impression of having a big head and ears.

Behaviorally, they can be recognized by their playful and inquisitive nature. You might see a subadult play-fighting, chasing a duck, or awkwardly attempting to fish. They are sometimes skittish around larger adult bears. Young adult females, due to their smaller size, can sometimes be confused with subadults but are less lanky and more filled-out. They will also behave more confidently than a subadult.



Bear 38 in July 2007



## Life History

Subadults, young brown bears typically between 2.5 and 5.5 years old, are independent of their mothers but have not yet matured into an adult bear.

The distinction between a subadult and an adult bear is somewhat arbitrary and is defined by reaching sexual maturity. Like in humans, there is no set age that this happens, but it generally occurs around the bear's sixth or seventh year. Until they reach maturity, subadults spend their time learning how to fit into the complex world of bears. Because of their relatively small size and low position in the bear hierarchy, the subadult years are a difficult time in a bear's life.

As the lowest members of the bear hierarchy, they are forced to yield space and food resources to larger adults. Subadults are relegated to the less than desirable fishing spots, and sometimes face predation by other bears. sound of a splashing fish is the sound of food to a bear. Each time a bear takes a fish from someone's fishing line it reinforces that behavior. The bear is then more likely to approach people in the future

# Bear 273

# Subadult Female



July 2011



## ID Marks and Hints

#273 is medium sized subadult with blonde, shaggy coat. Her ears are large and round. She has a furry face with close set eyes.

## Life History

#273 is an older subadult first observed in 2011. Based on physical appearance and behavioral traits it's believed, but not proven, that this is the same bear formerly known as #198. Both #198 and #273 frequent the lower river, using the same areas to rest or slowly patrol back and forth for salmon.

Unlike #198, #273 shows little curiosity towards human buildings or gear. While #198 repeatedly investigated and damaged objects around Brooks Camp in 2010, #273 has demonstrated complete disinterest in people's things. It is quite possible #198 simply outgrew her destructive curiosity, which is a phase some subadults go through. If so, this behavioral change occurred naturally, without Brooks Camp staff escalating their hazing techniques.



**Bear 284**

**Subadult Female**

## ID Marks and Hints

#284 is a medium-sized sub-adult who was classified as an independent 3.5 year old in 2011. She has uniform, medium-brown coat and a prominent shoulder hump.

#284 looks remarkably similar to her mother, #708.

## Life History

Like many subadults, #284 is curious and explores the world around her through play. People have watched her dig holes, bounce on fallen trees, slide down the river bank, and balance pumice on her nose.

People who encounter #284 should give this bear extra space. Despite growing up in the Brooks River area and often encountering humans, she has charged people on several occasions. #284 also seems to pay extra attention to anglers, suggesting that she may have gotten fish from people in the past and now associates the two.

