Park Info

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Novarupta

A trip planning and information guide to
Alagnak Wild River
Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve
Katmai National Park and Preserve

Issue Number 2021

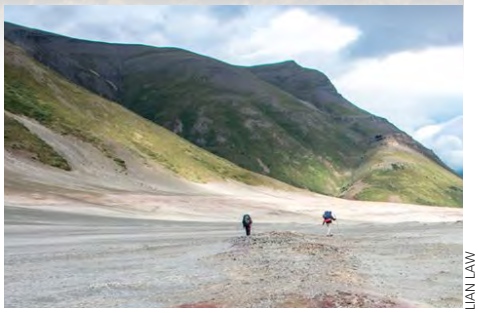
ANELA KOPSHERVER

What's Inside:

Brooks Camp 6
Katmai Origins 14
Backcountry Travel ... 20

NPS PHOTO

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



LIAN LAW

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Alagnak Wild River
Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve
Katmai National Park and Preserve

Katmai was declared a National Monument in 1918; Aniakchak in 1978. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 established Alagnak Wild River, while Katmai and Aniakchak were expanded to include national preserve areas. Katmai was also redesignated a national park. Together, these lands encompass nearly five million acres of unique landscapes managed by the National Park Service.

Mailing Address
PO Box 7
King Salmon, AK 99613

Park Headquarters
Phone: 907-246-3305
Fax: 907-246-2116

Websites
Alagnak: www.nps.gov/alag
Aniakchak: www.nps.gov/ania
Katmai: www.nps.gov/katm

Welcome to Katmai Country

Welcome to Katmai!

Katmai National Park and Preserve (Katmai) lies within the ancestral homelands of the Alutiit-Sugpiat (Aleut) people. Human habitation of this region goes back many thousands of years and speaks of thriving communities and perseverance in the face of challenging environments. Today, the Alutiit-Sugpiat people strive to maintain their traditional lifeways even in light of pressure brought on by an ever-changing world. Their connections to these lands are enduring and worthy of our respect. According, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge our Alaska Native communities—be they Alutiit-Sugpiat, Dena'ina, or Yup'ik—for their enduring legacy as the caretakers of this wonderous land we are fortunate to experience, and today call Katmai.

Geographically, Katmai is found on the Alaska Peninsula which encompasses a vast and beautiful landscape where the National Park Service also has the privilege of managing Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, and the Alagnak Wild River. Regardless of your interests, collectively these different park areas offer a diversity of outstanding Alaskan experiences.

The geology of Katmai is both ancient and new. The park's diverse landscapes comprise expansive mountains, active volcanoes, flowing glaciers and a wild and beautiful seacoast that is frequently fed by sparkling rivers and lakes. The cataclysmic eruption of Novarupta in 1912 took place long ago when compared to a human lifespan, but is geologically recent. The resulting ash covered everything for miles and even today life is still recovering from the effects of the eruption.

Many dedicated individuals from diverse walks of life have worked tirelessly over the years to ensure that wildlife remains abundant and diverse throughout this region. It is in large part because of these efforts that Katmai today supports world-class fisheries and outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities. To observe an Alaskan brown bear in its natural environment is a testament to the priorities of our nation.

Recently, we have all experienced some very trying times due to the far-reaching effects of the global coronavirus pandemic. Last year we were able to operate, albeit at a reduced operational capacity and this year promises to be similar, though we are striving to expand visitor services where possible during the 2021 season. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation with Covid-19 related mitigations; your adherence to them will help us stay open throughout the season.

We are glad you have come here to experience for yourself the sights, sounds, and feel of this special place and we hope that you take home many memories that will last a lifetime.

Mark Sturm, Superintendent

Contents:

Southwest Alaska's Parklands 2-3
Essential Information 4
Getting Here, Getting Around 5
Welcome to Brooks Camp 6-7
Camping at Brooks Camp 8
Brooks Camp Map 9
Bear Viewing 10-11
Safe Travels in Bear Country 12
Live Bearcams 13
Katmai and the National Park Idea 14-15
Exploring the Human History of Katmai 16
Cycle of the Salmon 17
Fishing Information 18
Backcountry Travel 20-21
Aniakchak National Monument 22-23
Alagnak Wild River 24-25
Park Neighbors 26-27
Support Your Public Lands 28

Alagnak
Wild River

Unbounded by dams or artificial channels, the Alagnak River meanders its way from headwaters in the Aleutian Range across the Alaska Peninsula to Bristol Bay and the Bering Sea. The upper 69 miles of river are designated a national wild river, meaning free flow, no dams, and little human impact.

From the time of the earliest Alaskans, the river has given much to those willing to learn its ways. In summer, the river teems with salmon. Falls brings migrating caribou and berries. It traverses the beautiful Alaska Peninsula, providing opportunities to experience the unique wilderness, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the area.

This river is one of the most popular sport fishing destinations in all of Alaska. Alagnak's extraordinary rainbow trout, char, grayling, and abundant salmon are some of the most attractive sport fish in the world, and the river has become the most popular fly-in fishing destination in all of Southwest Alaska.

See pages 24-25 for more information.

Aniakchak
National Monument and Preserve

Midway down the wild, remote, and mostly roadless Alaska Peninsula lies one of the nation's most fascinating, but least visited, volcanic features. Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve surrounds a large caldera formed by the collapse of a 7,000 foot volcano. Set inland in a place of frequent clouds and fierce storms, Aniakchak was unknown to all but area residents until the 1920s, and had its last eruption in 1931. Nestled inside the caldera is Surprise Lake, a remnant of a much larger lake that catastrophically drained in a massive flood. Warm springs, melting snow, and glaciers feed Surprise Lake, which in turn gives rise to the Aniakchak Wild River.

This narrow stretch of the Alaska Peninsula boasts a rich human history. Volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis have interrupted the human story, yet the land abides as a wild place where people can experience independence and interdependence. Life has persisted here in the face of catastrophic change.

See pages 22-23 for more information.

Katmai
National Park and Preserve

On June 6, 1912 residents of the northern Alaska Peninsula experienced one of the largest volcanic eruptions in recorded history. The eruption at Novarupta volcano sent ash over 100,000 feet into the atmosphere, led to the collapse of Mount Katmai, and created the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.

Katmai National Monument was established in 1918 to protect the volcanically devastated region surrounding Mount Katmai and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Today, Katmai National Park and Preserve is still an active volcanic landscape, which also protects 9,000 years of human history as well as important habitat for salmon and the thousands of brown bears that feed on them.

Katmai is a rugged and diverse land where bears are plentiful, salmon leap watefalls on their journey to spawn, steaming volcanoes serve as a reminder of the earth's power, and where cultural change continues.

See pages 6-21 for more information.

M. FITZ

Glacially shrouded volcanoes, like Mount Mageik, form the geologic backbone of the Alaska Peninsula. Katmai National Park is the site of the largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century (see pages 14-15).

Essential Information

Dates and Hours of Operation
Alagnak, Aniakchak, and Katmai are open 24 hours a day every day of the year. Most services such as lodges and air taxis operate seasonally.

National Park Service and concessionaire operated facilities at Brooks Camp are open from June 1 through September 17.

Camping
Within 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of Brooks Falls (i.e., the Brooks Camp Developed Area), camping is only allowed at Brooks Camp Campground. Camping is permitted elsewhere in Katmai with some seasonal exceptions (see Hallo Bay, page 20) and on any public lands within Aniakchak and Alagnak.

Fees and Reservations
There are no entrance fees associated with public use of Alagnak, Aniakchak, and Katmai.

Reservations and fees are required for camping in Brooks Camp Campground and must be made by telepone or online prior to arrival. See pages 8-9 for more camping information.

Reservations and fees also apply for public use of Fure's Cabin at the northeast corner of the Bay of Islands on Naknek Lake. Reservations can be made through www.recreation.gov.

Visitor Centers
The **Brooks Camp Visitor Center**, open June 1 until late September, is the point of entry for all visitors to Brooks Camp. A park ranger is on duty to provide information, campground check-in, bear safety talks, and backcountry planning. An Alaska Geographic Association (AKGeo) bookstore offers books, maps, and other Katmai-related items (see page 28).

Located next door to the King Salmon Airport, the **King Salmon Visitor Center** provides information on the many federal public lands in Southwest Alaska, particularly those in the Bristol Bay area. A large collection of films is available for viewing and an AKGeo bookstore sells maps, marine charts, videos, posters, clothing, and more. Contact the King Salmon Visitor Center at 907-246-4250.

Bears
This is bear country! Be prepared for a bear encounter! The Alaska Peninsula has a substantial population of brown bears. See page 12 for bear safety information.

Visitors to Brooks Camp are required, upon arrival, to participate in a brief, mandatory bear safety talk at the Brooks Camp Visitor Center.

Food Storage
All food, beverages, garbage, equipment used to cook or store food, and/or any odorous items must be properly stored in an approved bear-resistant container (BRC) or one of the food/gear caches at Brooks Camp. Certified bear-resistant products approved by the Department of Interior and Agriculture's Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee can be found at http://igbconline.org/certified-products-list/. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has an additional list of approved items at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.bearcontainers.

Hunting
Sport hunting is only permitted in Preserve areas of Katmai National Park and Preserve and Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve.

Only non-guided sport hunting is allowed in the Alagnak Wild River corridor. In all other areas, sport hunting is prohibited. All hunting activities require a license and are subject to National Park Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulations and restrictions.

Weather
Even during summer, visitors to the Alaska Peninsula should be prepared for cool and stormy conditions with frequent strong winds. Clear skies occur about 20 percent of days. Visitors traveling to the Aniakchak area should expect significantly cooler, stormier, and windier conditions. Wherever you travel, remain aware of the dangers and treatments for hypothermia and be equipped with appropriate clothing and a shelter.

Pets
Pets are not allowed within 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of Brooks Falls (i.e. the Brooks Camp Developed Area). In other areas, pets must be leashed or physically restrained at all times.

Weather Information for King Salmon, Alaska

Month	Average High	Average Low	Average Precip.
January	22.8°F (-5.1°C)	8.0°F (-13.3°C)	1.03″ (26.2 mm)
February	23.8°F (-4.6°C)	7.4°F (-13.7°C)	.72″ (18.3 mm)
March	32.0°F (0°C)	15.1°F (-9.4°C)	.79″ (20.1 mm)
April	41.3°F (5.2°C)	24.9°F (-3.9°C)	.94″ (22.9 mm)
May	52.1°F (11.2°C)	34.8°F (1.6°C)	1.35″ (34.3 mm)
June	59.5°F (15.3°C)	42.2°F (5.7°C)	1.70″ (43.2 mm)
July	63.8°F (17.7°C)	47.5°F (8.6°C)	2.15″ (54.6 mm)
August	62.2°F (16.8°C)	47.4°F (8.6°C)	2.89″ (73.4 mm)
September	54.9°F (12.7°C)	40.3°F (4.6°C)	2.81″ (71.4 mm)
October	40.5°F (4.7°C)	26.0°F (-3.3°C)	2.10″ (53.3 mm)
November	30.5°F (-0.8°C)	15.9°F (-8.9°C)	1.54″ (39.1 mm)
December	25.1°F (-3.8°C)	9.3°F (-12.6°C)	1.39″ (35.3 mm)

Quick Tips for Accessing Three of the Most Remote National Park Units

Many people consider Southwest Alaska's remoteness to be an attractive characteristic, but the remote nature of the area necessitates careful planning in order to overcome certain logistical and accessibility challenges. Unlike most national parks in the United States, Alagnak, Aniakchak, and Katmai are almost exclusively accessed by plane or boat. Much of this area is rarely visited and opportunities for incredible wilderness experiences abound. Other areas, such as Brooks Camp, are more easily accessed and have amenities like lodging and hot meals.

