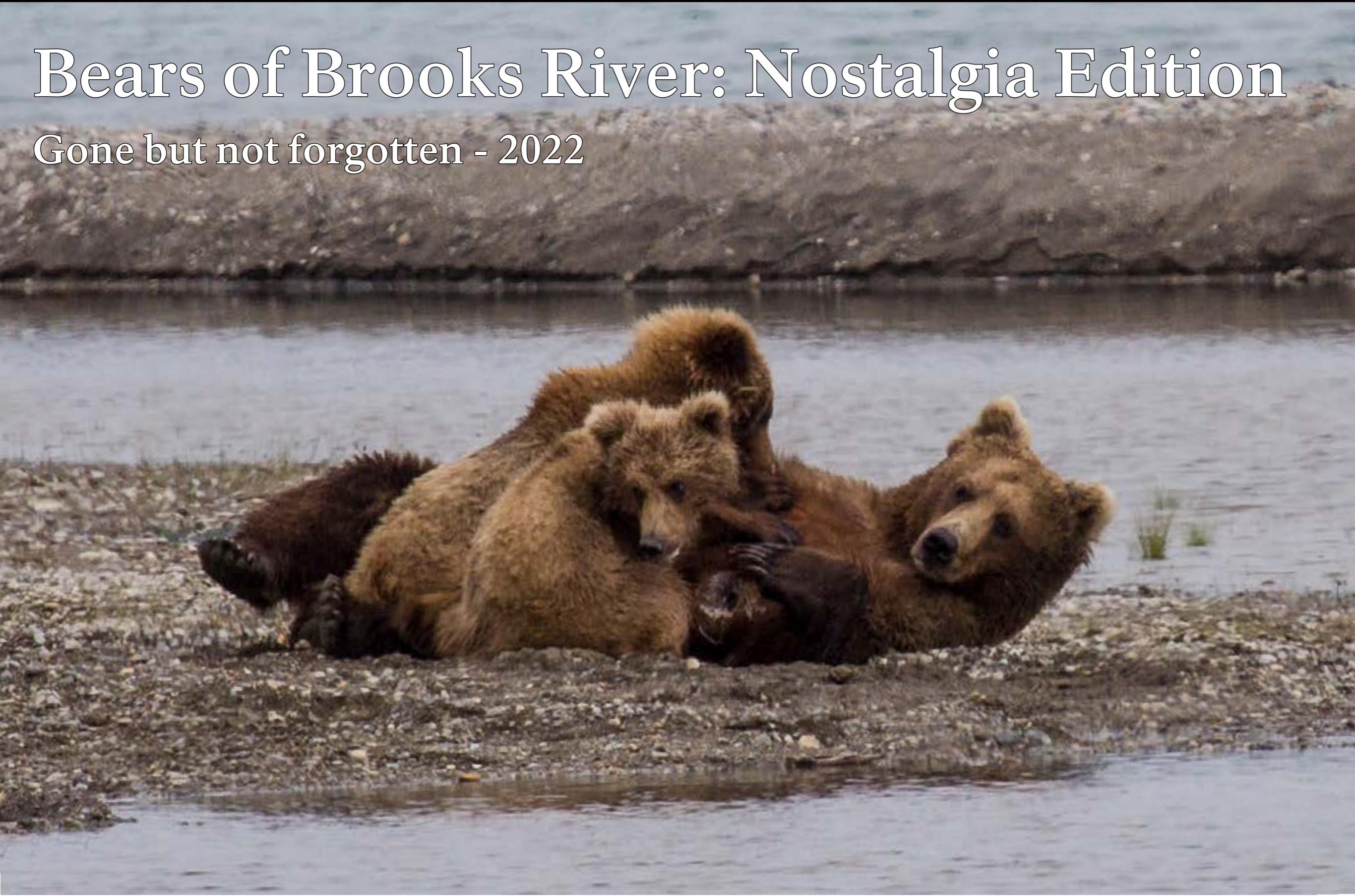




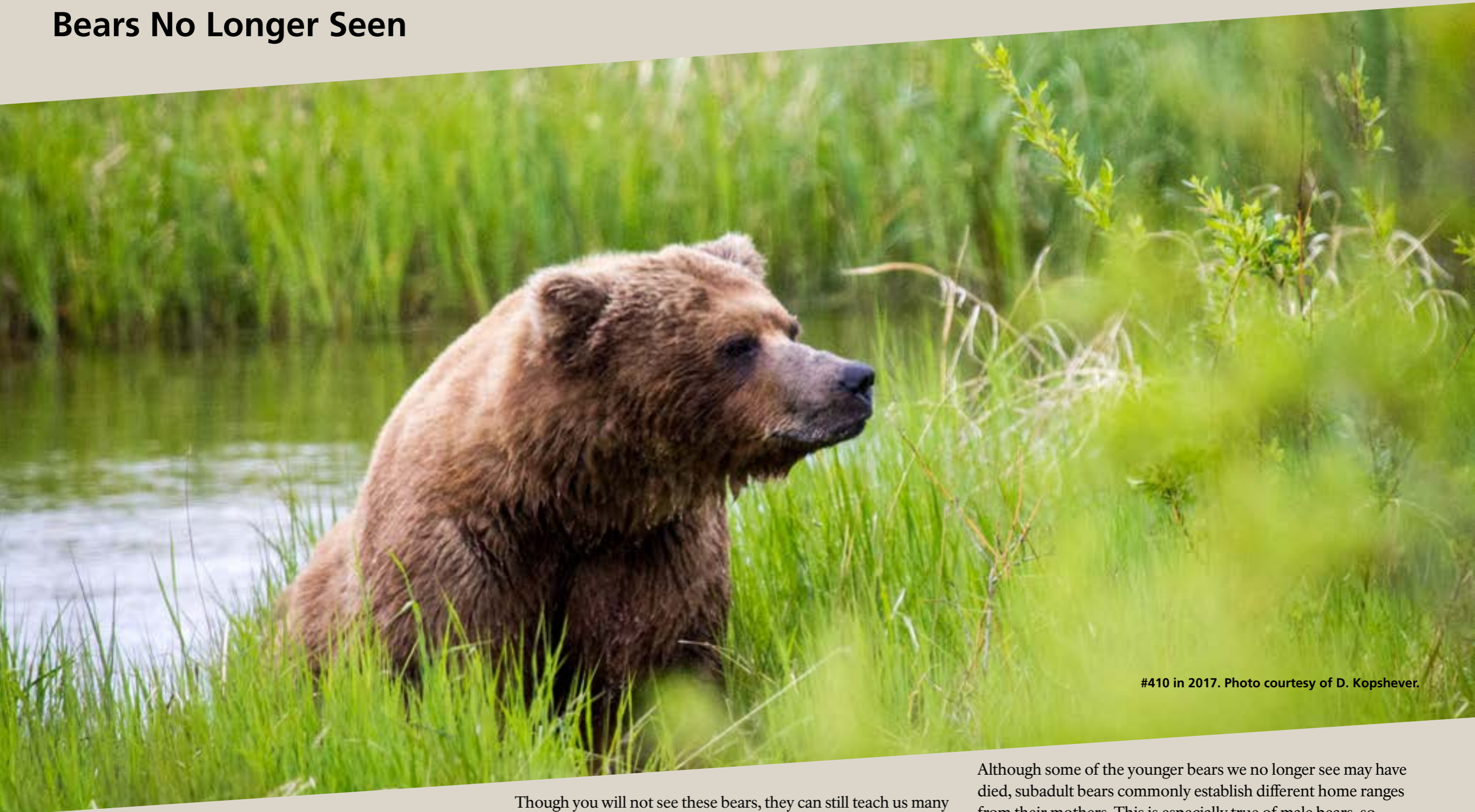
Katmai National Park and Preserve
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Bears of Brooks River: Nostalgia Edition

Gone but not forgotten - 2022



Bears No Longer Seen



#410 in 2017. Photo courtesy of D. Kopshever.

The following profiles identify select bears that have not been seen along the Brooks River for at least three summers or that are known to be deceased. For more information at Brooks River and current bears, see the main Bears of Brooks River ebook.

Bears in this book are arranged by the identification number assigned by park biologists.

Though you will not see these bears, they can still teach us many lessons about the lives of bears. Many of the bears in this book were in their 20s when they last used the river, but others were much younger. We do not know why some bears stop using the river. Older bears like #6, #16, and #410 were frequent users of the Brooks River year after year so it's likely they didn't return because they died. Disease, injuries, and predation can also shorten a bear's life.

Although some of the younger bears we no longer see may have died, subadult bears commonly establish different home ranges from their mothers. This is especially true of male bears, so dispersal may also explain their disappearance. In only a few instances (#130, #219, #868, #814) can death be confirmed.

Bears will alter their behavior and movement patterns when they discover new food sources, find that a formerly reliable food source is unreliable, or to deal with greater or lesser levels of competition from other bears or people.

1 Diver

Year First Identified: Unknown, likely in mid 1970s.
Year Last Identified: 1999

Identification

Diver was a large adult male with golden-brown fur in July and dark brown fur in the fall. His muzzle was blocky and his ears were wide-set. He had a distinctive scar on his back from a wound he received in the late 1980s.

Life History

#1 was an extremely long-lived bear and estimated to be more than 30 years old when he was last seen in 1999. He was nicknamed for his habit of diving—a fishing technique he skillfully used more often than any other bear.