*July 2011*



# CHAPTER 5

# Cubs



## ID Marks and Hints

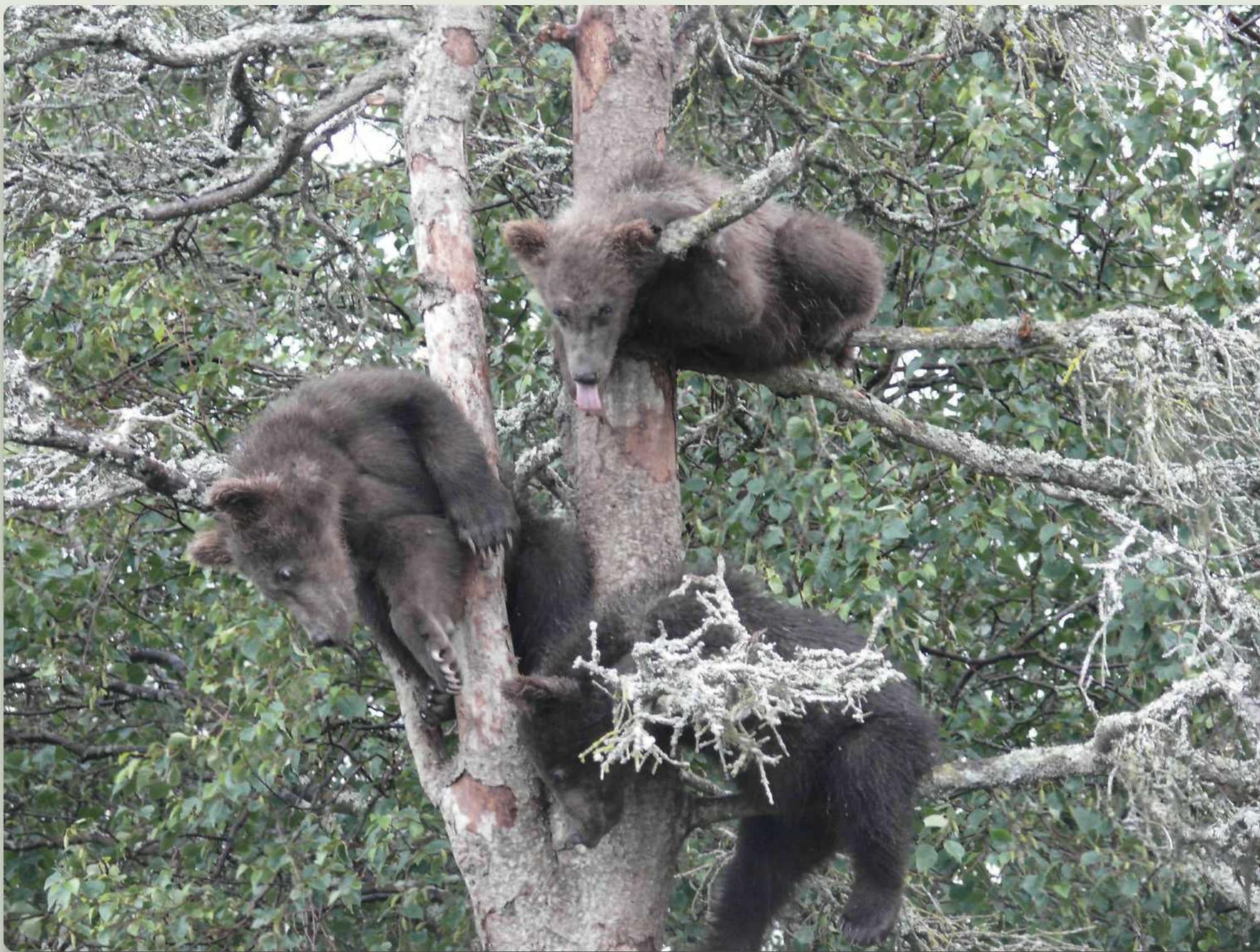
Cubs in their first year, called **spring cubs** or cubs-of-the-year, are generally very small with dark fur. They can sometimes have a natal collar of lighter fur around their necks. Upon first leaving the den, they normally weigh between 15-25 lbs. They may double in size by the end of their first summer.

In their second summer, cubs are known as yearlings. Their coats are generally lighter than spring cubs, especially in early summer.

Cubs who have survived into their third year are known as 2.5 year olds. At some point that third spring their mothers will chase them off.

From this time on, these bears will be independent and are classified as sub-adults.

The first six images show two litters as they grew from spring cubs to 2.5 year olds.



*The safest place for cubs is often up a tree. (402's spring cubs, July 2008)*



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## Life History

Cubs are born in the **den** in late January or early February. At this time they are hairless and weigh about one pound. Over the next several weeks they develop sight, learn to walk, and nurse. Weaning begins when the cubs are 6 months old, but does not end until they are nearly one and a half.

Cubs form strong but temporary social bonds with their siblings and mother. The playful interactions in these family groups often masks the seriousness of the cubs' position. Over two brief summers, they must learn all they will need to know in order to survive on their own.

Many do not. Mortality is very high in the region- about two out of three cubs die in their first year. Infanticide, drowning, falling, and becoming lost are just some of the obstacles these young bears must overcome.