The National Park Service headquarters for Alagnak, Aniakchak, and Katmai is located about 290 miles southwest of Anchorage in King Salmon. Regularly scheduled commercial flights to King Salmon are available from the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

These parklands are open year-round for the adventurous. Numerous companies—over 115 in and around Alagnak, Aniakchak, and Katmai—provide a variety of commercial visitor services, including transportation, guided day trips, guided multi-day trips, overnight accommodations and food services. Commercial partners are authorized by permit to operate in the parks. A complete list of services is available at go.nps.gov/AKComm.

Katmai National Park and Preserve and Alagnak Wild River

Katmai is located on the Alaska Peninsula, west of the Shelikof Strait and Afognak and Kodiak Islands. The Alagnak River is located on the Alaska Peninsula about 260 miles (418 km) southwest of Anchorage. Most destinations in the Katmai region, including Brooks Camp and Alagnak River, may be directly accessed via air taxi flights originating from Anchorage, Dillingham, Homer, Iliamna, King Salmon, Kodiak, Soldotna, and other nearby towns and villages.

Boats can access Katmai from villages and towns along the Pacific Ocean coastline. Brooks Camp and other locations along the Naknek River drainage can be reached by both motorized and non-motorized boats from Naknek and King Salmon, located west of the Katmai. Boats can access the Alagnak River from towns and villages along Bristol Bay and the Kvichak River.

Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve

Aniakchak is one of the least visited and most remote of all national park areas in the United States. It is located on the Alaska Peninsula about 450 miles (724 km) southwest of Anchorage and 150 miles (241 km) southwest of King Salmon.

Most people access Aniakchak by chartered airplanes departing from King Salmon and other nearby towns and villages. Boats can access the monument and preserve from the Pacific Ocean coastline. A few adventurous groups have also hiked into the Aniakchak Caldera via a cross-country route from Port Heiden.

To view a map turn to page 26.

NPS/M. FITZ

Welcome to Brooks Camp

A. KOPSHEVER

Brooks Camp is renowned for its remarkable bear viewing opportunities. For information about bear viewing at Brooks Camp, see page 10.

The Bear Essentials:

Brooks Camp attracts people from all over the world to fish for trout and salmon, to view brown bears, explore the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, and to learn about the long human history of the area.

Brooks Camp is situated at the mouth of the Brooks River, along the shore of Naknek Lake (the largest lake within any national park in the United States). From June 1 to September 17, the NPS operates a visitor center, ranger station, campground, and auditorium. Check at the Brooks Camp Visitor Center for any scheduled ranger programs.

Brooks Lodge

Lodging, meals, flights, and many other services at Brooks Camp are provided by Katmailand, the park's authorized concessioner

For information on Katmailand's sport fishing, bear viewing, air services, and lodging and meal service opportunities go to www.katmailand.com or call 1-800-544-0551.

Please Remember...

Upon Your Arrival
Visitors to Brooks Camp are required to check in at the visitor center for a brief bear safety talk outlining park regulations. These important regulations are designed specifically to keep bears and people safe in Brooks Camp.

Accessibility
While most trails around Brooks Camp and the trail to Brooks Falls are wheelchair accessible, they are not paved and are frequently muddy. The walk to Brooks Falls can be arduous for some people with limited mobility. A limited number of wheelchairs are available to borrow from the visitor center.

Food Storage
Do not carry food, beverages, or any other odorous items around Brooks Camp. All food and drinks, except plain water, must be stored inside a building or in a designated food cache. Eat and drink only in buildings or at designated picnic areas. Only water can be consumed outside designated picnic areas.

Gear and Equipment Storage
All gear and equipment must be attended or properly stored inside a building. Gear or equipment cannot be left unattended at any time. Storage caches for gear are located at the Brooks Camp Visitor Center, Lake Brooks, and in the campground.

Camping
Within 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of Brooks Falls, camping is only allowed in the Brooks Camp Campground (see pages 8-9).

Bear Viewing
Viewing platforms are situated to provide exceptional opportunities for observing bears. Three platforms are located at the mouth of Brooks River. Two other platforms—Falls and Riffles—are located at Brooks Falls. **Note: these platforms are closed between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am, June 15 to August 15.**

Outdoor Recreational Opportunities
A variety of hiking, fishing, and boating opportunities are available at Brooks Camp. For information visit https://go.nps.gov/rn68sz.

Programs

Junior Ranger Program
Learn about Katmai's natural and cultural resources by completeing activities designed to help you engage with the park. While geared toward children 5 to 13, all ages can participate. Free Junior Ranger books are available at the King Salmon and Brooks Camp visitor centers or online https://go.nps.gov/katmranger. Turn in completed books to either visitor center where a ranger will swear you in, sign your certificate, and present you with your official badge. Books can also be mailed to:

Katmai National Park and Preserve
Division of Interpretation
PO Box 7
King Salmon, AK 99613

Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes Tour
A park ranger leads this scenic bus ride through some of Katmai's spectacular backcountry. After lunch at the Robert F. Griggs Visitor Center overlooking the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, join an optional park ranger-led hike into the Valley. The hike is 3.4 miles (5.5 km) round-trip, with 1,000 feet (305 m) of elevation change. Sturdy boots, water, raingear, and warm clothes are recommended. The tour is 7–8 hours. Inquire at Brooks Lodge for reservations or contact Katmailand at 1-800-544-0551 and www.katmailand.com.

Evening Slide Show Programs
Join a park ranger for a 45-minute illustrated program offering information and interesting perspectives on Katmai's special features, history, and wildlife. Inquire at the visitor center for times and topics.

Cultural History Walk
A park ranger leads this short .25 mile (0.4 km) walk sharing the human history of Brooks River Archeological District and National Historic Landmark, including traditional Alaska Native uses of plants and animals. The walk lasts about an hour and leads to a reconstructed Alutiiq/Sugpiaq dwelling.

NPS

NPS

NPS

Creature Comforts: Braving Alaska's Infamous Insects

Rain, cold winds, and the unrelenting onslaught of biting insects—the beauty of Alaska does indeed come at a price.

While photographers are busy lining up the perfect shot at Brooks Falls, black flies and mosquitoes are working at an equally frantic pace to find the perfect shot into the photographers' skin. So what do you need to know in order to survive with your skin intact? For starters, don't plan on being attacked by mosquitoes alone.

At Katmai, mosquitos and black flies are typically most abundant in late spring and early summer. No-see-ums (very small biting midges) peak in August. Population sizes vary each year depending on weather and temperatures. No-see-ums could reign supreme one year and seem nonexistent the next. Everyone reacts differently to insect bites and thus there are differing opinions on which insect is the peskiest.

M. FITZ

Biting insects, like mosquitoes and black flies, are ubiquitous in Katmai. Expect close encounters!

One of the most despised insects around Brooks Camp is the white sock. A species of small biting black fly, they are nicknamed for characteristic white stripes on their legs. Swarms can be brutal and persistent, working their way under clothing. Female flies rasp into the skin of their hosts, unlike mosquitoes that merely pierce the skin with their needle-like proboscis. Bites can be identified by a characteristic red incision mark in the middle of the swollen bite area.

Relief from biting insects usually arrives on days when the weather is windy, rainy, and just generally dismal. Fortunately, skies around Brooks Camp are clear for only 20 percent of the summer. The best defense is to cover up. Many people report that insect repellent containing DEET is not always effective. Therefore, it is wise to invest in a good head net, wear long sleeved shirts, and be prepared to tuck your pant legs into your socks on particularly buggy days.

It may be difficult to see value in the Class Insecta, but consider the indispensable role these insects play in the ecosystem. Male mosquitos and black flies are pollinators. They all serve as food sources for other animals. Furthermore, they respond more quickly to environmental changes than vertebrates do, which can help provide early detection of ecological changes.

Regardless of their ecological importance, the insects of Katmai provide visitors with something else: stories to take back home—battle scars, even—to remind us that the beauty of Alaska can't be won without persevering through hardships, however large, or small, they may be.

Brooks Camp Campground

The only developed campground in Katmai National Park and Preserve is located at Brooks Camp.

With its wildlife viewing opportunities, access to Naknek Lake, and stunning views of nearby mountains, the Brooks Camp Campground is considered by many to be one of the top campgrounds in North America.

Because of the high numbers of bears in the Brooks Camp area, the campground is specially managed to minimize human–bear conflicts. Campers must take special precautions to reduce odors from food, garbage, and anything else that could appeal to a bear's strong sense of smell.

Campground reservations are required May to October and must be made in advance. The campground has a limit of 60 people. See page 9 for more information.

NPS/M. FITZ

NPS/B. LUTES

Facilities in the campground include cooking and eating shelters as well as food and gear caches.

Campfires

Campfires are allowed in the three designated fire rings near each cooking shelter. Only dead and downed wood may be collected for firewood. Please do not cook over open fires.

Cooking

All cooking and eating must take place within one of the three shared cooking shelters. (As a safety precaution, campers arriving by air with portable camp stoves should bring empty fuel bottles and purchase fuel at the Brooks Lodge Trading Post.) Wash dishes and cooking utensils at the water spigot near the food storage cache.

Food and Gear Storage

All food, refuse, and any other odorous items (e.g., toothpaste, deodorant, etc.) must be stored in the centrally located food cache which also contains a trash receptacle. In order to prevent curious bears from investigating, please store any unused equipment in the gear storage cache adjacent to the food cache. A fireproof locker is available to store flammable materials, such as stove fuel.

Electrified Fence

Brooks Camp Campground is enclosed within an electric fence designed to deter bears from entering. The fence is not bear proof, although once "shocked," bears tend to avoid any subsequent contact with these fences.

How Far is the Walk to... (one way distances)

	Visitor Center	Brooks Camp Campground	Cultural Site	South Platform	Falls Trail Outhouse	Falls Platform	Lake Brooks
Visitor Center	0	0.3 mi (0.5 km)	0.25 mi (0.4 km)	0.3 mi (0.5 km)	0.6 mi (1 km)	1.2 mi (1.9 km)	1.2 mi (1.9 km)
Brooks Camp Campground	0.3 mi (0.5 km)	0	0.55mi (0.9 km)	0.6 mi (1 km)	0.9 mi (1.4 km)	1.4 mi (2.3 km)	1.5 mi (2.4 km)
Cultural Site	0.25 mi (0.4 km)	0.55 mi (0.9 km)	0	0.55 mi (0.9 km)	0.85 mi (1.4 km)	1.45 mi (2.3 km)	1.55 mi (2.5 km)
South Platform	0.3 mi (0.5 km)	0.6 mi (1 km)	0.55 mi (0.9 km)	0	0.3 mi (.5 km)	0.9 mi (1.4 km)	1 mi (1.6 km)
Falls Trail Outhouse	0.6 mi (1 km)	0.9 mi (1.4 km)	0.85mi (1.4 km)	0.3 mi (0.5 km)	0	0.6 mi (1 km)	0.7 mi (1.1 km)
Brooks Falls Platform	1.2 mi (1.9 km)	1.4 mi (2.3 km)	1.45 mi (2.3 km)	0.9 mi (1.4 km)	0.6 mi (1 km)	0	1.3 mi (2.1 km)
Lake Brooks	1.2 mi (1.9 km)	1.5 mi (2.4 km)	1.55 mi (2.5 km)	1 mi (1.6 km)	0.7 mi (1.1 km)	1.3 mi (2.1 km)	0

Campground Reservations

Reservations are required for the Brooks Camp Campground from May to October. Reservations can be made beginning January 5 each year. Telephone and internet access are not available at Brooks Camp, so campground reservations must be made prior to your arrival.

