



One More Time We returned for one last visit to the coast of the Alaska Peninsula. Seattle friends Jon Barwick and fiancée Allison Watson flew into Kodiak to join us for a quick one-week cruise (**photo**).

They had heard and read of our adventures in this scenic country and were looking forward to joining us and our Katmai brown bears in the Alaskan wilderness.

It Doesn't Get Any Better This year we chose to remain in the region until late August. We had

heard that the salmon runs in the region reach their peak late in the summer. The arrival of salmon in the streams attracts greater concentrations of bears gorging on the fish as they prepare for the long winter hibernation.

It was the end of the season for the local commercial fishermen and the end of their life cycle for the salmon, but a high point for the brown bears.

Here's Looking At You One bear appeared to be coming directly towards us but actually was just reading the stream looking for an available fish (**photo**).



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Our drone provided us a terrific view of the river delta in Geographic Harbor (58 07.163 N, 154 36.259 W). The *Inside Passage* is the white dot at the top of the image (**photo**).

There are few restrictions on those who come to view the wild yet somewhat predictable bruins. We make sure they know we are there, but they appear to ignore us and stay focused on

eating. Each bear we observed looked healthy with beautiful undamaged fur coats and each had its own unique personality and fishing techniques.

Bear Mischief At one point, we saw a bear heading directly to our beached kayaks. Since they are only made of light weight plastic, we watched with concern as the inquisitive animal stepped on top of Carl's kayak. The bear then lowered its head and raised it with the personal floatation device in its mouth (**photo**).



It gave a couple of sturdy shakes, but quickly lost interest and dropped it nearby. We then became the curious ones and walked over to investigate if any damage had been done. The device was undamaged with only some tooth impressions and a fairly good coating of bear saliva.

Without thinking, Carl's first reaction was to clean the floatation device by rinsing it off. That doesn't work well with inflatable life jackets as when he dipped it into the stream, the CO2 cartridge inside exploded as it is designed to do when put into water! We learned our lesson and until we can buy a replacement cartridge, this device can only be inflated manually.

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Amateur Archeologists

In Journal #4 of our 2015 cruise, we mentioned our visit to the archeology site on the small coastal Mink Island (58 03.365 N, 154 25.654 W). It was our desire to go ashore and hike in an area where we were less likely to encounter four legged residents. We chose Mink and nearby Little Talki Island. We also wanted to revisit and investigate further the archeological site.

The original site was excavated about twenty years ago. At that time researchers dated the bones located in the dense shell midden to up to 7,300 years before the

present, making it one of the oldest known sites along the south-central coastline of Alaska. We climbed and hiked up and down the shoreline of these two small islands which are barely connected at low tide and walked through shoulder high grasses.

Our Find At one point, Carl climbed 30 feet up a cliff and discovered many bones and shells sticking out from the hillside.

Not knowing which might have been animal or possibly human bones, he brought several samples to show the group. Interested in what had been found, Jon also climbed the cliff to investigate further **(photo)**.

Jon reached down to retrieve an almost perfectly shaped projectile point **(photo)** lying among the detritus accumulated over



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the millennium. It is 2 ½” long by 1 ¼” wide. The *Inside Passage* now has an addition to the items collected over many years of Alaskan exploration.

We will probably never know the true age of this artifact, but hope to further explore its provenance.

As we prepared to leave the Alaska Peninsula, we realized that for the last month, we had never been very far from the many bears of Katmai. It was not the occasional bear we see in other areas of Alaska, but often several nearby wherever we might explore (photo).

Fly Fishing Jon, an avid fly fisherman, had brought along his 10’ collapsible fly rod. He tried his luck at the mouth of the creek entering the lagoon that lies off Kinak Bay ([58 11.495 N, 154026.49 W](#)). Jon’s primary interest is fresh water rainbow trout, but we never got far enough inland for him to find them. Watched lazily by a grazing brown bear, he tried his best (photo). The water was full of chum and pink salmon but they were preparing to spawn and no longer feeding.