In the 1970s, Diver would fish the jacuzzi at Brooks Falls in July and in the fall dive for fish in the Brooks River. Diving allowed him to feed on salmon that were generally inaccessible to most other bears. In the fall, he was often very fat—evidence that diving can be a lucrative fishing style.

Adult Male



July 1997



6 Headbob

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Young adult in 1988

Year Last Identified: 2010

Identification

In July, #6 had an orange-blond coat. His left ear was flopped over and his muzzle was dog-like. He also had a thin lower lip and dark claws. He was sometimes confused with #211 who also had a droopy lip and ear, but #211 was darker, stockier, and had a more barrel-shaped torso.

Life History

#6 was 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 a young adult in 1988 and eventually became one of the oldest bears that frequented the Brooks River.

When he fished on the lip of the falls, #6 typically stood in one spot waiting for fish to jump within range rather than shifting locations. He would sometimes hold his head out with his neck extended, then raise (bob) his head upward once or twice in quick succession as if sniffing the air.

Despite his old age, he often displaced younger males at the top of the falls. In July, he fished the lip but also fished in the far pool and the jacuzzi, and he occasionally stole fish. He was often seen fishing in and sleeping on the banks of the lower river late in the season.



July 2010



© Tamara Olson

July 1988



October 2002

16 Cinnamon

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 1988
Year Last Identified: 2011

Identification

#16 had a cinnamon-brown coat with blonder ears, a drooping lower lip, and white claws. He had no long-lasting scars, but he did have scars on the side of his head and shoulders. In later years, he was thinner than most adult bears.

Life History

When he was last seen in 2011, he was among the oldest bears in the Brooks River area. #16 was classified as an adult in 1988, placing his age around 30 in 2011 and well past an adult male brown bear's average life expectancy of 20 years.