During the month of July, campsites may be reserved for a maximum of seven nights, cumulatively. Campers arriving without a reservation, especially during July when the campground is usually full, must be prepared to backcountry camp outside of the Brooks Camp Developed Area—defined as the area within 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of Brooks Falls.

Reservations cost $12.00 per person per night from June 1–September 17 and $6 per person per night in May and September 18 to October 31. Please visit www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777 (within United States), 518-885-3639 (international).

NPS/M. FITZ

Brooks Camp Campground is surrounded by an electric fence. It is bear-resistant, but not bear-proof. Campers must take precautions so that bears are not tempted to enter the campground.

Brooks Camp Area Map

Bears Galore

Brooks Camp is world famous for its bear viewing opportunities. It is one of the most accessible and popular bear watching sites in Katmai National Park. Watching bears at Brooks Camp is an unforgettable experience, but timing your trip properly is critical because the overall number of bears as well as their general behavior varies with the seasons.

When can bears be seen at Brooks Camp?
Bear viewing at Brooks Camp is best from very late June through the end of July and again in September. At other times of the year, like June and August, less food is available along the Brooks River so bears are not seen as frequently.

Springtime is a lean season for bears. Little food is typically available to bears in the spring so bears are dispersed throughout the area and are only infrequently seen at Brooks Camp in May and June.

When the salmon begin to arrive in late June, bears migrate to the Brooks River. Bears can be seen fishing at Brooks Falls and in the lower Brooks River throughout the month of July. Mid-July is typically when the largest number of bears can be seen along the river. In late July, after the salmon run peaks, bears begin to disperse to feed in other areas.

In August, salmon are beginning to spawn in the Brooks River, but they are less concentrated, remain energetic, and are no longer migrating. This creates difficult fishing conditions for bears and almost all of the bears will leave the area. Like June, there are typically days in August when no bears are seen at Brooks Camp.

By late August, many salmon have already spawned and will begin to die. As the fish weaken and die, bears will again migrate to the Brooks River to feed. In September, bears are usually present in high numbers as they search for dead and dying salmon.

NPS/M. FITZ

Watching a mother bear play with her cub is an unforgettable experience.

The behavior and appearance of the bears also varies with the season. In July, more aggressive interactions between bears are observed, especially at the beginning of the month. Bears are also thinner and many will shed their fur at this time. In September, bears at Brooks Camp are typically less aggressive towards each other. In contrast to early summer, bears in September and later in the fall are usually fat and covered with a new coat of fur.

Where can bears be seen at Brooks Camp?
The brown bears of Katmai are eating machines. A Katmai bear must eat a full year's worth of food in 6-8 months to ensure its survival. Katmai's bears predictably congregate around rich and concentrated sources of food. At Brooks Camp this means salmon.

During the peak of the salmon migration in July, bears will fish for salmon all along the Brooks River, but bears will be especially concentrated at Brooks Falls. The falls creates a temporary barrier to migrating salmon which gives some bears the opportunity to catch many fish with little effort. Typically, the largest and most dominant bears along the river fish at Brooks Falls.

In July, many of the bears that cannot compete for fishing spots at Brooks Falls will fish the lower half of the Brooks River. At this time of the year, females with cubs are usually easiest to see near the mouth of the Brooks River.

After the salmon begin to spawn and die in late summer, bear activity is concentrated in the lower half of the Brooks River. In some years a few bears may still fish at Brooks Falls and the upper Brooks River in September and October, but most will patrol the slower moving waters of the lower Brooks River as they search for dead and dying salmon that collect in the slow moving currents and eddies near the river mouth and bridge.

Five wildlife viewing platforms can be found along the river – one at Brooks Falls, one downstream of the falls, and three at the mouth of Brooks River. Each one can offer unique bear watching experiences in season.

Other Considerations
Brooks Camp is a unique place with special

regulations designed to protect bears and people.

Everyone who arrives at Brooks Camp is required to check in at the Brooks Camp Visitor Center for a brief bear safety talk outlining park regulations and proper behavior at Brooks Camp.

Be sure to dress and pack in anticipation of diverse and changing weather conditions. Whether staying for just a few hours or for several days, you should expect to encounter windy, cool, and wet weather as well as biting insects like mosquitos and black flies.

Weather and bear encounters can sometimes delay the arrival and departure of float planes, so it is usually best to incorporate some extra time into your itinerary in case of any delays.

Access to the elevated boardwalk across Brooks River can temporarily close because of bear activity near the boardwalk entrances. Bear activity on the trail to Brooks Falls can also delay tavel.

Give yourself extra time to walk to and from Brooks Falls, especially in July and September.

More people visit Brooks Camp in July than any other month. If you come at this time, expect crowded conditions especially at Brooks Falls Platform. Wait times to access Brooks Falls Platform commonly exceed 1.5 hours in July, especially midday. The Platform is closed 10pm to 7am June 15–August 15.

Other Bear Viewing Opportunities in Katmai

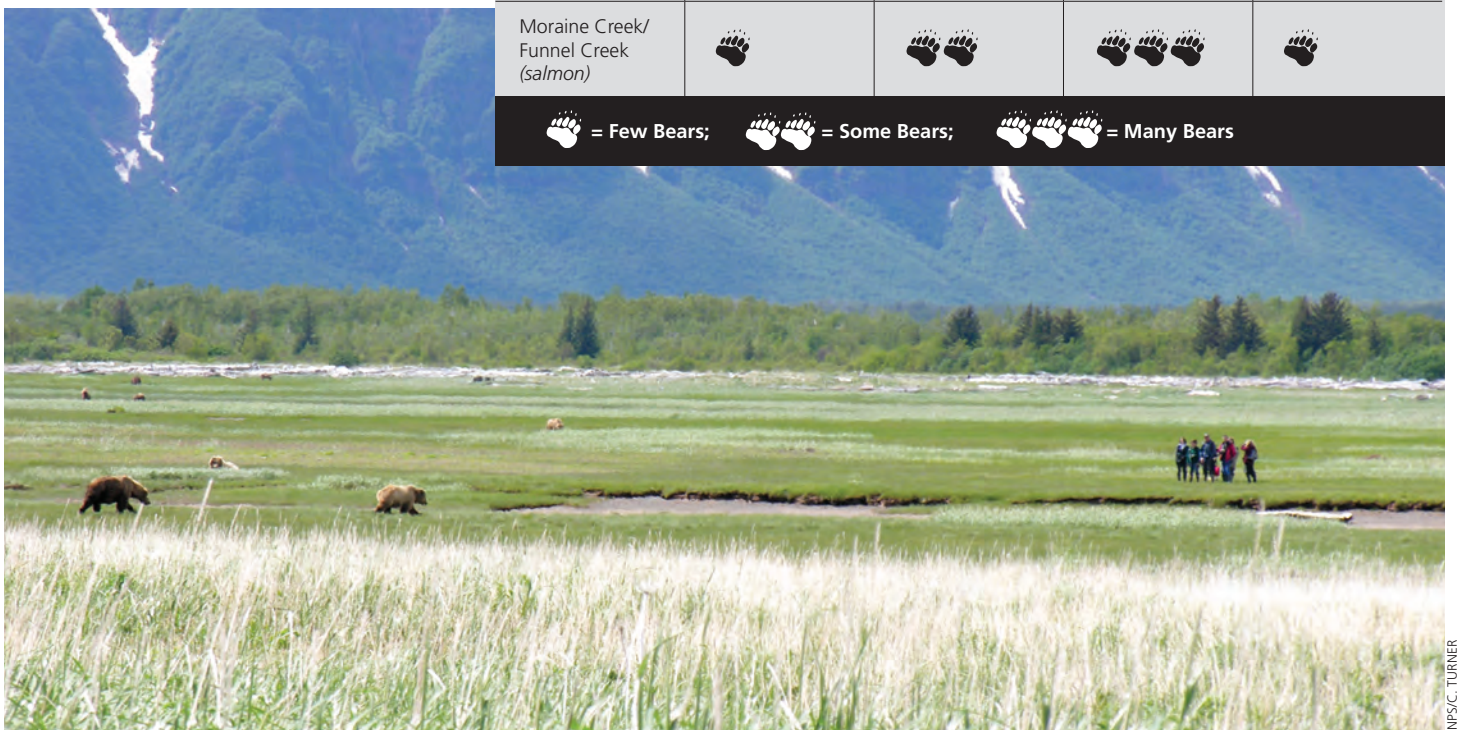
A bear's waking hours are often dominated by their search for food. Outside of their denning season, bears predictably congregate in food rich areas throughout the Katmai region. Some areas of Katmai National Park, like the food rich Pacific coast, support some of the highest densities of bears ever documented. Other areas of the park with little food, such as the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, support only a few bears in any season.

If you know what foods bears prefer to eat and when that food is most abundant, accessible, and nutritious, then you will be able to find many areas in Katmai to observe these fascinating animals. Many guided trips to observe bears in Katmai's backcountry are available. See the link on page 5.

Where the Wild Things Are: A Bear Viewing Calendar for Katmai National Park and Preserve

Location *(primary food)*	**June**	**July**	**August**	**September**
Brooks Camp *(salmon)*	🐾	🐾🐾🐾	🐾	🐾🐾🐾
Hallo Bay *(vegetation, clams)*	🐾🐾🐾	🐾🐾	🐾🐾	🐾🐾
Geographic Harbor *(salmon)*	🐾	🐾	🐾🐾🐾	🐾🐾
Swikshak Lagoon *(vegetation)*	🐾🐾🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Moraine Creek/ Funnel Creek *(salmon)*	🐾	🐾🐾	🐾🐾🐾	🐾

🐾 = Few Bears; 🐾🐾 = Some Bears; 🐾🐾🐾 = Many Bears



NPS/C. TURNER

Exceptional wildlife watching opportunities can be found throughout Katmai, like Hallo Bay.

You are in Brown Bear Country

Prepare for Bear Encounters Anywhere You Go

Bears are fascinating animals that add excitement and risk to any trip in bear country. Katmai National Park and Preserve, and the surrounding lands in Southwest Alaska, support some of the highest densities of bears on earth, so the chances of encountering a bear in Katmai are very high. Before you begin your visit, learn as much about bears as you can. You need not fear bears, but you do need to respect them. Follow these general guidelines during your stay and don't hesitate to ask your guide or a ranger for more information.

