



# Bear Tracts

VOLUME 5

WINTER 2012/2013

## Winter Solstice

It was a cool, wet summer along the Chilkoot River. For most of the summer the river levels were very high. In late June the river was flowing over the weir.

BMJ and her 2.5 year olds were seen in the Chilkoot River vicinity in early April. This was just in time for them to take advantage of the eulachon run at the end of April. Speedy and her daughter (Speedy 2) were first seen along the Chilkoot about the same time. This summer, BMJ's and Speedy's 2.5 year olds struck out on their own leaving their Moms behind.

The Foundation held their annual local tour guide training in May. The bear viewing etiquette and fishing with bear brochures were updated this year. With a lot of German speaking tourists visiting the area, we also translated the viewing brochure into German. An additional Living in Harmony with Bears sign was installed near the lake. Two electric fences and three critters were purchased and donated to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. These items were loaned out to local folks. The Foundation again had a booth at the SE Alaska State Fair. Due to concerns about bear activity around the landfill, the Foundation is in the process of finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with Community Waste Systems concerning the installation of electric fencing around the landfill. The Foundation is also discussing electric fencing at the recycling center.

In April, the Alaska State Parks held an open house in Haines to present ideas about short and long term management along the Chilkoot River Corridor. There was no bear monitor along the river this summer.

In 2012, the Chilkoot River saw the largest sockeye salmon count since the weir began operation in 1976. The weir count was 114,025 sockeye salmon, which exceeded the 38,000 to 86,000 fish escapement goal range. The Chilkoot River total count of 41,000 pink salmon was 6% above average. There were 139 coho and 494 chum salmon counted through the weir.

### Streamflow over the Weir



### BMJ with a Eulachon



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We believe that the best way to preserve the gifts of the Chilkoot and to resolve issues is to work cooperatively with the diverse interests that have a stake in the Chilkoot



Help me by joining the Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation

**Tourist's Corner**

Tim Sefton, Black Hawk, Colorado: We came to Alaska to see the abundant wildlife and majestic beauty, and we sure weren't disappointed. At the top of our wish list was to see a bear up close and get some pictures, but I never dreamed we'd see one THIS close, and posing for us no less! When I walked out from the trees and looked over to see a bear standing and leaning on a sign, I couldn't believe my eyes. Luckily I had my camera ready.



Gini Sturgess, Toronto, Ontario: I was just totally in awe of being that close to one of nature's big creatures and to watch it run through the water and let us watch her eat, it was one of the most beautiful moments of my life. It brought tears to my eyes.



Reg Pattee, Flagstaff, Arizona: We were able to watch Speedy 2 fish along the river, and then travel out onto the tidal flats. Being able to watch and photograph this natural wonder it was a very special treat.



**PFD Charitable Contributions Program**

Giving has never been so easy!

**Pick.Click.Give.**

When you apply for your Permanent Fund Dividend, you will have an opportunity to give to your favorite Alaska nonprofit organizations. The PFD Charitable Contributions Program began with our 2009 dividend. It provides a safe, secure and easy way to make a donation, and is available to all Alaskans who file on-line.

When you go online to apply for your dividend, you will see the option called "**The Gift of Giving.**" Click on **Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation**. Chose the amount you would like to donate.

You can find more information about the program, including frequently asked questions at <http://www.pickclickgive.org>

### Bear Collaring Update

Recent information from a study of three collared, female bears on the Chilkoot River indicate that the Ferebee Valley *may be* a mating area for brown bears.

The average home range for two of the bears was 135 square kilometers. The bears spent 42 percent of their time in closed forest, 14 percent in grassy areas, 13 percent in open forest (for example, avalanche chutes) and 12 percent in water. Aside from denning, the collared bears spent almost no time in alpine areas.

The bears concentrate along the river in September, when they spent 95 percent of their time within 500 meters of it, compared to 75 percent in August. They spend nearly all of late summer and fall moving between the river and nearby daybeds.

The average date of den entrance was November 6 and the average date of den emergence was April 29. The mean elevation of the den was 2,800 feet on south or southwest facing slopes of 30 to 40 degrees.

The collar study began in 2008 and the 2 collars currently deployed will be retrieved in the summer of 2013.

### Director's Spotlight

I was afraid of bears until I worked in the Chilkoot. I had bought all the scary stories and I had experienced two scary close encounters. I had seen dozens of bears at a distance. Then one day I was working as a tour guide getting ready to take a group of folks into the woods. I was chatting with them in the parking lot at the lake with my back to the trailhead, waiting for the rest of the group to join us.

There was a boy of about 10 in the group of tourists. He pointed behind me and said, "Bear!" Being a former teacher, I took that with a grain of salt. I looked, and lo and behold, there was a full grown bear standing about 15 feet behind me in the forest.

OMG!!! I am responsible for these people! I know I shouldn't run! What am I gonna do! So, I told the folks coming to join us to stop where they were and form a quiet group. Then I backed my group toward the bus, keeping myself between them and the bear. When we were about 25 yards from the bear, we all stopped and looked.

The bear had waited quietly for us to move, then walked to the edge of the forest, looked both ways, crossed the parking lot down to the river and moved downstream looking for fish. End of encounter. This bear's local nickname was Boo because she would sneak up on people like that.