He returned to Brooks River every year from 1988 to 2011. At the falls in 2011, he rarely fished. Instead, he regularly begged other bears for fish scraps or obtained leftover fish parts. When not begging he would often rest near the Falls Platform or on the small island nearby.

Although it appeared that other bears would give fish to Cinnamon, the other bears' behaviors more likely reflected their tolerance of an older bear in poor physical condition who displayed submissiveness. This posturing may have increased his chances of scavenging leftover fish from other bears.

In some respects, #16's advanced age and dramatic decline in the bear hierarchy are reminders of the harsh realities wild animals face. Yet #16's presence at Brooks Falls, when other bears of his age class and status have died or otherwise failed to return, demonstrated his survival skills.



July 2003



© Tamara Olson

July 1988



September 2010

24 BB

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 1996

Year Last Identified: 2009

Identification

#24 was a large, long-legged, tall, and dark-colored bear with white claws. In July, his coat was a medium-dark brown with hints of blonde around his neck. Large areas of his hind quarters were usually bare when he was shedding. He had a narrow, long, straight muzzle which gave his face a black bear-like profile. He was missing a chunk of flesh from his nostrils and numerous scars were visible, but none were distinctive.

Life History

As early as 1997, bear monitoring staff noted that #24 was one of the largest and most dominant bears seen along Brooks River.

#24 had a reputation of being hyper-dominant and was observed killing other bears. His reign as the most dominant bear of Brooks River ended in 2006 and 2007 when he was [displaced by #864](#). After encounters with #864, he was less aggressive towards other bears but still very dominant.

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



June 2003



July 2007



June 2007

45 Tatonka

Year First Identified: Adult in 2007
Year Last Identified: 2014

Identification

#45 was an adult male with medium-brown fur. In early July, he was most recognizable by his sloping body shape, which gave him the appearance of having shorter hind legs than most bears. He also had a distinct face, characterized by closely spaced eyes and oval shaped ears. His muzzle was long and pointed with a dark band or scar running across it.

Life History

First observed as an adult in 2007, #45 was a regular visitor to Brooks Falls during July. In later years, he shifted his use of the river to the fall months. He usually moved slowly back and forth between the falls and the riffles, and his behavior suggested he was intolerant of bear viewers and anglers.

Adult Male



July 2010



September 2014



September 2014



July 2008



July 2012



July 2012

130 Tundra

Adult Female

Year First Identified: 2.5 year-old subadult in 2009

Year Last Identified: 2014

Number of Known Litters: 0

Identification

#130 was a small adult with a medium-blond coat and round ears of the same color. Her most distinctive feature was a scar above her left eye.

Life History

#130 commonly fished the cut bank and lower Brooks River. Occasionally she visited the falls, but she was not large enough to regularly compete for those fishing spots. This young bear showed signs of habituation towards people, especially around Brooks Camp, though she usually avoided other bears and people when surprised.

She is believed to be the offspring of #409. In 2008, while #130 was still with her mother, she received a bloody wound above her left eye that resulted in her recognizable scar. On July 1, 2014, #130 was [found dead at the cut bank](#). Her skull was collected and cleaned so it could be used for educational and interpretive programs. As it turns out, #130 apparently fractured her skull in 2008 only to [persevere through the injury to live several more years](#).

[View photos of this bear on the day she was found dead](#) (some photos are graphic).



June 2014



In July 2008, #130 apparently suffered a skull fracture.



#130's skull reveals evidence of a fracture above her left eye.

161

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Subadult in 2009
Year Last Identified: 2014

Identification

#161 was a semi-large, mature adult and comparable in size to #83 and #868. He had a dark coat, a thick and blocky muzzle, and a large round scar on his right hip. His ears were rounded, light-tipped, and perched on top of his forehead.

Life History

Little information about this bear is contained within Katmai's bear monitoring records. #161 was first identified in July 2009 but after that initial sighting, he was only seen fishing the cut bank and lower Brooks River in the fall. In 2014, he participated in extended bouts of play with #83 and #868.

Like #879, this bear seemed to only use Brooks River in the fall. It is unlikely this bear used Brooks River in July, since the large scar on his right hip would have made him so identifiable.



September 2012



September 2013



September 2010



September 2012



September 2012



September 2014



September 2014

211 Backbite

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 1996
Year Last Identified: 2010

Identification

#211 was a large adult male with a uniformly brown coat. He had a distinctive muzzle and profile. His head was wide with a thin muzzle and a drooping lower lip. His claws were dark and his right ear drooped. This bear lacked a prominent shoulder hump. He had numerous scars on his back, face, and head, but none were distinctive.

#211 was 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

#211 was first described as an adult male in 1996. He was regularly seen in July at Brooks Falls and he also returned to the Brooks River in September. He preferred to fish in the jacuzzi and often sat in the water to eat his fish. He was also observed napping in the water above Brooks Falls after fishing for salmon. In the fall, he was often seen at dawn and dusk.



July 2002



June 2010



September 2009

216 Marilyn

Year First Identified: Subadult in 1996

Year Last Identified: 2008

Number of Known Litters: 3

Identification

#216 was a medium-sized adult female. She had a prominent shoulder hump, a shaggy dark blond coat, and blond ears. Her muzzle was straight and the long hairs on her chin gave her a bearded appearance.

Life History

#216 was observed along Brooks River every year from 1996 to 2008. She fished at the falls and the lower river area, and appeared habituated to humans. She was sometimes defensive around other bears. DNA analysis confirmed she is the mother of females #790 and #854. Compare the faces of #216 and #854 and you may see the resemblance between these bears.

#216 raised several litters of cubs through her lifetime. She was not observed caring for cubs into their third summer. In 2005, she arrived at Brooks River with four spring cubs but by the end of the summer season in 2006, she had only two left from this litter.