Avoid Surprise Encounters
Take appropriate steps to avoid surprising bears. Where visibility is limited or where windy conditions prevail, make noise to warn bears of your approach. The human voice is the best tool for this. Bears may not associate other noise makers, such as bells, with people. If you see a bear that is unaware of you and/or far away, back away slowly and quietly while observing the bear's behavior.

Avoid Food Sources That Attract Bears
Bears can be especially protective of concentrated food sources like salmon and animal carcasses, so be especially cautious in areas where bears are likely to gather and feed. Stay far away from animal carcasses. Bears often defend these aggressively.

Do Not Run
Running may encourage a bear to pursue you. Bears can run faster than 30 mph (50 km/hr). You cannot outrun them. If you are charged, try to appear non-threatening. Stand your ground and speak to the bear in a calm voice. Bears sometimes come within a few feet of people before stopping.

Give Bears Space
Do not approach bears within 50 yards (46 m), or as otherwise directed by National Park Service personnel. Some bears need more space than others. To lessen your impact on the animals, avoid actions that interfere with bear movement, behavior, or foraging activities. Please check with a park ranger if you're unsure about a situation. In general, the greater the distance between yourself and a bear, the safer you can be.

Hike and Travel in Groups
Groups of four or more people are typically very safe in bear country. Groups of people are usually noisier and smellier than a single person. Therefore, bears often become aware of groups of people at greater distances, and because of their cumulative size groups of people are also passively intimidating to bears. Hiking and traveling in groups is typically the best way to increase your level of safety in bear country.

Remain Calm
A bear may approach closely or rear up on its hind legs to identify you. Back away slowly, moving out of its line of travel if necessary. You may need to leave a trail temporarily to allow a bear to pass. If a bear follows you, stop and hold your ground. If a bear continues to approach, make noise, wave your arms, and try to appear as large as possible.

If A Bear Makes Contact, Play Dead
Fall to the ground on your stomach with your legs apart. Lock your hands behind your neck to protect your neck and face. If you do get rolled over, keep rolling until you're face down again. Stay quietly in this position until the bear has left the area. If the attack continues long after you have assumed the protective position, fight back vigorously.

For More Information and Regulations
Special regulations designed to keep bears and people safe apply in Katmai. See page 6 and Katmai's bear safety pages at go.nps.gov/Katmai_bearsafety for more in-depth information.

NPS

Bearcam!

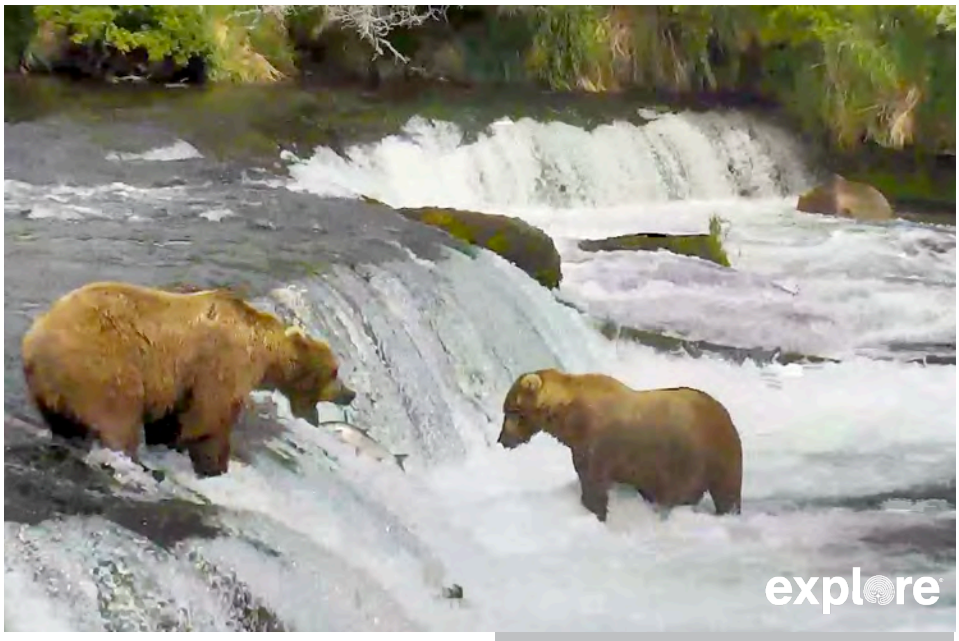
Watch Live Streaming Video of Brooks River and Its Famous Bears

Watch live footage of brown bears fishing for salmon anywhere with an internet connection. Katmai's bearcams are live and freely accessible. Cameras are located at Brooks Falls, at the outlet of the Brooks River, near the summit of Dumpling Mountain, and even underwater.

Don't miss a second of the action. Go to go.nps.gov/bearcam and follow the links to these world famous bearcams.

Join the Bearcam Community
Connect with the growing online community of Katmai and brown bear stewards. Discuss recent and past bearcam events with other fans, share your thoughts on national parks and wildlife conservation, and upload your favorite bearcam screen shots for others to enjoy. On social media, use #bearcam and join the real-time chat at the bottom of any bearcam page on www.explore.org/bears.

Ranger Live Chats
Throughout the year, rangers host live web chats on the bearcams to discuss the biology, behavior, and ecology of bears and the salmon they depend on. Check the park's calendar of events at go.nps.gov/KATM_calendar or social media pages for the live chat schedule.



Streaming webcams at Brooks River take you right to the action at Brooks Falls. Watch the cams at go.nps.gov/bearcam.

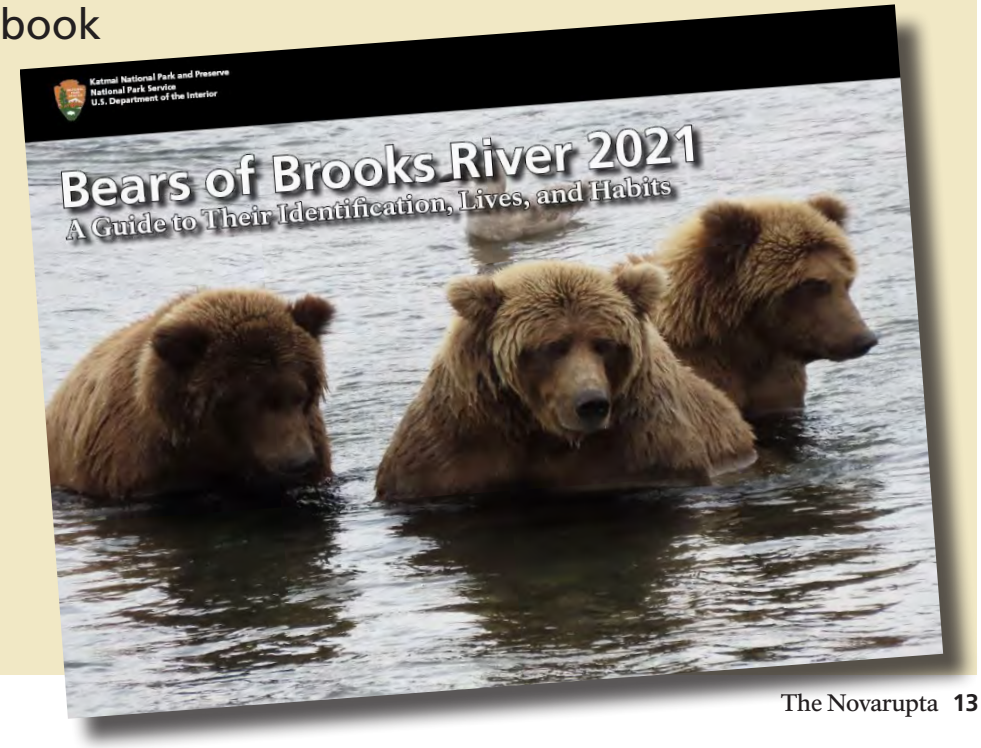
explore.org

Funding for the installation, maintenance, and technical support for the bearcams is proudly provided by explore.org. Explore.org is a philanthropic organization with a mission to champion the selfless acts of others, create a portal into the soul of humanity, and inspire lifelong learning. Katmai was granted $150,000 by explore.org to further fund educational efforts related to the bearcams.

Bears of Brooks River ebook

Every bear at Brooks River has a story. Since 2001, biologists at Katmai have conducted in-depth monitoring sessions along Brooks River to record data on bear and human use of the area. Over time, this information has grown into one of the most comprehensive data sets about bear use of a particular place ever recorded and provides you with the opportunity to learn more about the lives of these amazing animals.

Brown Bears of Brooks River, a free ebook, provides life history and identification information on the most commonly seen Brooks River bears as well as stories about bear research, biology, and behavior. Visit go.nps.gov/katmai_ebooks to download the latest edition of *Brown Bears of Brooks River*.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes filled its discoverers with wonder, awe, curiosity, and a sense of stewardship.

Robert Griggs: Katmai's First Champion

On June 6, 1912, Novarupta Volcano exploded in a remote valley on the northern Alaska Peninsula. For 60 hours, ash and pumice darkened skies across the region, pyroclastic flows and surges buried Ukak River valley, and the summit of Mount Katmai collapsed forming a 2000 feet (600 m) deep caldera.

The ash and pumice released during the eruption represents over 3 mi^3 (13.5 km^3) of magma beneath the earth, 30 times more magma than the 1980 Mount Saint Helens eruption. The Novarupta-Katmai eruption was the largest of the 1900s and one of the five largest in recorded history.

The eruption created a harsh land of abandoned villages, ghost forests, quicksand, and ash covered mountains. Even so, a few people were eager to explore the transformed terrain. Curious about vegetative recovery in the wake of such a large scale eruption, Robert Griggs organized and led expeditions funded by the National Geographic Society into the heart of the area. He discovered far more than he imagined.

In July 1916, Griggs and his team suffered through exhaustive slogs in quicksand, punishing wind storms, and two treacherous climbs to reach the rim of Mount Katmai's newly formed caldera. On July 31, the day after their second Mount Katmai ascent, Griggs continued toward Katmai Pass. Temporarily leaving behind one companion who "was incapacitated by too many flapjacks," he and L.G. Folsom traversed a deeply gullied notch between Mount Trident and Mount Mageik.

Just as Griggs was ready to turn back, he caught sight of a small volcanic steam vent in Katmai Pass. After warming his hands in this small fumarole, he spotted another, much larger one nearby. Curiosity hastened him forward. In the January 1917 issue of National Geographic Magazine, Griggs described what he saw next.

"The sight that flashed into view...was one of the most amazing visions ever beheld by mortal eye. The whole valley as far as the eye could reach was full of hundreds, no thousands—literally tens of thousands—of smokes curling up from its fissured floor.

Continues on page 15

E.C. KOLB / NAU CLINE LIBRARY

Robert Griggs (1881-1961) led several National Geographic Society expeditions that brought world-wide attention to the Katmai region.

Continued from page 14

It was as though all the steam engines in the world, assembled together, had popped their safety valves at once and were letting off steam in concert."

