



# Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Fall 2011

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(Karl Wheeler)

## Refuge Turns 70 Visitor Center Manager Ava Kahn and Refuge Manager Gary Wheeler hold 70th birthday cake.

The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge celebrated its 70th birthday on August 19 with birthday cake, jazz music, and a presentation by Refuge manager, Gary Wheeler. More than 50 people joined the celebration at the Kodiak Refuge Visitor Center, and listened to Gary recount the creation and shaping of the Refuge over the past 70 years.

Designation of the Refuge in 1941 by President Franklin Roosevelt was prompted by public concerns about Kodiak brown bears. Sport hunters regarded them as unique and conservation-worthy while cattle ranchers thought of them as pests. The President sought to reconcile these opposing views by setting aside an area where the land was conserved for bears while allowing for continued cattle ranching on other public lands on the island.

In the early years following establishment, the Refuge focused on learning more about the biology of brown bears. Refuge budgets were

limited, and the manager wore most of the hats—serving as administrator, biologist and pilot. In 1958 the boundary of the Refuge was adjusted significantly to further improve bear habitat and reduce conflicts.

Later, in 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was passed, which provided opportunity for Native communities to select public lands including those within the Refuge.

In 1980 the Alaska National Interest Lands Claim Act (ANILCA) redesignated the Refuge and added more lands on Afognak and Ban Islands. ANILCA also expanded Refuge purposes, highlighted the importance of the area to bears and an array of fish and wildlife, and recognized the longstanding traditional use and value of these resources by local residents and added the provision for continued subsistence uses.

The Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 had a devastating effect on State intertidal lands adjacent to the Refuge. Through  
(cont'd on page 7)

Early Refuge efforts were focused on bear management. See back page for historic bear research photos.



1950's brown bear paw width measured 8 1/2 inches.

## Madsen Bear Receives Re-Dedication

Long-time family sees dream fulfilled

Visitors stepping off the ferry are now welcomed by an historical landmark – the Madsen Bear statue on the front patio of the downtown Kodiak Refuge Visitor Center. A realistic Kodiak brown bear's stride and pigeon-toed tracks mark the path leading up to the life-size statue. An Interpretive display next to the statue offers a glimpse of the history of Kodiak guides.

The Madsen Bear was commissioned in 1957 by Alf Madsen to honor his father, Charles Madsen, one of Kodiak's pioneer guides. Madsen's guiding outfit, Kodiak Guides Association primarily employed local Native guides and grew to become one of the most respected in Alaska. Charles Madsen passed away in 1954.

The statue stood in front of the Madsen's Kodiak Hotel, until the 1964 tsunami destroyed much of downtown Kodiak. It was then donated by the family to the city for local residents to enjoy. Placed in front of the newly constructed Harbormaster building, it stood as a Kodiak landmark for some forty years. Then during the remodel of the harbor's Fisherman's Memorial six years ago, it was moved by a Boy Scout troop to Oscar's Dock.

It was a Madsen family wish to see the statue move to a more fitting and final resting place. So, with special coordination between the city, Kodiak Unified Bear Subcommittee, the

Historical Society and the Refuge, the bear was moved to its current location outside the Refuge Visitor Center.

In the ceremony on April 9, 2011, Judge Roy Madsen rededicated the statue to the pioneer guides of Kodiak and to all those who work to protect the Kodiak brown bear. He gave an historical presentation on the evolution of the Madsen/Metrokin bear guiding business in Kodiak. He told stories about travels to Mush Bay and Karluk camps starting with open skiffs powered by puny 10 hp outboards, to 14 hp, then a small enclosed 25 foot boat and from there graduating to a 42' Chris Craft Cabin Cruiser, followed by a 65' yacht and finally to a 96' super yacht that could sleep 22 people. Hunters traveled for weeks by train, then steamship to get to Kodiak Island and then accessed the Karluk camp by river. All this being replaced by air travel.

Harry Dodge and Paul Chervenak introduced the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust. Dodge then read an excerpt from his new book, *The Hunts*, a novel about a bear hunt on the south end of the island. Alf Madsen's daughter, Shari Madsen-Howard was presented a gift in recognition of her father and grandfather.

More than 100 community members joined this historic event. Refuge Manager, Gary Wheeler thanked the



Judge Roy Madsen dedicates the Madsen Bear statue. He stands along with his niece Shari Madsen-Howard and sister Thelma Johnson.