Adult Female



June 2003



July 2007



September 2006

218 Ugly

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Young adult in 2001

Year Last Identified: 2013

Identification

#218 was a medium-large bear with a dark blond coat that was lighter towards his head. When shedding, his coat was patchy with dark, bare spots. He had wide set ears, dark claws, and a blocky muzzle. His dark eye-rings contrasted sharply with his fur. 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 used some of the most efficient fishing techniques at Brooks Falls. He would fish successfully almost anywhere, but seemed to prefer fishing in the plunge pools below the falls, especially the jacuzzi. After catching many fish, he would 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. Later in his life, he became one of the more dominant bears at Brooks Falls. He was responsible for the scar on #489's left hip.



July 2013



September 2012



July 2008

219 One Toe

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 1997

Year Last Identified: 2008

Identification

#219 was a distinctive large adult male due to numerous large scars on his head, face, neck, and body. His claws were white and he was missing the outermost claw on his left front foot, hence his nickname. In early summer, his coat was reddish-brown, and in the fall, his coat turned dark brown covering most of his scars.

Life History

In October 2008, during an event rarely seen, park biologists observed #219 dying in Brooks River from unknown yet apparently natural causes. He was seen coughing up blood before he died in the river (see the photo at lower right from October 2008). 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. In 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 #604 and #608.



July 2007



July 2006



#219 hemorrhaging blood in October 2008

234 Evander

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 1996
Year Last Identified: 2010

Identification

This bear was tall with tan claws and a short, blocky muzzle. He was easily recognized due to his missing left ear. He lost his left ear late in 2001 or in the spring of 2002.

Life History

#234 was 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 appeared to be one of the oldest bears that frequented the Brooks River. 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 saw 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 was no longer the case in 2009 and 2010. During those summers, #234 more readily yielded to younger, more dominant males.



July 2003



July 2000 #234 with two ears



September 2006

236 Milkshake

Adult Female

Year First Identified: Adult in 1997
Year Last Identified: 2011
Number of Known Litters: 5

Identification

#236 was a large adult female with a relatively large shoulder hump and a round, filled in body. Her coat was medium-brown in July and in the fall. She had the classic grizzly/brown bear dish-shaped face, a rectangular muzzle, and lighter, wide-set ears.

Life History

When last seen in 2011, #236 was one of the older adult females to frequent the Brooks River. She fished the lower river and the lip of the falls. She was first identified in 1997 caring for two spring cubs. She had at least four more litters. Records from the past 20 years indicated that she was 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 four spring cubs, her fifth known litter, but by the end of August 2011, she has lost the entire 2010 litter. The specific causes of her cubs' deaths remains unknown.

Older females who are raising a litter of cubs may have higher mortality rates than younger, single females. 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.

In Katmai's movie, [The Ends of the Earth: Alaska Wild Peninsula](#), #236 is the adult female with a litter of four cubs.



July 2008



June 2008



October 2002

247 Snaggletooth

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 1994
Year Last Identified: 2009

Identification

#247 was a medium-sized bear with a rectangular muzzle, tan-tipped claws, a brown coat, and wide-set ears. His most identifying characteristic was his distinctive, protruding lower left canine tooth.

Life History

As early as 2000 observers at Brooks River reported that his namesake tooth had “been this way for many years” and it did not seem to affect his ability to fish. He fished the far pool and never seemed to approach the platform side of the river. #247 was not seen in areas of high human use.

Although it can never be known for sure, his distinctive tooth may have been the result of a fight with another bear. During intense fights, bears will sometimes lock jaws and vigorously twist their heads and neck in an attempt to injure their opponent. #247’s tooth could have been snapped free from its roots during such a bout.

[This video](#) shows him as a thin and slow moving bear in October 2009. Unseen injuries and illness can often prevent bears from finding enough food during late summer and fall, a crucial time to build the fat reserves necessary to survive winter hibernation.



October 2002



July 2007



September 2006

403 Egberta

Adult Female

Year First Identified: 3.5 year-old subadult in 2003

Year Last Identified: 2007

Number of Known Litters: 1

Identification

#403 was a large female with a blond coat that darkened to reddish-brown in the fall. Her facial profile revealed a straight straight profile resembling a polar or black bear rather than the classic dish-shaped face of a brown/grizzly bear.

Life History

As a subadult and young adult female, #403 successfully learned to use multiple fishing styles, including diving. She would not only dive for salmon, but also salmon eggs. In July, #403 fished the lip of the falls and stole fish. #402 and #403 are siblings. While #402 frequently uses the Brooks River area, #403 has not been seen at all since 2007.



October 2002



#403 (top) in July 2007 with her 2.5 year-old cub



September 2006

408 CC

Adult Female

Year First Identified: Older subadult or young adult in 2001

Year Last Identified: 2010

Number of Known Litters: 1

Identification

#408 was a medium-sized adult female with a dark blond to blond coat. She had light blond ears and a long and slightly upturned muzzle. She had a crooked claw on her left front foot, hence her nickname. #408 was easily confused with #409 who also had light blond 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 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 through their third summer.

Both #408 and #409 were remarkably similar in appearance, especially late in the season. It is suspected that these two bears are siblings. #408 fished the riffles below Brooks Falls and in the lower river area.



September 2004



July 2010



June 2007

409 Beadnose

Adult Female

Year First Identified: Subadult in 1999

Year Last Identified: 2018

Number of Known Litters: 4

Identification

#409 had a long, straight muzzle with a slightly upturned nose and a large body. She had a light to medium brown coat with wide-set, blond ears. In the fall, she was often very fat and her coat was a uniform brown, but her ears remained very blond.