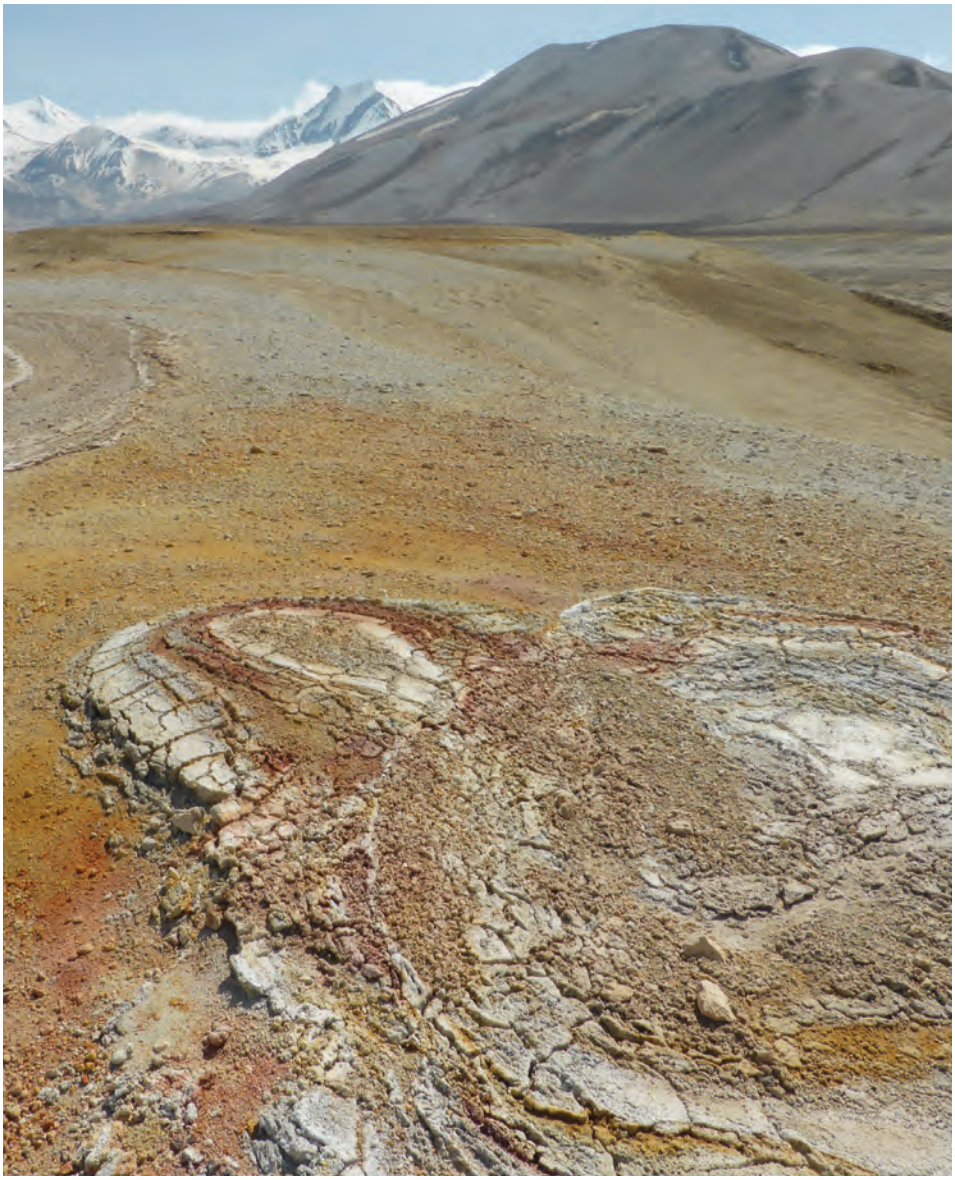
Griggs discovered the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, an amazing 46 mi^2 (120 km^2) steaming landscape. Later that night, he found sleep impossible—his mind restless with thoughts. Griggs later described himself as "overawed" but he "had seen enough to know that we had accidentally discovered one of the great wonders of the world."

What to do with such a place? Citing Yellowstone as an example Griggs answered, "I recognized at once that the Katmai district must be made a great national park accessible to all the people." Through the National Geographic Society, Griggs lobbied for permanent protection of the Katmai region. Two years after the discovery of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, Katmai National Monument was established by presidential proclamation.

The National Park Service entered its second century in 2017, but the national park idea was born long before the creation of the National Park Service, in the minds and actions of citizens. It lived in the mind of Robert Griggs during his explorations of Katmai. He "found" Katmai and became Katmai's first modern day champion. Robert Griggs's discovery of and subsequent efforts to protect the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes exemplifies the national park idea. This idea continues to live in the hearts and minds of people all over the world. How will you #FindYourPark?

NPS/B. PLOG

Several hundred feet of ash and pumice cover the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes near Novarupta.



NPS/M. FITZ

Volcanic gas vents, or fumaroles, in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes formed where water became superheated by heat trapped within the 1912 ash flow. Today, fossil fumaroles are recognized by their colorful halos. Most of these fumaroles cooled by the late 1920s.

Gilbert Grosvenor

Gilbert H. Grosvenor

Robert Griggs received enthusiastic support from Gilbert H. Grosvenor, then President of the National Geographic Society, to explore Katmai. Did Grosvenor plant the seeds of the national park idea in Griggs's mind?

Shortly before Griggs discovered the grandeur of Katmai, Grosvenor discovered the importance of national parks. In 1915, Stephen Mather invited Grosvenor to the Sierra Nevada in a bid to garner support for the fledgling national park idea. Grosvenor was overwhelmed by the trip and quickly became a staunch supporter of national parks. He helped Mather draft the Organic Act of 1916 which established the National Park Service.

Griggs was likely familiar with Grosvenor's support of national parks since the entire April 1916 edition of National Geographic Magazine was devoted to national parks. Grosvenor also fully supported Griggs's efforts to protect Katmai. Today, Grosvenor Camp and Lake Grosvenor bear his name—a tribute to an influential national park supporter.

NPS/M. HORNER

Katmai Village was once a major center of trade on the Alaska Peninsula. Volcanic unrest forced residents to flee the area and abandon their homes in June, 1912. This is the village as it looked in 1913.

Learn about Katmai's People, Past and Present

The Alaska Peninsula may seem like untouched wilderness, but when you visit Alagnak, Aniakchak, or Katmai, you are following in the footsteps of thousands of people. Certain places, like the Brooks River area and Katmai's Pacific coastline, have been a bustling hub of human activity for millennia.

People have used the rich resources available in the Brooks River for nearly 5,000 years. In *Story of a House*, archeologist Don Dumond illuminates this rich history by recounting the discovery, excavation, and reconstruction of a semi-subterranean homesite along Brooks River.

The human story of Katmai is also intertwined with the geologic landscape. In the past, volcanic eruptions disrupted and displaced people—even whole communities on the Alaska Peninsula. The 1912 Novarupta-Katmai eruption irreparably altered the lives of the people who called this area home.

Learn about their experiences in *Witness: First Hand Accounts of the Largest Volcanic Eruption in the 20th Century*.

For more on Katmai's human history and to download these books go to go.nps.gov/katmaihistory.

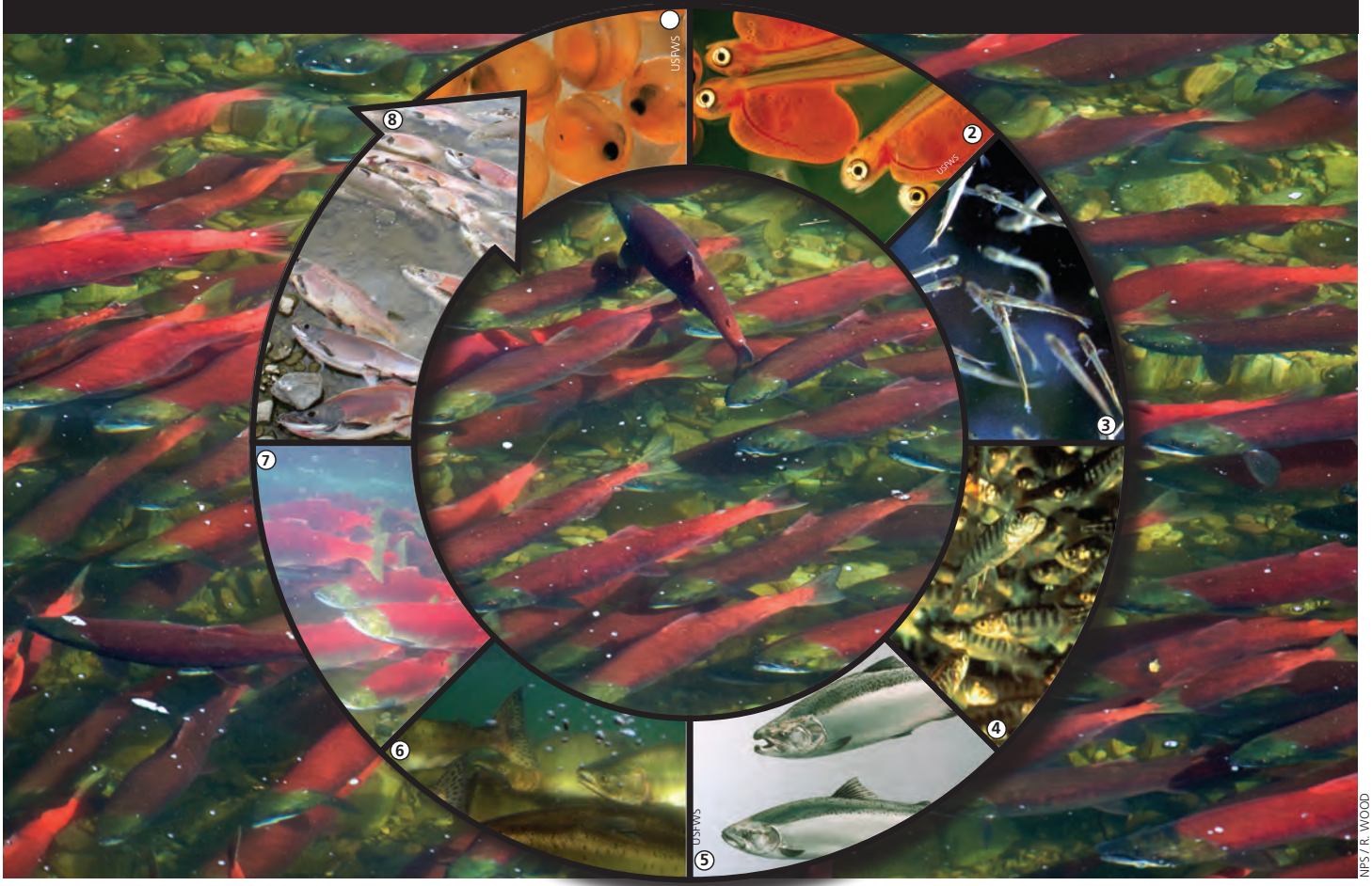
NPS

Katmai's Heartbeat

Every spring, the Bristol Bay region bustles with activity. After a long winter in dry dock, fishing boats are moved into the water and working women and men flock to the area. Why? Because the salmon will soon arrive.

