

Brown Bears of Silver Salmon Creek

Lake Clark National Park, Alaska



Less than 100 miles southwest of Anchorage lies four million acres of unspoiled wild Alaska—Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. The park was established in 1980 to protect the region's exceptional diverse scenic beauty, steaming volcanoes, dynamic glaciers, wild rivers and abundant wildlife. Within its borders dwell more than 250 of those iconic denizens of tide flat, taiga and tundra—the mighty coastal brown bears.

Lake Clark has been called the “Essence of Alaska” as it combines an awesome array of landforms and habitats not found together in any other Alaskan park—three mountain ranges, two active volcanoes, fertile coastline, rain forest and tundra. This rugged and isolated park is only accessible by small aircraft or boat. One of the least visited of all US national parks, Lake Clark presents its few visitors a wonderful opportunity to experience true northern wilderness.

Starting from our strategically-located, exclusive, spacious and comfortable lodge, we begin each day riding on ATV-drawn carts through pristine landscapes to photograph this wilderness icon. With highly-experienced guides, locating bears is very easy. In fact, brown bears are commonly seen from the lodge's decks and windows. Dramatic full-frame images of mothers with cubs and of bears foraging, feeding and interacting are all readily captured with 300mm, 400mm or 500mm lenses.

Standing at close range, on ground level, to a 1,200-pound male brown bear is an experience that always delivers a real adrenaline rush! As with other Alaskan bear populations with a variety of foods to eat, these bears are essentially “people neutral”—they are fully aware we are there, but, fortunately, they don't view us as part of their diet. Each day we can enjoy multiple photo shoots—we set our own group schedule—with no time limits, no crowds.

"Spring cubs" on grassy meadows, feeding and play-fighting over salmon along the river, and bears digging clams on the tidal flats provide an endless source of rewarding—and often humorous—photo opportunities. Photographing the bears at Silver Salmon Creek is different than at any other brown bear-viewing location. In contrast to the often aggressive salmon feeding frenzy at Brooks Falls, with the lower density of adult male and higher density of females



and cubs, the bears tend to be more relaxed due to the lack of competition, and a wide variety of very different bear behaviors yields more diverse images. We can routinely photograph bears catching salmon along the river, digging clams along the shores of Cook Inlet during low tide, and grazing in summer meadows with serrate mountain backdrops.

Though bears are definitely our “focus,” other photogenic wildlife abounds, including bald eagles and other birds of prey, shorebirds, songbirds—and wolves. We should hear their mournful howls reverberating from the nearby forest. Wild, vast landscapes, with distant but well-placed bears in the frame, also rank high among our photographic goals.

Fly with us to Lake Clark National Park. Enjoy the homespun hospitality, delicious homemade comfort food and cheery camaraderie of a marvelous backwoods lodge, and create breathtaking images of bears in this vast and varied wilderness—the epitome of Alaska!

Check out Gary Alt's [trip report](#) from our 2019 brown bears photo tour

Tour Itinerary

Day 1 (Jul 4)

We meet in the lobby of our Anchorage hotel at 6:30 PM. After introductions and an orientation regarding next morning's flight to Lake Clark National Park, we depart for dinner—and more detail about what we are about to experience. (D)

Day 2

After breakfast at our hotel, we leave for nearby Lake Hood and our chartered aircraft. The legendary Alaskan bush pilots are a unique breed—and ours are some of the best! The flight to Lake Clark is an adventure in itself. Flying over Cook Inlet, we pass tall majestic snow-covered volcanic peaks with long braided rivers radiating from their steep slopes. Continuing west and slightly northward, we again pick up the north shore of Cook Inlet and follow it to our ocean beach landing site at Silver Salmon Creek.

"For anyone interested in nature or photography, this trip is a must do! Brown bears at close range, great accommodations and 20 hours a day of good light."

—J. Marmillo

The beach commonly has bears and/or bear tracks. We load our gear onto all-terrain vehicles for the short trip to our lodge. (BLD)

Days 3–6

We have more than four full days of bear photography. Expect a full spectrum of unpredictable weather conditions as we venture out each day to explore diverse habitats and photograph one of largest land carnivores roaming across some of wildest and most pristine environments left on Earth. Throughout the season bears are seen foraging in verdant sedge meadows, bears fish for salmon and dig enthusiastically for clams on the vast tidal flat, and photogenic young cubs interact at length as they “fish” along the river.

Each day we return to our lodge for lunch and some free time to download images and rest. We are back in the field for late afternoon and/or evening photo sessions. A great dinner awaits our return to the lodge—along with a good night’s sleep after an active day! (BLD)

Day 7 (Jul 10)

After breakfast, we are transported to the beach where our chartered aircraft returns us to Anchorage.

Participants depart for home on late afternoon or evening flights. (B)

Please note

Rooms at our exclusive lodge are all very comfortable but vary in size, bed size and in-room facilities. Rooms will be assigned on suitability and on a first-come basis. Single accommodations are not available at our lodge, but are available for the first night in Anchorage.



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Trip Details

Jul 04 - Jul 10, 2020

Fee: **\$7,095** from Anchorage, Alaska

Deposit: **\$750**

Limit: **8**

[CONTACT US ABOUT THIS TOUR](#)

Tour Leader



GARY ALT



A magical adventure that every photographer should do. The trip was amazing. The brown bears get real close to the photographers. The wilderness along with a beautiful and comfortable lodge is a great experience. The food was gourmet. The staff at the lodge has a saying, "Visit us as tourists and leave us as family."

—S. Kline