Life History

#409 was frequently seen along Brooks River in July and in the fall. Like #410, she appeared habituated to the presence of humans and would use areas near people to rest, travel, and feed.

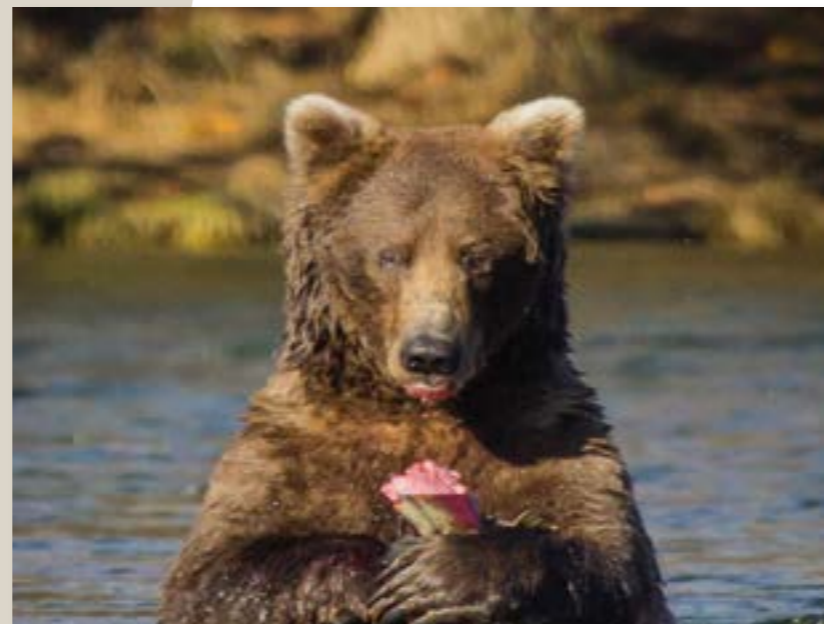
When she was not raising cubs, this bear was usually one of the fattest females in the fall. Raising offspring is very energetically taxing for bears. Females with offspring must sacrifice body fat to raise cubs.

At Brooks River, she would often fish successfully in many places, including the lip and far pool at Brooks Falls as well as the river mouth. Two of her suspected offspring, 909 and 910, also fish the lip of the falls.

#409 was a two-time champion of Fat Bear Week, Katmai's annual event that recognizes the hard work of bears to gain weight and Katmai's healthy ecosystem overall.



July 2017



September 2016



September 2017

410

Adult Female

Year First Seen: Spring cub in 1989

Year Last Seen: 2018

Number of Known Litters: 4

Identification

#410 was a large adult female. Early in the summer, her coat was light to medium-brown and often shaggy. Her fall coat was darker and grizzled. She had a recognizable dished-shaped face, a droopy lower lip, and prominent muzzle. Her claws were dark and she lacked distinctive scars.

Life History

#410 was one of the oldest and largest females frequenting the Brooks River and she fished almost anywhere. She was observed fishing in Naknek Lake, the lower Brooks River, and both above and below the falls.

She was arguably the most human-habituated bear to be found using the Brooks River, even while caring for cubs. #410 was observed with people and heavy equipment operating within 15 meters. She would sleep on the trail near the bridge, on the beach near the visitor center and lodge, and in front of or underneath the wildlife viewing platforms.

Habituation is simply defined as getting used to something. Human-habituated bears are accustomed to our presence and often tolerate our close proximity. This gives us remarkable opportunities to observe them, but these bears should not be considered tame or safe to be near. Human-habituated bears can still react defensively toward people if we violate their personal space. These bears may also damage human property and they are at a higher risk of becoming food conditioned if we do not exercise care to properly secure food and other attractants.



July 2017



September 2016



July 2012

415

Adult Female

Year First Identified: Young adult in 2001

Year Last Identified: 2012

Number of Known Litters: 2

Identification

#415 was a medium-small adult female. #415 had a uniformly brown coat and a short straight muzzle. She had no distinctive scars.

Life History

#415 wasn't easy to identify by appearances alone. Her behavior, more than her physical features, was the key to identifying her. She was very aggressive with other bears when fishing the lip of the falls. Even with her smaller stature, she would often force larger bears to back down to retain her preferred fishing spot. She was even seen chasing #480 out of the far pool. When fishing for salmon on the lip of the falls, she almost continuously bobbed her head.



July 2004



July 2012



September 2008

418 Jack

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 2001

Year Last Identified: 2011

Identification

#418 had a compact, medium-large body, and a brown coat that became lighter towards the front. He also had dark claws; a small yet distinctive scar above his right eye; and a short, stocky, dog-like muzzle.

Life History

While fishing, #418 often plunged quickly into the river. He usually fished the jacuzzi and far pool. For most of his life, #418 fished at Brooks Falls in July yet was not seen at the river during late summer and fall. That pattern changed, though, in his later years when he fished the lower river in September and October.



July 2004



July 2009



September 2011

420 Genghis

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Adult in 2001
Year Last Identified: 2010

Identification

#420 was easy to identify due to his protruding teeth on his lower-right jaw. Otherwise, he was a long, large-bodied bear with a blocky muzzle, rusty brown coat, tan-brown claws, and a floppy left ear. He was confused with #247, but that bear was smaller and only had one protruding canine tooth on his left jaw.

Life History

#420 was aggressive around other bears and regularly stole fish. In 2005, he had a large open wound on his left front leg that eventually 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. 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 more dominant bears fishing at Brooks Falls.

Even though #420 was typically very dominant at Brooks Falls, he did not appear to be habituated to humans and rarely approached the Falls Platform side of the river.