Katmai National Park and Preserve and Alagnak Wild River protect critical spawning and rearing habitat for sockeye and other salmon. These fish are the foundation of a complex ecological system, and they are intricately woven into the cultural and economic fabric of the area. Salmon are the heartbeat of the ecology, economy, culture, and history of the Katmai region.

Cycle of the Salmon



Salmon overcome tremendous obstacles in order to reproduce.

During winter, when the Alaska Peninsula is locked under ice and snow, salmon eggs incubate quietly in well oxygenated steams and lakes ①. Months before, adult salmon struggled against nearly insurmountable obstacles in order to spawn. Every stage in a salmon's life illustrates their ability to survive and their drive to reproduce.

After incubating, salmon eggs hatch in mid-winter. The larva, called alevins ②, remain in the nest feeding on a yolk sac still attached to their bodies. They may even migrate deeper into the stream gravel for protection during this vulnerable period.

Salmon fry ③ emerge from the gravel between April and June. Most salmon live in freshwater for one to two years while feeding on zooplankton. Vertical stripes, called parr marks, help camouflage them from predators.

Salmon smolt ④ imprint on their natal streams and lakes while migrating to the ocean. Along this journey, they undergo many physiological changes to prepare for a saltwater existence. Salmon prepare to enter a totally new environment, with conditions they cannot know until they get there. Substantial changes to the kidneys and gills are required for these fish to survive the harsh transition from freshwater to the salty ocean.

Salmon spend one to four years in the ocean ⑤, depending on the species. Salmon in the ocean are bright and silvery in color to hide them from predators like orcas, seals, and sharks. In offshore waters, salmon are among the most abundant fish and use keen eyesight to find and catch prey.

Most salmon are between one and six years old when they begin migrating back to the watersheds where they were born ⑥. Sockeye salmon may travel 37 miles (60 km) or more each day during this long journey. Water temperature, ocean currents, day length, the earth's magnetic field, genetics, and other factors may all determine the precise timing and pattern of the migration.

Upon returning to freshwater, salmon stop eating. 95-99% of spawning salmon return to the same lakes, rivers, and streams where they were born. They smell their way upstream following the odors of the water they imprinted upon as fry and smolt. Pigments from salmon flesh are transferred to the skin and eggs. Their bones soften and they develop distinctive humped backs and elongated jaws ⑦.

Female salmon excavate several gravel nests, collectively called a redd. To do this, she fans the gravel violently with her tail to winnow away sand and silt which would smother her eggs. Males and females release milt and eggs simultaneously. Up to 1,000 eggs are laid in each nest. Salmon spawn across the Alaska Peninsula from midsummer to fall. They die shortly there after, and nutrients from their decaying bodies drive the cycle once again ⑧.

Fishing in the Katmai Region

A visit to Alagnak and Katmai offers tremendous fishing opportunities for rainbow trout, arctic char, grayling, and salmon. Katmai's runs of salmon, in particular, also support some of the greatest gatherings of brown bears on earth. No matter when or where you choose to fish, extra care and responsibility are necessary to protect people, wildlife, and the experience.

Fishing Around Bears

When salmon spawning activity peaks in a stream, bears and anglers compete for the same resources. Expect to spend more time out of the water than in, and be prepared to give up your fishing hole to a bear at some time during your trip.

Splashing fish sound like food to bears. Bears will often move in your direction to investigate a fish on a line. Always be prepared to cut or break your fishing line, so that you can free the fish and move out of the water until the bear passes. Never let a bear acquire a fish from you.

It is easy to become so engaged in fishing that you forget to be alert for bears. They are surprisingly quiet and difficult to see in dense grass or tall brush, so always have someone spot bears for you. At minimum, keep 50 yards between yourself and all bears. Stop fishing and move away well before a bear approaches within 50 yards, or you may find yourself in a situation with a fish on the line and a bear in pursuit.

Catch and Release Ethics

Many areas in the Katmai region experience heavy fishing pressure each year. Fish are often caught multiple times per season. Therefore, anglers must release fish as quickly and gently as possible to ensure their continued survival.

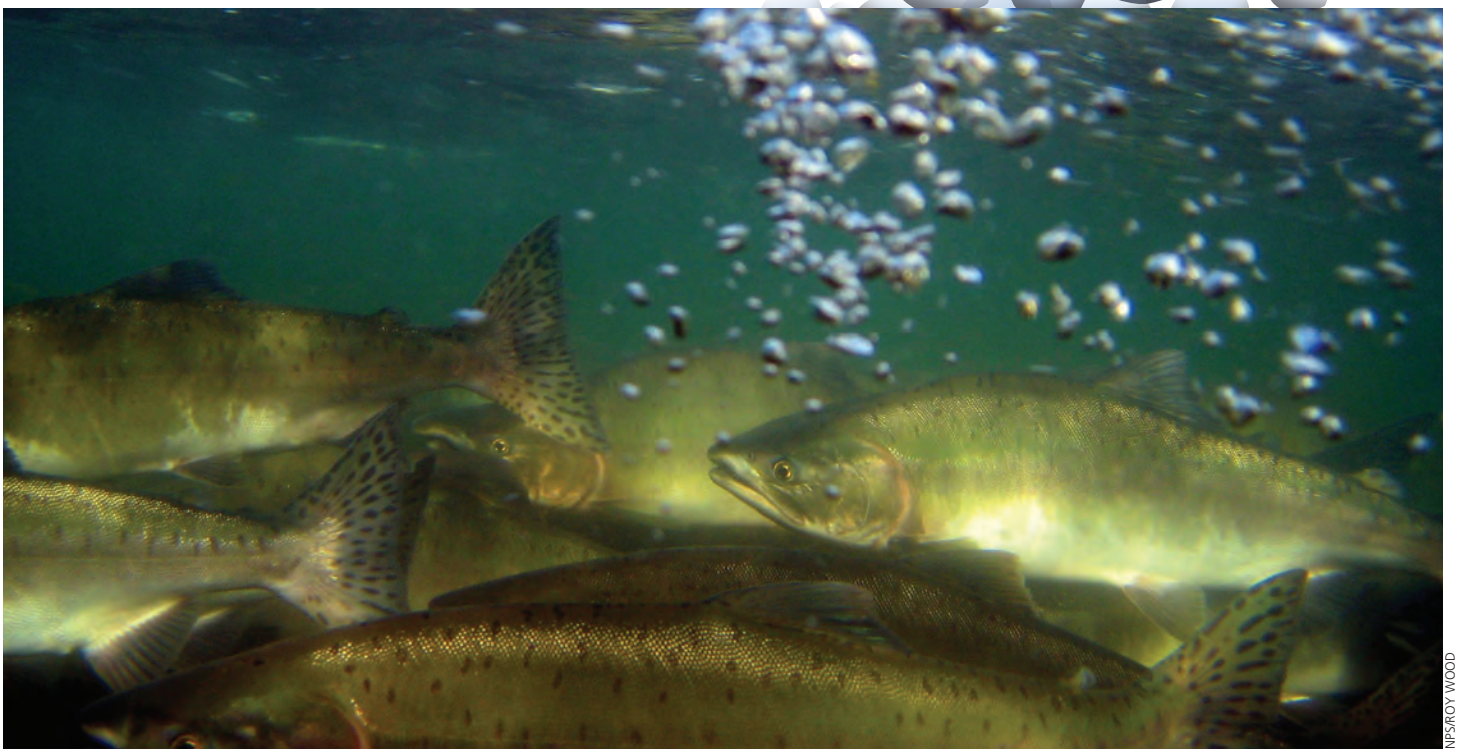
Avoid playing a fish to exhaustion. As a fish is landed, keep it in the water when removing the hook. Fish can quickly suffocate when removed from water, especially after battling the forces of rod and reel. Use barbless hooks as much as possible. They are easier to remove and less injurious to fish.

The slime on fish helps to protect it from disease and parasites. Handling a fish roughly, with dry hands, or dragging it onto the shore removes this slime and reduces its chances for survival.

A short video, *Letting Go: The Art of Catch and Release*, is available to watch online at https://youtu.be/snKzEskc_OY and in the Brooks Camp Visitor Center. This video, written and produced by experienced local fishing guides, succinctly highlights proper catch and release techniques.

Regulations

Fishing in Katmai, Aniakchak, and the Alagnak is subject to Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) regulations and restrictions. Additional federal regulations apply to Brooks River. Alaska state fishing licenses are required. For more fishing information, ask a park ranger or visit the ADF&G website at www.adfg.state.ak.us/.



NPS/ROY WOOD

Photographing a Wild Heritage

You are encouraged to enjoy Katmai's wildlife, but please do it with respect and care. National parks are symbols of our wild heritage. The forethought of past generations has given us the special places we enjoy today. Help protect and preserve the natural wonders of Katmai, Aniakchak, and the Alagnak for the future by maintaining standards of ethical photography—it's up to each of us.

The North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) encourages adherence to the following Principles of Ethical Field Practices:

Environment: Knowledge of Subject and Place

- Learn patterns of animal behaviors so as not to interfere with animal life cycles.
- Do not distress wildlife or their habitat. Respect the routine needs of animals.
- Use appropriate lenses to photograph wild animals. If an animal shows stress, move back and use a longer lens.
- Acquaint yourself with the fragility of the ecosystem. Stay on trails that are intended to lessen impact.

Social: Knowledge of Rules and Laws

- When appropriate, inform managers or other authorities of your presence and purpose. Help minimize cumulative impacts and maintain safety.
- Learn the rules and laws of the location. If minimum distances exist for approaching wildlife, follow them.
- In the absence of management authority, use good judgment. Treat the wildlife, plants and places as if you were their guest.
- Prepare yourself and your equipment for unexpected events. Avoid exposing yourself and others to preventable mishaps.

Individual: Expertise and Responsibility

- Treat others courteously. Ask before joining others already shooting in an area.
- Tactfully inform others if you observe them in engaging in inappropriate or harmful behavior. Many people unknowingly endanger themselves and animals.
- Report inappropriate behavior to proper authorities. Don't argue with those who don't care; report them.
- Be a good role model, both as a photographer and a citizen. Educate others by your actions; enhance their understanding.

This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the North American Nature Photography Association. For more information, please visit www.nanpa.org.

NPS/M. FITZ

If people behave consistently, then animals may learn to behave consistently around people. Your potential impact on animals can be minimized by photographing from predictable places like the wildlife viewing platforms at Brooks Camp.

Katmai's Abundent Wildlife

NPS/M.BRADBURN

While little is known about Katmai's wolf population, wolves have been seen throughout the park; along the coast hunting sea otter and harbors seals, and in Brooks Camp fishing alongside bears.

Katmai was designated a National Monument in 1918 to preserve features associated with one of the most powerful volcanic eruptions ever recorded. However, later expansions and the change in status to Katmai did not focus on geologic activity but rather on the importance of wildlife. Today, one of the primary purposes of Katmai National Park and Preserve is to protect habitats for and populations of fish, brown bears, and other wildlife.

Katmai encompasses 4.1 million acres of pristine land that includes mountainous regions, dense spruce forests, rolling tundra, a variety of water features and nearly 500 miles of coastline. While bears tend to dominate the animal conversation, the varied landscape provides habitat for a whole host of wildlife.

