



ALASKA PENINSULA - Huge Brown Bear



Before we go any farther, it's important to know that in Alaska you can shoot only one brown bear every four years.

The question as to whether the **Alaska Peninsula** or **Kodiak Island** produces larger bears is largely a matter of opinion. Both areas have produced so many 10-foot bears through the years that the question is almost pointless. I personally believe that the Alaska Peninsula has been producing the largest animals *on the average* over the past fifteen years (nine to ten foot bears, even some eleven foot monsters) but many Kodiak guides of course will disagree.

One thing is beyond question, the Alaska Peninsula has been producing the largest hides and largest skull sizes in Alaska over the last 20 years, and anyone considers those to be trophy brown bears. Bears from our camp have ranged between 8 foot 8 inches and 11 foot 6 inches in size with an overall average of 9 foot 4 inches for many years.

There are no excuses; a "camp legal" bear should measure 9' or more. It is our goal to only take bears that square more than 9' and we do that... for everyone. Seldom has a season gone by that we have not taken at least one bear over the 10' mark. Yes, we do occasionally take bears in the upper 8' range.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has designated the Alaska Peninsula as a trophy bear area for game management purposes. The goal is to produce bears of the largest possible size for sportsmen. To accomplish this, seasons have been restricted since 1976. Fall hunts take place in October of odd years (i.e., 2005, 2007, 2009 *etc.*) and spring hunts take place in May of even years (i.e., 2006, 2008, 2010 *etc.*). The technique has been very successful.

Weather on the Peninsula is seldom what you could call good; often it's downright horrible. But then big bears live where the weather is the worst so it's something everyone tolerates. The worst weather is generally encountered during October when

Ralph Miller & Jim Weidner ~ Registered Alaska Guides

PO Box 1538, Delta Junction, Alaska 99737

Telephone (907) 895-5006 ~ FAX (907) 895-5563 ~ Cell phone (907) 378-9959

Email: ralph@deltana.com ~ www.deltana.com

high winds can be a major factor; however, we tend to see more bears in the fall than in the spring.

In the spring the hides may be somewhat thicker and the bears move about during the day. In addition the wind and rain are significantly below fall levels. The liability is that we never know just when the bears may come out of their dens, so patience is a greater factor.

Like all successful bear hunts, the primary activity in fall or spring is glassing. In October you glass the mountain walls and valley floors for bears feeding on roots or in the salmon streams. In October of '95 we saw over 100 bears between the camps using this method. In spring you hunt by glassing the mountainsides in search of fresh bear track or dens appearing on the snow covered mountains. As the days become longer the bears break out of their holes and move into the valleys in search of feed. Unusual weather can bring the bears out early, or cause them to stay in late so weather is still a factor. Regardless of which period you choose, bear size will remain about the same. We do not encourage you to shoot the first animal you see. You can shoot only one bear every four years, so it might as well be a big one.

Though success on brown bear is over 90%, and many years we have enjoyed 100% success, it's inevitable that occasionally a hunter will go home without a bear. For some it will simply be a matter that they held out for a really large bear, others will not be willing to hunt in bad weather and for a very few the circumstances and game movement just will not fall in their favor. Regardless, occasionally we do have clients go home without the bear they came for.

Most clients are successful within the first 10 days of the hunt and there really is no need to commit to the extra expense of a longer stay. If for some reason you do not take your bear in this time frame, you may extend your hunt on a daily basis if your schedule will allow. The additional cost is \$750.00 per day for each additional day in the field. This will give you up to 5 additional days of hunting.

The town of **Sand Point** is the **point of outfitting** on the Alaska Peninsula. Sand Point is served by [Peninsula Airlines](#) out of Anchorage every day. Reservations can be made through your travel agent.

Ralph Miller