July 2007



June 2004



July 2003

438 Flo

Year First Identified: 1999
Year last Identified: 2013
Number of Known Litters: 2

Identification

#438 was a medium-sized female with a blond coat. Her coat only darkened slightly in the fall. She also had wide-set and large blond ears as well as a grooved muzzle. Her claws were distinctly white.

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 last litter through their fourth summer. It is rare for bears in Katmai to care for offspring 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. You can 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.

Adult Female



July 2012



July 2006



September 2011

468 Reggie

Adult Female

Year First Identified: Adult female in 1999

Year Last Identified: 2009

Number of Known Litters: 3

Identification

#468 was a medium-sized and sometimes fat female. She had a light brown, uniformly colored coat that darkened in the fall. Her facial features were easy to recognize. She had a drooping lower lip, a 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 and grandmother of #284. #468 fished the oxbow, lower river area, and far pool at the falls.



October 2004



July 2004



September 2003

489 Ted

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Subadult in 2001
Year Last Identified: 2013

Identification

#489 was easily recognizable because of a large, distinctive scar on his left hip. He was a medium-large bear. His coat was light brown and often patchy when shedding, but was darker in September. He had a slightly drooping lower lip, dark eye rings, and dark claws. His ears were large, upright, and triangle shaped. His nickname, Ted, is short for “triangle-eared.”

Life History

#489 was classified as a subadult when first identified in 2001. In 2007, he received a wound on his left hip during a brief altercation with #218. While the wound looked severe, it healed quickly to produce a distinctive scar.

From 2008-2013 he was one of the only bears who fished the river in mid August. During these periods he repeatedly entered Brooks Camp, something most adult males do not do regularly.

#489 often begged for fish from other bears, sometimes very vocally. He was one of the few adult bears to show this behavior. Other bears would not give #489 fish, but this technique did put him in a good position to access discarded fish remains.



August 2007



August 2013



July 2010

500 Indy

Year First Identified: 2.5 year-old subadult in 2014
Year Last Identified: 2015

Identification

#500 was a small adult with very blond fur in July. By September, her fur darkened to a mottled blond. When shedding, she had a noticeable circular shed patch on her forehead. She also had large upright ears.

Life History

When this bear first arrived in July 2014, #500 was often seen with another blond bear of similar size and color. Sibling bears sometimes associate with one another for days, weeks, or months after they separate from their mother. In rarer instances, siblings may even den together the following fall after they become independent. This may explain why #500 was seen with the other bear. Her suspected sibling, however, was not seen after early July of that year.

#500 was believed to be the offspring of #409. She was one of the smallest independent bears at Brooks River and as such faced challenges posed by other bears. In 2015, she would visit Brooks Falls, but could not compete for fishing spots. #500 found an abundant supply of food by scavenging dead fish even though she was often displaced by older, larger bears.

As part of the growing pains of subadulthood, she would often challenge and/or approach larger bears. Many of these bears ignored her, but some chased her away, including [cubs from other litters](#). In these situations, she was likely just testing her limits and was constantly reminded of her place in the hierarchy at the time: the bottom.

Adult Female



July 2016



August 2015



July 2016



September 2014



July 2015



July 2014



August 2014

604 Little

Adult Male

Year First Identified: 2.5 year-old subadult in 2002

Year Last Identified: 2007

Identification

In July 2007, #604 had a large open wound on his right hind leg, which was a distinctive feature at the time. Otherwise, he was a medium-sized young adult bear with wide-set ears and a somewhat straight nose. #604 had a brown coat with a darker head and dark claws. He had longer fur under his chin which resembled a beard or goatee.

Life History

The 2007 wound on 604's right hind leg was large and 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 the lip of Brooks Falls and scavenged for scraps below it. Before 2007, he was infrequently seen at Brooks during the fall months.



July 2007



#604 sustained a deep laceration in July 2007



June 2004

608

Adult Female

Year First Identified: 2.5 year-old subadult in 2002

Year Last Identified: 2010

Number of Known Litters: 2

Identification

#608 had a small to medium-sized body and a dark blond coat. The long fur around her neck gave her mane and forehead a fluffy appearance. She also had dark claws and a long muzzle.

Life History

DNA analysis confirmed that she was the offspring of #236 and #219 and the sibling of #604. #608 was raised in the Brooks River area. She frequently fished the lower river and used the area around camp which indicated some level of human-habituation, but she was a defensive mother around people.

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 also obtained play rewards from humans when she was a cub. While #608 was not a “problem” bear, her past behavior, especially with cubs, highlights the importance of maintaining appropriate distances from wildlife as well as storing all equipment properly so that bears don’t learn to associate our possessions as toys. Bears have long memories. If #608 got unintentional toys from people when she was a cub, that may have made her more likely to investigate our possessions and teach that behavior to her own offspring.

[Watch a video of #608’s yearling cubs playing with a basketball.](#)



July 2010



July 2007



June 2004

744 Dent

Adult Female

Year First Identified: 2.5 year-old subadult in 2004

Year last identified: 2013

Number of Known Litters: 0

Identification

#744 had a small, thin body. Her summer coat was blond to light brown in color. She often shed most of her coat by the end of July. She had large, triangular ears, dark claws with lighter tips, and her head and feet appeared large in proportion to her body.

Life History

This bear appeared to tolerate other bears, even large males. She would approach large males at the falls in hopes of picking up any fish scraps they left behind. She had not been observed with cubs, but had shown signs of estrus. #744 seemed habituated to people and was often seen on the beach in front of camp and near the bridge.