From coast to tundra, Katmai is one of the best areas in North America to watch birds, especially during the spring migratory and summer breeding seasons. Fish from salmon to sculpin are a crucial part of Katmai's ecosystem and over 40 mammals call the park home. What will you see on a visit to Katmai?

NPS/M. FITZ

Hikers often find challenge, adventure, unusual geology, and surreal beauty in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.

Logistics

Permits

Permits are not required for backcountry travel or camping, but you are encouraged to submit a backcountry itinerary at the Brooks Camp or King Salmon visitor centers. In case of emergency, these itineraries give park rangers a point of reference to begin a search and rescue.

Camping

Camping is allowed anywhere on public lands within Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve and Alagnak Wild River. At Katmai, no camping is permitted within 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of Brooks Falls except within the Brooks Camp Campground. Seasonal camping restrictions may apply to other areas of Katmai. Please visit go.nps.gov/KATMbackcountry for the latest information.

Campsites must be relocated at least 2 miles (3.2 km) after 14 consecutive days in one location. When choosing a campsite, follow Leave No Trace guidelines. Food, trash, and all odorous items must be carried and stored in a bear-resistant container (BRC). A limited supply of BRCs are available to borrow at the Brooks Camp and King Salmon visitor centers. Hanging food is not encouraged as trees of appropriate height are not usually available.

Maps

Maps are available from the USGS Map Store (store.usgs.gov). The Brooks Camp and King Salmon visitor centers (see page 4) maintain a limited selection of topographic maps as well.

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is a national and international program designed to assist outdoor enthusiasts with their decisions about how to reduce their impacts when they hike, camp, picnic, snowshoe, run, bike, hunt, paddle, ride horses, fish, ski or climb. The program strives to educate all those who enjoy the outdoors about the nature of their recreational impacts as well as techniques to prevent and minimize such impacts. Leave No Trace is best understood as an educational and ethical program, not as a set of rules and regulations.

Leave No Trace information is rooted in scientific studies and common sense. The message is framed under seven Leave No Trace Principles:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

4. Leave What You Find

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

6. Respect Wildlife

7. Be Considerate of Others

This copyrighted LNT information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. For more information, please visit www.lnt.org.

Leave No Trace™

Center for Outdoor Ethics | LNT.org

NPS/M. FITZ

Backcountry campers should consider using portable electric fences in areas with high densities of bears.

Attention Hallo Bay Campers:

To ensure bears' free access to prime feeding sites and to reduce the risk of bear/human conflicts, camping within the core Hallo Bay Meadows is closed from April 1 through October 31 annually.

Explore the Savonoski Loop

Magnificent lakes, rivers, and mountains await exploration on the Savonoski Loop, an 80 mile (129 km) backcountry canoe or kayak trip. The trip generally takes four to ten days to complete, depending on weather conditions and paddlers' experience.

Most paddlers begin at Brooks Camp and travel to the North Arm of Naknek Lake and Bay of Islands where rugged topography and an intricate shoreline invite further exploration. At historic Fure's Cabin, a 1.5 mile (2.4 km) portage leads to Lake Grosvenor. After reaching Lake Grosvenor, paddlers usually continue southeast on the lake to its outlet. After reaching Savonoski River, paddlers are swiftly carried to the Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake.

Bears are commonly seen along the route. In July, many paddlers avoid camping along Savonoski River, as it is particularly popular with bears fishing for salmon. Strong winds and cold water can create dangerous conditions at any time. Downed trees form sweepers and strainers in Savonoski River.

Paddlers should exercise caution to avoid these potential hazards and practice Leave No Trace skills.

Equipment rentals, outfitters, and guides may be available locally. A list of service providers is available at go.nps.gov/AKComm.

Public use of Fure's Cabin in Bay of Islands is available by permit. Reservations and permits are issued through www.recreation.gov. To read more about the Savonoski Loop and other boating opportunities in Katmai, please visit go.nps.gov/KATMboating.

The 80 mile (129 km) Savonoski Loop.

River Crossings in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes

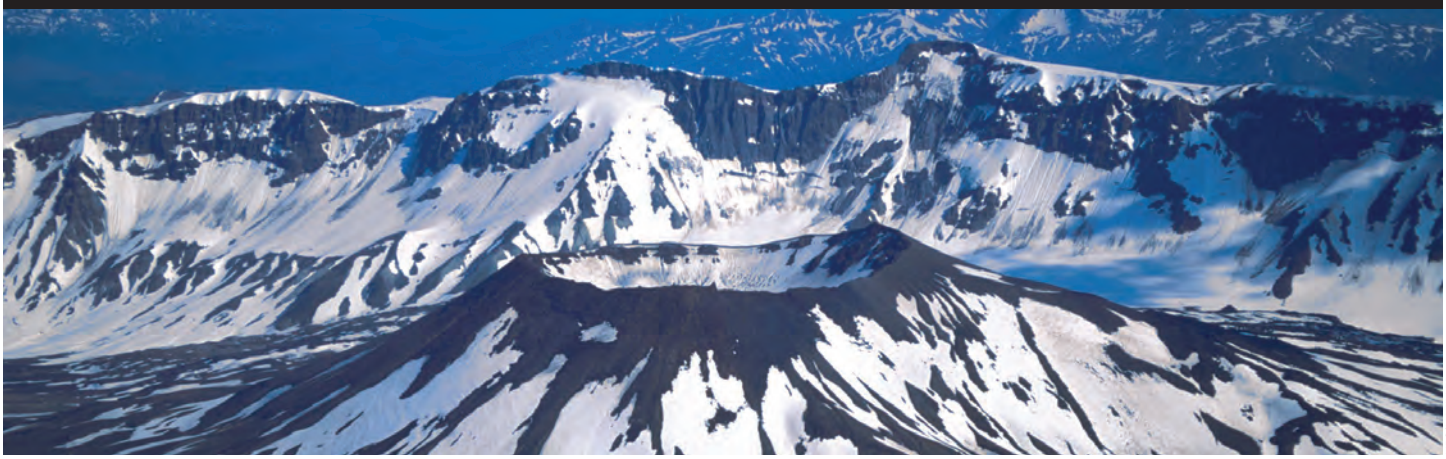
The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes poses special challenges for backcountry travelers. Suspended volcanic ash and glacially-derived sediments in river waters often make water depths impossible to estimate, and most of the rivers in the Valley are confined to narrow gorges that are deceptively deep and swift. Hikers must be especially cautious when choosing a place to cross the Valley's rivers and creeks. The River Lethe and Knife Creek, for example, can only be forded in a few places. If you cannot find a safe crossing, then you should not attempt to cross. You may also need to wait a day or longer until lower water levels permit safe crossing.

Follow these tips when crossing:

- Watch the water's surface and cross where you see small ripples, not waves.
- Wear shoes while crossing.
- Release your pack's belt buckle and loosen shoulder straps so you can drop your pack easily.
- Cross early in the morning when runoff from glaciers is low.
- Allow yourself a retreat. Don't commit to one route.
- Use a hiking pole or stick to help steady yourself and gauge the water's depth.

Hikers can cross River Lethe in very few places. High and sediment-laden water often hide steep drop-offs and gorges (inset bottom right).

NPS/M. FITZ



NPS/J. MILLER

Vent Mountain (middle foreground) in the Aniakchak Caldera is one of the more recent reminders of Aniakchak's active volcanism.

A Remote and Wonderful Land

Aniakchak is out there, really out there. It lies 450 miles (724 km)south of Anchorage on the roadless Alaska Peninsula. Because of its remote location and notoriously bad weather, Aniakchak is one of the least visited units of the national park system. However, the monument's extraordinary landscape make it a truly unique place to experience.

Aniakchak is a vibrant reminder of Alaska's location on the volcanically active Ring of Fire. About 3,500 years ago, a 7,000 foot (2150 m) volcano collapsed during a massive eruption. A more than six-mile (10 km) wide, 2,500 foot (770 m) deep caldera was left in the eruption's wake. Since then, subsequent eruptions created cinder cones, lava flows, and explosion pits that dot the caldera floor. Aniakchak's most recent eruption occurred in early May, 1931. When you are in the caldera, you feel like you are inside of a volcano.

Aniakchak's caldera was once partly filled with a large lake, similar to Crater Lake in Oregon. Eventually, a weaker portion of the caldera rim collapsed. The resulting outflow eroded the rim to create The Gates through which the Aniakchak River now flows. At 2.5 miles long (4 km), Surprise Lake is all that remains of the once larger lake. Catastrophic change has repeatedly altered the face of the landscape, but that is only one of the many things to discover at Aniakchak.

With less than an estimated 200 visitors per year, solitude is easy to find. Aniakchak is rich with wildlife and fish, and archeological excavations have revealed a substantial record of human history in the area. Of course, there is always the volcano. If you visit be prepared for the worst, but expect to experience the best of Alaska.

NPS/T. HAMON

Through The Gates: Rafting Aniakchak Wild River

Congress designated Aniakchak River a national wild river in 1980. Spectacular scenery and remoteness make rafting this river a rewarding experience. From Surprise Lake, the river flows a peaceful mile (1.6 km) to The Gates. The river moves swiftly through this narrow gorge in the caldera wall, and large rocks demand precise maneuvering. A gradient of 75 feet per mile (14.2 m/km) makes this section challenging.

After a more gentle 10 miles (16.1 km) rafters arrive at the confluence with Hidden Creek where car-sized boulders, abrupt bends, and a narrow bed require extreme caution. After 5 more miles (8 km), the river slows as it meanders toward the Pacific Ocean and the seals, sea otters, bald eagles, and sea birds of Aniakchak Bay. Bears can be seen all along the river.

NPS/T. HAMON

Rafters must negotiate car-sized boulders in The Gates of the Aniakchak Wild River.

Are you contemplating the trip? Aniakchak River challenges even the most experienced river runners. Only a few parties float the river each year, mostly in July. Aniakchak's weather is often severe. Strong winds and cold temperatures can appear suddenly. A hefty budget and pre-tested skills are absolutely necessary. Plan on delays getting in and, especially, getting out. The river is dynamic; conditions often change rapidly. Bring durable, field tested equipment. Inflatable rafts 12–13 feet (4 m) long with rowing platforms are most popular, but smaller packrafts are also used. Total float time is 3–4 days from Surprise Lake to the ocean. Contact the National Park Service in King Salmon for the latest information and always be prepared for the unexpected.

NPS

10 Essentials for Backcountry Travel

The Alaska Peninsula's backcountry provides access to millions of acres of wilderness and limitless possibilities for adventure and exploration. With these opportunities come great responsibility to maintain the safety of your group, yourself, wildlife, and the land. To have a safer and more enjoyable visit, be sure to bring these essential items with you.

1. Sturdy Shelter

2. Bear Resistant Food Container

Required for all backcountry travel. Store anything with an odor that might catch a bear's interest inside.

3. Good Rain Gear and Extra Clothing

4. Map and Compass/GPS Units

There are no trails in the backcountry so route finding is a necessary skill.

5. Extra Food

6. Water and a Water Treatment System

7. Camp Stove and Extra Fuel

8. Appropriate Footwear

9. Safety Items

Safety items include headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries, whistle or other signaling device, first aid kit, repair kit and tools, protection from biting insects, sunglasses and sunscreen.