Take home lesson: What a polite bear! She didn't huff or growl or charge. She just waited her turn to cross the road. She didn't hurt anyone. She didn't hurt me. My adrenalin rush was for nothing. What a magnificent animal! She respected us and we respected her. No problem.

But, of course, when something goes wrong it is always the bear's fault. It is always the bear that dies, even when it is the humans fault. These wonderful animals have just as much a right to make a living as I do, and it is thrilling to watch them do just that. They are part of the glorious ecosystem we live in. It is important to protect that ecosystem in all its wondrous diversity and plenitude of resources.

That is why I am privileged to work on the ACBF Board, and share my summer days with BMJ, Speedy, Speedy Jr, white Claws, Silver and the gang.



**Pam Randles**

**The Bears of Summer**



3 Orphan Cubs



2 Sows with 3 Cubs (this is one of them)



BMJ



Silver - Female



Blue Ear Tag - Male



Speedy



Speedy2 -2.5 year old daughter



White Claws (the venerable lady of the river)



Silver Tipped Ears

**Bear Facts**

Bears are believed to have evolved 30-38 million years ago from ancestors that are thought to have been dog or raccoon like in size and shape. The oldest known bear, the Dawn bear, lived about 20 million years ago and was the size of a small dog. The Dawn bear inhabited subtropical forests throughout Europe during the Miocene. The Dawn bear is believed to be the ancestor of all eight living bear species.

Today, eight bear species live in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Bears have never lived in Australia or Antarctica. North America is home to the: Brown, American Black, and Polar bears. Almost two thirds of the bears in the world live in North America. Southeast Asia is home to the: Asian Black, Sloth and Sun bears. Giant pandas are native to the central and southern parts of western China. The Spectacled bears are the only wild bears that live in South America. Koala Bears are marsupials not bears.

The word "bear" is an Old English word, derived from the Proto-Indo-European *bher*, meaning "bright brown."

### In Memoriam

This was not a good year for bears in the Haines vicinity. The one notable death was that of Speedy's 2.5 year old son that was killed in defense of life and property (DLP).



Speedy's 2.5 Year Old Son

- 8 bears killed in people's yards (most called DLP, but only one officially called DLP)
- One sow with 3 cubs shot in Small Tracts
- One shot from a boat in Lutak Inlet
- One shot at dump
- Plus one alleged sow killed somewhere along Lutak Road (mother of three orphaned cubs?)

#### From the Police Blotter

- 112 calls to the Police Department about bears
  - 38 involved some damage by bears
  - 25 associated with KNOWN human cause (attractant of some sort)

### A Bear Story

Once upon a time there was a bear that discovered that people threw away good food. She discovered the dump was full of human food scraps. She went in search of trash cans and dumpsters. Sometimes she was yelled at and sometimes she could not break into the trash cans. But sometimes she succeeded, so she kept trying. When she had cubs, she showed them this free lunch. Finally one day some people came and captured her and her daughter. They were shipped off to the Endicott Wilderness area, many miles away from their home.

Her daughter finished growing up in Endicott. When it came time for her to have cubs, she walked back to Haines looking for human food, the same way she was taught. She found food at human houses and the dump. She learned to forage at night when there were not so many humans around the houses, she decided to try to see if there was food in the houses. She had three cubs to feed, so she worked hard to get food. One night, she was shot and killed near one person's house.

The incidents in this story are true.

Her cubs will probably starve or become victims of larger predators.

People and houses were threatened and damaged.

All of this could have been prevented.

**Please secure and dispose of your garbage properly.**

Postscript to this story: The cubs returned to the place their mother was killed and one of them was killed. People in the area reported the remaining two cubs getting into their gardens. Finally, they were shot as well.

YES! 

I want to invest in the future of the Chilkoot River Watershed!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email (Email addresses are not shared.) \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	\$ 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior	\$ 10
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Sponsor	\$ 2,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Founder	\$ 7,500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Endower — Lifetime	\$ 10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	\$

Please send information about habitat purchasing.

**Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation, Inc.**  
 Box 1188 Haines AK 99827  
 chilkootbearfoundation@yahoo.com

Donations are as allowed by  tax deductible law.



**Ball Caps: \$20 (Khaki, Maroon, Green, Charcoal Gray, Sage)**  
**Long Sleeve Shirts: \$20 (Navy Blue, Khaki, Black)**  
**Short Sleeve Shirts: \$18 (Navy Blue, Khaki)**  
**Stickers: \$2.00 (Black, Navy Blue, Khaki)**

**Order online or send an e-mail to:**  
[hats@bearfoundation.org](mailto:hats@bearfoundation.org)

***Going into Hibernation Reminder***

**Please RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP to the Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation.**



**PO BOX 1188**  
**Haines, Alaska**  
**99827**

phone: Pam Randles 907-982-1824  
 email: [info@bearfoundation.org](mailto:info@bearfoundation.org)

{MAILING LABELS HERE}

Bear Tracts is published by ACBF, a volunteer run non-profit organization. We rely on your support and membership to help protect the Chilkoot River watershed for generations to come.



**Partnerships for Harmony in Nature**

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