Madsen family and the bear guide community. He said: "We are honored to house the Madsen Bear. This statue completes the story of the Refuge in that we don't just produce big bears but we harvest the surplus of those bears and create life changing memories for many people."

## Hunt Reminders

1. State and Federal Migratory Bird stamps are required to hunt ducks, geese and other migratory birds. This is true even for subsistence seasons.
2. Know your birds before you shoot (ID guides available at Refuge headquarters)
3. Leave evidence of sex on big game animals.
4. Salvage all edible meat.
5. Brown bear locking tag is required for all brown bear hunts.
6. Sea otter hides and walrus tusks must be tagged within 30 days.
7. Be bear aware out there.
8. Get involved if you want to see changes.

## Subsistence Consultation Makes History

The federal subsistence board, which administers subsistence harvests of fish and wildlife on federal public lands, held its first ever Tribal Consultation meeting via teleconference on September 13, 2011.

Tribes and Corporations are able to comment on federal subsistence fish and wildlife regulation proposals before each regional advisory council meeting takes place. Federal subsistence proposals on wildlife regulation are published in the spring every other year, while fishery proposals are published alternating years.

Government to government

consultation protocol is being developed. The next scheduled meeting for protocol review is on December 1, 2011, at the BIA Tribal Service Providers Conference in Anchorage at the Dená'ina Convention Center. Participation is encouraged. The Federal Subsistence Board meeting is scheduled for January 17-19, 2012 at the Egan Center and there will be tribal consultation during the course of this meeting, as well.

This public process and the proposed regulations can be found online at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.cfm> or call 1- (800) 478-1456 for more information.



## Profiles of Kodiak: Fun Faces From Around the Refuge

Mary Peterson of Akhiok, holds a migratory bird poster and tells stories of growing up in Akhiok as a midwife and the 1st health aide.



"We used to walk all the way to Karluk to attend a dance and potlatch. That was a long way but we danced our heart out then walked home." Mary Peterson, Akhiok

Ivan Lukin of Port Lions builds a custom canoe out of a log he found in the bay and towed home.



Pat Holmes at Dig Afognak EARTH Camp teaches kids how to hunt octopus, blow bull kelp horns and turn seaweed into hair for a fashion show.



Old Harbor's "Whitie" stands beside his smokehouse where an electric fence was installed to keep the local hungry bears from stealing his fish.



Nick Alokli applies skin salve from the healing leaves of yarrow plants made by the children at Dig Afognak Harvest Camp.



Children in Karluk hold up their bear drawings after a puppet show that demonstrated bear safety. This was followed by playtime along a trail above the Karluk River where some of the world's densest brown bear populations live.



## Traveling Visitor Center Sails to Port Lions

**Refuge Outreach by Sea** Last spring Kodiak Refuge sailed a mobile visitor center to the village of Port Lions on the Refuge research vessel Ursa Major II. A weather port was secured on the aft deck of the ship prior to sailing to the harbor in Settler's Cove. As villagers boarded the 48-foot research vessel, they were greeted and given boater safety tips by "Coastie", a talking boat on loan from our partners the Coast Guard Auxiliary Association. Visitors then toured the vessel from the wheel house to the galley and into the weather port which was full of bird mounts, furs, displays and activities on deck. The National Wildlife Refuge System was highlighted and a variety of posters had something for everyone to learn about Refuge resources.

Thirty-five people came to mingle on the Ursa. The crew enjoyed meeting local residents and learning more about this unique village and fishing port.



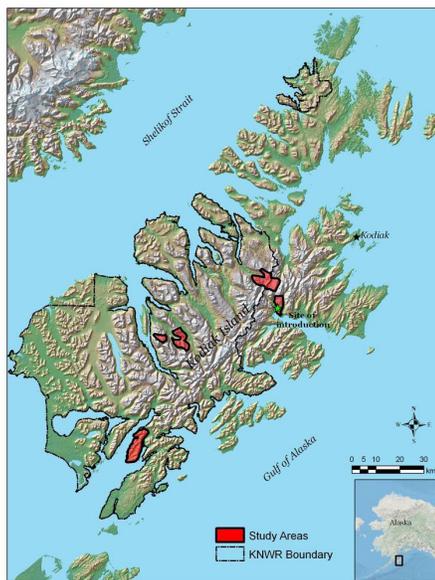
When the Ursa Major II visited Port Lions, people were greeted by Refuge crew and "Coastie" a talking boat.