10. Safety Items You May Not Have Thought About

These include things such as emergency deterrents in case of aggressive wildlife such as bear spray and a satellite phone or other two-way communication device for emergency communications.

For more information, please visit https://go.nps.gov/1m50vm

.

NPS

Alagnak Wild River

NPS / R. WOOD

Alagnak Wild River is popular with rafters and anglers.

Meander After Meander After Meander

Alagnak river flows through a land of captivating landscapes, abundant wildlife, and cultural heritage. Meandering down the braided river, you may discover a bald eagle perched atop a spruce tree in the boreal forest, gaze at a moose browsing above the river bank in the wet sedge tundra, or perhaps encounter a brown bear feasting upon spawning salmon.

In Yup'ik, Alagnak means "making mistakes" or "going the wrong way." It's easy to see why. The middle section of river rarely occupies one channel. Many local people call Alagnak the Branch River, because of its branching and meandering nature.

NPS/R. WOOD

For much of its length, Alagnak River is rarely contained in one channel.

In order to protect the Alagnak's free-flowing characteristics, striking scenery, diverse wildlife, and cultural history, the upper 67 miles (108 km) were designated a wild river in 1980 by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act under the provisions of the 1968 National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Alagnak Wild River is part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. In Alaska, 3,210 miles (5,166 km) of protected wild, scenic and recreational rivers have been designated. The National Park Service manages approximately 83 percent of the river within the Alagnak Wild River corridor; the remaining 17 percent of the lands within the corridor are privately owned by Alaska Natives. Please respect the rights and privileges of private land owners.

For centuries people have lived along the Alagnak and depended on the rich natural resources for survival. Today, Alaska Natives from nearby villages depend on the area for subsistence hunting and fishing. The Alagnak River's wildlife and Class I–III rapids offer an exciting trip for many boaters, and the abundant fish make the river the most popular destination for sport fishing in Southwest Alaska.

People and the Alagnak River

Alagnak River has been a productive place to live for thousands of years—home to many people thriving on its bounty. An archeological survey conducted in 1997 revealed that people have lived along the river for the past 8,000 years.

Some early inhabitants lived in settlements with as few as four dwellings, while others resided in larger villages with as many as 69 houses. From more recent times, the remains of an early historic village provide evidence of a community whose members cached their food in the ground, attended a Russian Orthodox church, and buried their loved ones in a cemetery.

Alaska Natives continue to own land along the Alagnak River, practicing traditional subsistence activities. As you enjoy the river, remember those who came before and respect the special cultural heritage of the area.

Please do not disturb archeological sites, leave artifacts where you find them, and do not camp or trespass on private property.

To learn more about the people who live and have lived along Alagnak River, download your free copy of the *Illustrated Guide to the Cultural History of the Alagnak Wild River* at go.nps.gov/alagnakhistory.

An Enduring Subsistence Life

For thousands of years, people inhabited many places along Alagnak River such as Alagnag'llug (which is diminutive for "teasing cousins") and Locknuk. Their descendants have since moved to small villages like Kokhanok, Igiugig, and Newhalen, but many people still return to the area for subsistence purposes.

Alagnak River provides a place for people to thrive in a rural landscape. Along the river, people traditionally caught birds and gathered eggs, sour dock, wild celery, and fiddlehead ferns. At summertime camps, fish are gathered for smoking, salting, canning, and freezing for the winter. When dogs were used as the major mode of transportation, fish were stored for them too.

Long ago, fish were stored in underground pits and were used to make fermented fish heads, a delicacy. In the fall season, salmon-berries, blackberries, blueberries, and cranberries are gathered and stored for winter. Wild game such as caribou, moose, and bears are hunted.

In late fall, whitefish are harvested and stored for the winter. Smelt, trout, and grayling are caught by ice fishing. Trapping is still done to provide fur for hats, mittens, coats, and household use such as throw rugs and furniture coverings.

Salmon drying on a traditional rack.

NPS

Neighbors on the Alaska Peninsula

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge

This wildlife refuge stretches nearly 340 miles along the Alaska Peninsula and encompasses about 4.3 million acres. Elevations range from sea level to 8,225 feet (2,507 m) at the summit of Mount Veniaminof. It's a place of towering volcanoes, misty fjords, steep cliffs, deep bays, and long beaches that provides important wildlife habitat.

Located approximately 330 miles (547 km) southwest of Anchorage and 55 miles (89 km) south of King Salmon, the refuge is bordered on the north by the Becharof National Wildlife Refuge, and to the south it is bisected by Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve.

Phone: 907-246-3339
www.fws.gov/refuge/alaska_peninsula/

Becharof National Wildlife Refuge

Becharof National Wildlife Refuge contains a variety of landscapes within its 1.2 million-acre boundary including rolling tundra, wetlands, glacial lakes, rivers, rugged cliffs and volcanic peaks. Land elevations range from sea level to 4,835 feet (1,474 m) at the summit of Mount Peulik.

Located approximately 295 air miles (475 km) southwest of Anchorage and 10 miles (16 km) south of King Salmon, this refuge is situated between Katmai National Park and Preserve to the north and the Alaska Peninsula Refuge to the south.

Phone: 907-246-3339
www.fws.gov/refuge/becharof/

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

McNeil River State Game Sanctuary

Many of the same conditions that make Katmai National Park and Preserve prime bear habitat are also found at McNeil River State Game Sanctuary. McNeil is located on Katmai's northwest boundary and is famous for its large brown bear population and for the opportunity it affords a small group of visitors to watch bears fishing and interacting in a natural setting.

To reduce the human impact on bears at McNeil, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game limits the number of visitors to 10 people per day by means of a permit lottery. Permit applications are due by March 1 and an application fee is required.

Phone: 907-267-2189
https://go.usa.gov/xs8YA

Alaska State Boroughs

Bristol Bay Borough

Bristol Bay Borough is a rural Alaskan fishing community situated at the mouth of Kvichak and Naknek rivers. The borough includes three cities: King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek. Commercial fishing, salmon processing, and tourism are economic mainstays. The Bristol Bay salmon fishing industry is one of the largest and most valuable in the world.

King Salmon, connected to Naknek by the 15.5 mile (25 km) Alaska Peninsula Highway, serves as the transportation center and is the site of a former U.S. Air Force Base. South Naknek is a more traditional rural community and is not connected to the other communities in the borough by road.

Phone: 907-246-4224
www.bristolbayboroughak.us/

Lake and Peninsula Borough

Lake and Peninsula Borough encompasses nearly 24,000 square miles (62,160 km^2)—about the size of West Virginia—and stretches from Lake Clark in the north to Ivanof Bay in the south.

Incorporated in 1989, the borough includes 17 communities with a combined population of about 1,800 people grouped in three distinct geographical areas: the Alaska Peninsula/Pacific side, the Alaska Peninsula/Bristol Bay side, and Iliamna Lake/Lake Clark area. Major rivers in the area provide outstanding recreational opportunities and the largest runs of sockeye salmon in the world. Commercial fishing and fish processing are the borough's economic foundation.

Phone: 907-246-3421
www.lakeandpen.com

Alaska Geographic

Alaska Geographic (AKGeo) is a non-profit bookstore, publisher, educator, and supporter of Alaska's magnificent parks, forests, and refuges. Let AKGeo be your guide to the Last Frontier. AKGeo's mission is to meaningfully connect people to Alaska's public lands because they believe that inspired people become champions of Alaska's parks, forests and refuges.

To accomplish their mission, AKGeo:

- Operates bookstores in many locations statewide as well as an online store.
- Publishes books, maps, films, and free visitor guides.
- Offers youth, family, and adult programs through Field Institute courses.
- Collaborates with partners, including land management agencies, business associates, and educational organizations.
- Contributes financial support and services to Alaska's parks, forests, and refuges.

AKGeo's work is undertaken with generous contributions from members and donors, as well as income earned from our bookstores and other sources. Consider becoming a member and learn more at https://www.akgeo.org/.

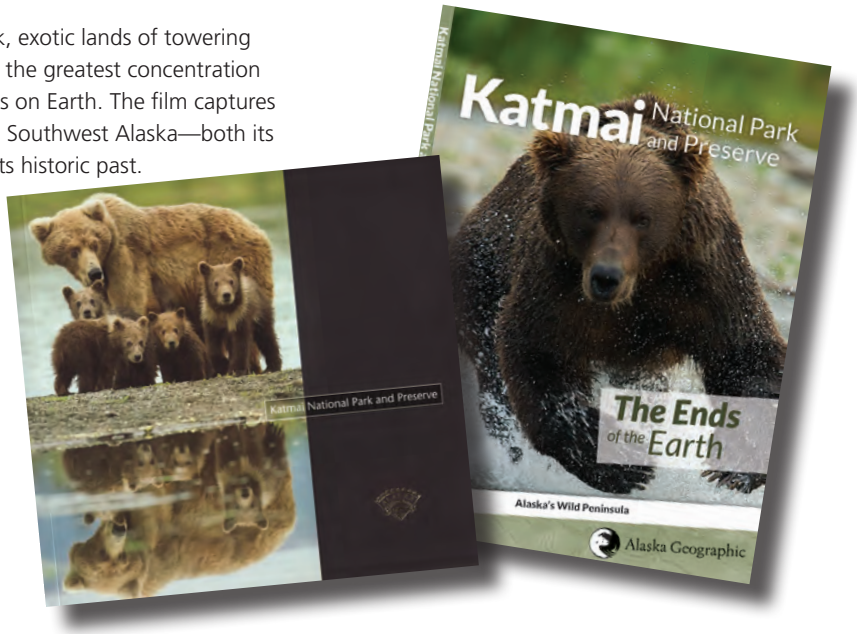
Katmai Book and Movie

A book and movie highlight the spectacular resources and history of Southwest Alaska. Get them both from the AKGeo store online at https://alaska-geographic.mybigcommerce.com/.

Katmai National Park and Preserve by Andromeda Romano-Lax explores the fascinating story behind the world's largest volcanic eruption of the twentieth century. This cataclysmic event brought this dynamic and culturally rich landscape to the attention of the outside world.

Ends of the Earth: Alaska's Wild Peninsula, narrated by N. Scott Momaday, contains stunning high-definition footage of Katmai and Aniakchak, exotic lands of towering volcanoes and the greatest concentration of brown bears on Earth. The film captures the essence of Southwest Alaska—both its wildness and its historic past.

Other books, guides, maps, and films are also available online.



Katmai Conservancy

The Katmai Conservancy is the official nonprofit partner of Katmai National Park and Preserve.

The Katmai Conservancy's mission is to support the preservation of Katmai, its unique ecosystems, scenic character, and associated natural and cultural resources by promoting greater public interest, appreciation, and support through education, interpretation, and research.

By coordinating and working with the park and its management, the Katmai Conservancy contributes vital funds for a wide variety of projects and events that enhance visitor experiences and community relations.

In the past, these funds have been used by the park to:

- Purchase equipment for media efforts at Brooks Camp, Katmai Coast and other backcountry areas
- Fund various park ranger positions
- Support bear research
- Support continuing education and training for rangers and staff

Become a friend of the Katmai Conservancy and help protect Katmai's future. Learn more about the Conservancy and becoming a member at www.katmaiconservancy.org.