July 2012



September 2012



#744 as a subadult in August 2006

790 Weevil

Year First Identified: 3.5 year-old subadult in 2005

Year Last Identified: 2009

Number of Known Litters: 0

Identification

This was a medium-small adult female with skinny legs. #790 had a long, shaggy light brown coat, a straight facial profile, and small ears in proportion to her head. She resembled #216 and was often confused with #854.

Life History

#790 was often seen fishing in the lower river. DNA analysis identified #216 and #24 as her parents and #854 as her sibling.

Adult Female



July 2007



July 2008



September 2007

814 Lurch

Year First Identified: Young adult in 2005
Year Last Identified: 2016

Identification

#814 was one of the most distinctive bears at Brooks River. He was very large and had a missing right ear. His muzzle was long and he had a distinctive scar above his right eye. In June and July, his back had a pronounced saddle and was sometimes noticeably shed out. Late in the summer, his new coat was a uniform dark brown. Like #856, #814 was often seen repeatedly licking his lips while he fished and walked around Brooks Falls.

Life History

When #814 was first identified in 2005, he typically fished the riffles, cut bank area, and scavenged salmon carcasses at Brooks Falls. Beginning in 2008, Lurch became one of the river's most dominant bears. He would steal fish and regularly displaced other bears from his preferred fishing spots. During the last year of his life, he yielded only to #856 and #747.

He killed #435's spring cub in June 2009. In October 2012, #814 was seen guarding a food cache near the mouth of the Brooks River. Later observations determined that he was guarding and feeding on a dead bear. It is unknown whether or not #814 killed the bear he was feeding on. He likely appropriated the cache from #469 who was seen digging in the same spot. He also appropriated a food cache containing another dead bear in October 2013. For bears like #814, calories are calories. It makes no difference whether or not the energy comes from salmon or another bear. #814's actions demonstrate the successful survival skills of a dominant bear.

#814 apparently had his right ear torn off in the spring of 2015. The wound around his ear and right side of his face appeared very fresh when he was first seen in mid June 2015. He likely was injured in a fight with another bear, but this is not known with certainty.

In August 2016, park rangers found remains of a bear near Brooks Falls. The [broken teeth of this bear](#) were strikingly similar to that of 814. Although it is not certain whether the body was Lurch, has was not seen after late July that year or since.

Adult Male



July 2015



October 2014



July 2016



October 2014



July 2012



July 2006



September 2011

864 Norman

Year First Identified: 2006

Year Last Identified: 2007

Identification

#864 was a very large male. His coat was dark brown, his muzzle was blocky and scarring was usually visible on his forehead. The whites of his eyes were often visible giving him a distinctive look.

Life History

#864 was a large, mature adult at the time he was identified. When present, he was arguably the most dominant bear along the Brooks River in July, even [fighting and displacing #24](#). During the rare instances when he was seen, #864 did not acknowledge other bears while fishing. This is common behavior for very dominant bears.

In 2007, he was only observed by bear biologists on overnight surveys which suggests he developed little to no habituation towards people. It is possible this bear visited Brooks Falls briefly in July 2014 (see photo at lower right). If it was #864, he was no longer the dominant bear that he used to be. #747 quickly chased him away from the falls area.

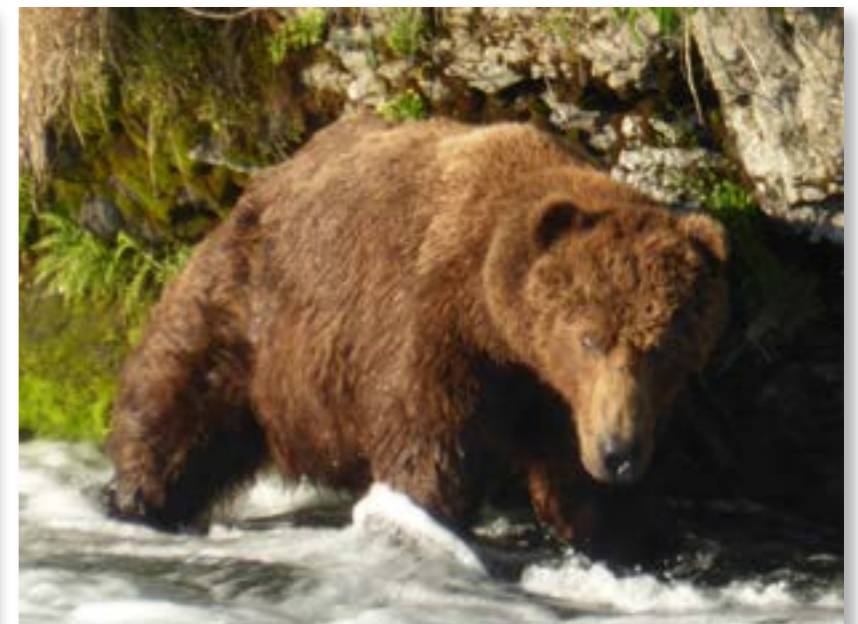
Adult Male



July 2006



July 2006



This photo was taken in July 2014. Is it #864?

868 Wayne Brother

Adult Male

Year First Identified: Subadult in 2006

Year Last Identified: 2015

Identification

#868 had a medium-sized body with a light brown or blond coat, and a grooved, medium length muzzle. His ears were wide-set, triangular, and very blond. When shedding, he had a distinct vase-shaped patch around his tail area. In 2014, he had a large scar on the top of his left hip that was similar in its size, shape, and location to #489's distinctive scar. In the fall, his coat was dark blond but he retained a blondish muzzle and ears.

Life History

#868 was first classified as a subadult in 2006. His mother is believed to be #438 and is the sibling of #83. This bear often fished on the lip of Brooks Falls, but also anywhere else he could find space. When he and #83 fished Brooks Falls at the same time, #868 was certainly less dominant than his brother.

