



July 7, 2016

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## **Hiker injured by brown bear on Kenai National Wildlife Refuge**

Late Sunday afternoon, July 3, a lone female hiker encountered a brown bear and was bitten on the upper leg while hiking with her two dogs on the Lower Kenai River Trail on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

The woman began hiking back towards the trailhead along Skilak Lake Road with one of the dogs and was helped by other hikers. She was driven to Central Peninsula Hospital in Soldotna where she was treated and released. The second dog was later found and has been reunited with its owner.

The hiker reported that she first saw the bear when it stood up on the trail approximately 20 feet in front of her, in an area of tall grass immediately adjacent to the Kenai River. She fell while retreating, and the bear was upon her immediately. It quickly left either distracted by or in pursuit of one of the dogs.

“This appears to have been a defensive attack triggered when the bear was surprised at close quarters,” said Refuge Manager Andy Loranger. Bear activity along the Kenai River and its tributaries typically increases in June with the arrival of salmon.

Signs warning of bear activity have been posted along the Kenai River Trail. Refuge law enforcement officers have also increased patrols in the area.

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