## First Season of Mountain Goat Research

A mountain goat field research project this summer was aimed at better understanding mountain goat diets and feeding site selection on Kodiak Island. Refuge researchers visited three main study sites twice over the summer, where they collected mountain goat fecal pellets and surveyed alpine vegetation. The pellets will be sent to a lab at Washington State University to determine the composition of plants in their diet.

Although mountain goats here are a popular game species on Kodiak, they are also not native to the island. Eighteen mountain goats were introduced to the Hidden Basin region of Kodiak in 1952, and since then, their population has grown dramatically in size and range. Although hunted since 1968, Kodiak's mountain goat population grew to approximately 1,000 animals by 1999. Currently, mountain goats number over 2,500 and are widely distributed across most available habitats on the island. With draw and registration hunts available, and trophy animals being harvested, it has never been a better time to be a goat hunter on Kodiak Island.

The work completed this summer is a part of a larger project focused on maintaining viable hunter harvests of mountain goats while



Research this summer was conducted at three study sites on Kodiak, which were selected based on the duration of mountain goat occupancy.

avoiding potential negative impacts from non-native mountain goats on alpine plants and animals.

Next year, the Kodiak Refuge hopes to build upon the work completed this summer, by deploying radio telemetry collars on mountain goats. Information from the collars will help us to better understand habitat selection, population dynamics, and other aspects of their life history.

Field research in remote areas of Kodiak presented challenges including inclement weather, thick vegetation, and steep terrain.



(USFWS)



(USFWS)

A band of goats observed on the Hepburn Peninsula during summer 2011 fieldwork.

## Update on Brown Bear Project 2011

**Bear Menu:** Scooping up sticklebacks and lavishing a lupin field, Kodiak brown bears manage to find food almost everywhere. A snowshoe hare and a fawn can be easy opportunities for hungry bears. Curved claws quickly dig plant roots for their nutritious bulbs. When bears are gorging on salmon they need to complement their diet with grasses, forbs and berries when available. Slick tongues slurp sand fleas from under beach rocks... Ohhh Yummm.

**Bear Research:** As a continuation of a habitat and resource selection study that started last year, eight more collared bears were closely monitored this summer in the southwest region of the Refuge, including Uyak Bay, Deadman Bay, Karluk and Frazer Lake



A large boar on the Dog Salmon river fishing.

basins, and the Ayakulik River and Red Lake. While fitting the collars, biologists collected age, zoological measurement, reproductive status, and weights of these bears. The GPS collars allowed biologists to follow their movements, foraging patterns and bedding activities in remote areas of the island.

Throughout the summer the field crew would locate a bear's GPS points, hike to the location, then survey the bear's preferred vegetation, activities, behavior, denning locations and habitats.

This information will provide a better understanding of Kodiak Brown Bear Biology and help managers make good, sound decisions.



## Kittlitz Murrelet Study

The Kittlitz's murrelet (KIMU) is one of the rarest seabirds in the North Pacific. Hard work from an intense research project in its fourth year is finally bringing the secret life of this unusually cryptic and fascinating bird into focus. Now, 53 nests have been found in Kodiak. Prior to 2006 only 25 nests had ever been discovered within its range in coastal Alaska and Russia.

*This Kittlitz's murrelet chick waits patiently on its nest for mom and dad to return from the ocean with a fish to eat.*



(Dan Roby, OSU)

## Monitoring Avian Survivorship and Productivity (MAPS)

This year was the second summer of the MAPS project where Refuge staff and volunteers net and band tiny songbirds once every ten days for about six weeks at the Buskin River between June and August. This year 32 volunteers from the Kodiak community participated, including several very enthusiastic youngsters. We banded 217 new birds and recaptured 16 birds banded last summer. The returning birds included three Wilson's Warblers, four Yellow Warblers, and two Hermit Thrushes.

These are species that migrate to the lower 48 and even south into Central and South America in the Fall only to make the return trip north in the spring to nest on the exact same territory on the Buskin River. Because the birds are so faithful to nesting locations by banding them and then recapturing them in subsequent years researchers can get an idea of how many survive their long trips back and forth between the breeding and wintering grounds.



*Cindy Trussell holds a yellow warbler prior to releasing him.*

## Solar Power Project at Remote Facilities

Refuge maintenance staff installed two new solar systems at the Camp Island administrative facilities at Karluk Lake. These energy systems are renewable, sustainable and conservation-oriented. The systems provide enough electricity to power a four-building site, including a Panabode, bunkhouse, pilot facility and boathouse. Camp Island serves as headquarters for projects on the southern portion of the refuge.