#868 died on the shore of Naknek Lake at the outlet of Brooks River in late October 2015. Wildlife technicians collected organ and tissue samples and performed a basic field necropsy. No signs of trauma were found. Tissue samples were too badly decomposed for the lab to analyze. His skull was collected for future educational use.

[View photos of the field necropsy](#) (some photos are graphic).



July 2015



This is how park staff found #868 in late October 2015.



#868 as a subadult in July 2006

Learn More About the Brooks River Bears

There are many resources available to those who wish to learn more about Brooks River, the brown bears who inhabit it, and Katmai National Park and Preserve.

[Katmai Bears of Brooks River eBook](#)—Learn more about the bears of Brooks River in this guide to their identification, lives, and habitats.

[Katmai Terrane Blog](#)— Learn about Katmai through the eyes of

a National Park Ranger. Blog posts range in topic from bears to bugs and everything in between.

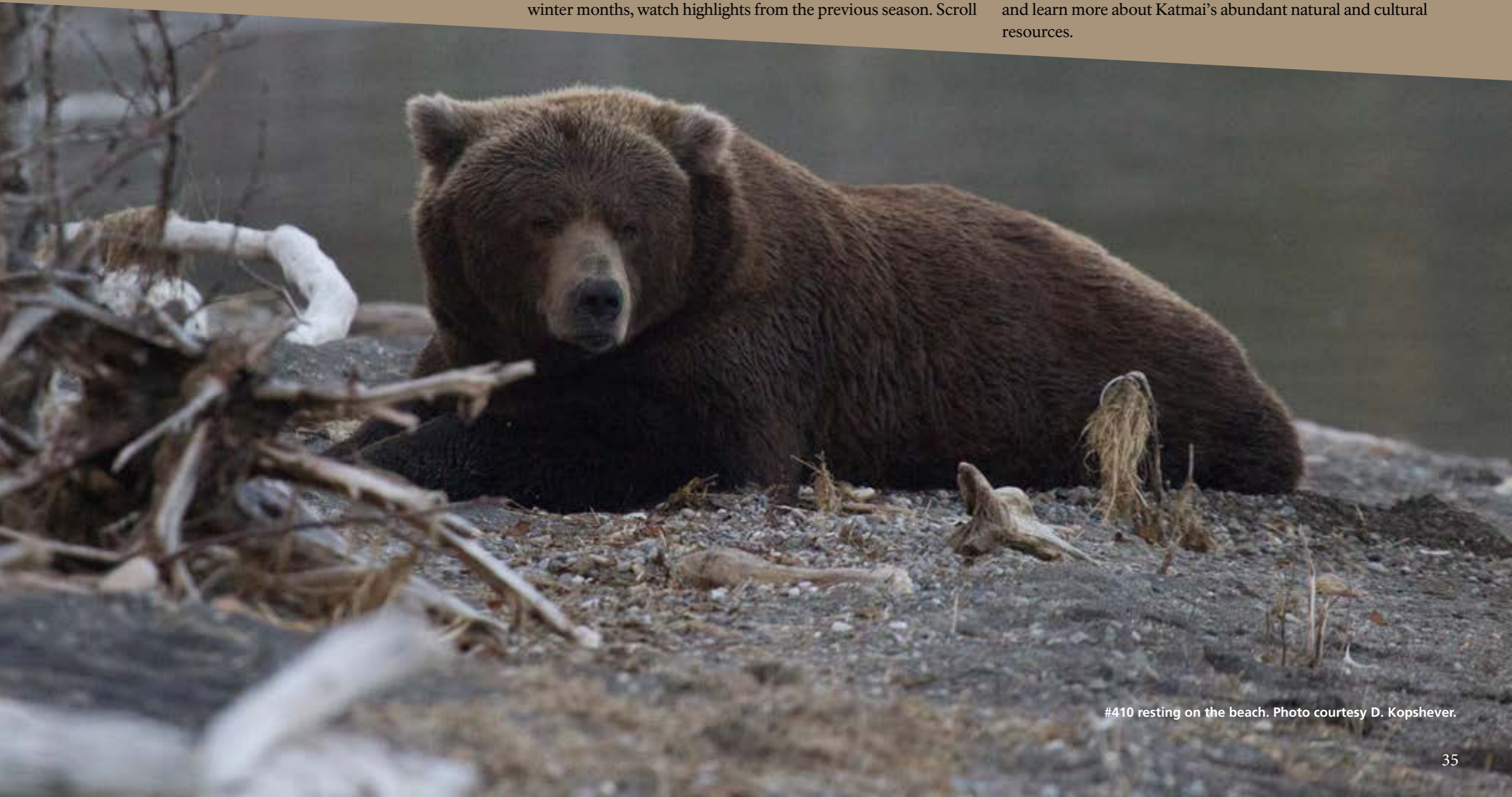
[Katmai Park Webpage](#)— Get info on trip planning to Katmai, learn about bear safety, download a free copy of the park’s official guide, and more.

[Explore.org Bearcams and Chat](#)— During summer and fall, watch wild brown bears fish for salmon, compete for mates, and work to get fat before winter hibernation to survive. During winter months, watch highlights from the previous season. Scroll

down and discuss what’s happening on the bearcams with other viewers in the chat section. During summer, engage with live ranger programs that cover a wide variety of Katmai topics.

[Explore Bears YouTube Channel](#) (explore.org)— The best place to find live ranger chat replays and hours of “play-by-play” re-runs.

[Katmai Social Media](#)— Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube—Stay up to date with what’s happening in the park and learn more about Katmai’s abundant natural and cultural resources.



#410 resting on the beach. Photo courtesy D. Kopshever.