This solar project has significantly reduced propane and gasoline usage at this site. In turn, it has reduced our need to transport fuel to the facility and ultimately decreased our carbon footprint.



*Battery bank of 8-80 12 volt 4KW AC system.*



Robin Leatherman (USFWS)

*Two of the nine 230-watt solar panels are installed on the boathouse that charge the battery bank to the left.*

# Education Programs for Children of All Ages

 Kodiak Refuge's Education Department is roarin' to serve Kodiak kids and their naturally WILD appetite. Listed below are a few of the programs available at the Refuge. Check with the outreach staff to see if they have the wild program you are ready to explore.

## Programs Offered by Outreach Staff:



Build a Seabird

Kodiak Brown Bears



Hoo-hoo-ray for Owls

Whale of a Time



Kodiak Land Mammals

Eagles



NATURE Photography

Marine Debris



Habitat is Where It's At

Sea Otters



Kits to Check Out:

Land Mammals Kit



Jr. Duck Stamp Program

To schedule a program in your school contact Tonya Lee at [tonya\\_lee@fws.gov](mailto:tonya_lee@fws.gov)  
(907)487-0235

To check out a kit please contact Shelly Lawson at [michelle\\_lawson@fws.gov](mailto:michelle_lawson@fws.gov)  
(907)487-0283



(Jennifer Simeonoff)

This blown-up photo is a small rodent skull in the hands of a young scientist who dissected an owl pellet. Another student found an amazing 4 skulls in one owl pellet.



(Tonya Lee, USFWS)

Hoo-hoo ray for Owls includes owl pellet dissection, interactive discussion and a chance to go "owling" in the story "Owl Moon".

## Acrostic Poem by Alisandra Lake

**I**n Kodiak, Beauty thrives through the land

**S**almon of many colors create rainbows in streams

**L**ovely flowers, pretty berries

**A** town of honor and respect

**N**o place can even come close to my

**D**ear Kodiak Island.



(Shelly Lawson, USFWS)

Alisandra Lake is Kodiak's very first Junior Ranger. She completed the Ranger Book this summer during the program's kick-off celebration.

(cont'd from page 1) the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council, some of the Native lands have been sold back to the Refuge, and some remain in their natural condition under a conservation easements with Native corporations.

Today the refuge vision statement and purposes provide the framework for management. The Refuge is regularly used by residents and visitors from around the world. Some new public uses, such as bear viewing, have developed, while many longtime traditional uses such as subsistence and game hunting

have continued to flourish. The public, especially local residents, take an active role in management by participating in meetings and requests for comments by the Refuge. Also public attitudes about Kodiak bears have shifted to respect and appreciation.

So there is good news. As partnerships are forged to solve local problems and as lands are managed with future generations in mind, conservation continues to improve. That's why the Refuge was established 70 years ago and that's why we celebrate.



Week 1



Week 2



Week 4



Week 8

*In the early years of the Refuge, some of the founding work on bald eagles was done in Kodiak. Here bald eagle chicks were observed in June-July of 1962.*

## Additional Youth Opportunities:

**Volunteer Opportunity for Middle through High School Students:** The Kodiak Refuge Youth Leadership Program (KRYL) involves dedicated youth who volunteer as instructor aids for one week of Salmon Camp. The Refuge provides one day of training to the 7-12th grade volunteers on how to be a good counselor and tips for leading games. During their week as instructor aides, the students work directly with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) instructors.



## Work Opportunity for High School Students:

Every summer, the Kodiak Refuge hires high school students to work with Refuge staff as part of a Youth Conservation Corps crew (YCC). This is a 9-week paid work program. Students are exposed to a variety of jobs in public lands in the field and in town. Students share their creativity, unique input and stories with the public. For this program, students will need housing in Kodiak.

# Alutiiq Words for Animals

Draw a line from the animal to the Alutiiq name.

## Kodiak's 6 Native Land Mammals



bear



river otter



brown bat

Aaquyaq

Ugna'aq

Kaugya'aq

Amitatuk

Taquka'aq

Keneryaq



fox



ermine



vole

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Web: <http://kodiak.fws.gov/>



*1950's Bear hunter.*



*Deputy Refuge Manager Berns prepares to collar a brown bear to track movements in the 1960's.*



*Refuge biologist, Hensel in a bear den, 1969*



*Berns tranquilizes bear, by Gerry Atwell - 1972.*

