

Fishing in ALASKA'S BEAR Country

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #123 —

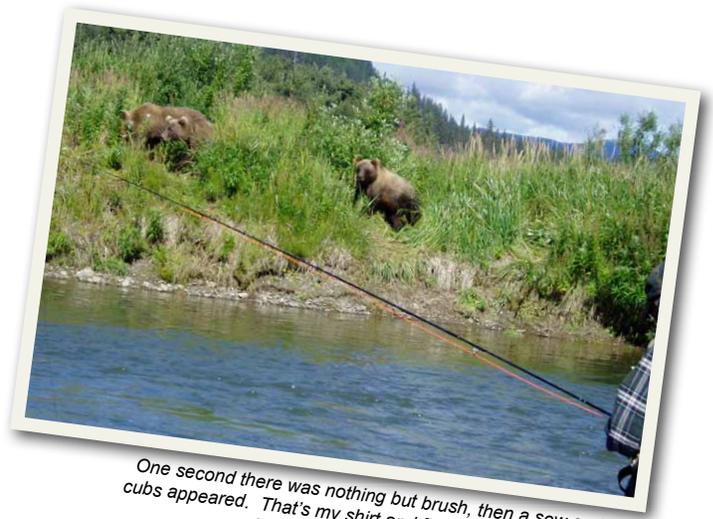
There are lots of fish in Alaska, mostly rainbow trout and the five species of salmon. It's been my great fortune to spend some time up there, fishing the creeks and rivers and those parts of the lakes where the rivers come and go. It's mostly wade fishing, where I put on chest waders and walk out to where the water is knee to waist deep and cast to the fish.

Almost everything is remote in Alaska. Headquarters (the lodge) will likely have Wi-Fi, hot showers and a trained chef – but small bush planes fly to where the fish are, the fisheries. They land on a beach or gravel bar (wheel planes), or on a lake or long stretch of the larger rivers (float planes). It will always be great fishing country, but also great bear county. There's a reason so many

lakes, rivers and creeks include the word 'bear' in their name.

The guide may bring a shotgun or a 30-30, but you're not always near the guide and the guide is not

always near the gun. That's one of the reasons I pack. Sometimes I'm fishing with my wife, kids, grandkids or a friend. It's one thing to be killed by a bear – because I wouldn't have to worry about anything after that. But if a friend or family member were mauled or killed while I stood and watched, and I had to think about it the rest of my life – well, that just wouldn't be acceptable; that's the other reason I pack. The gun is like a life insurance policy. You gotta have it, but hope you never have to use it.



One second there was nothing but brush, then a sow and two cubs appeared. That's my shirt and fishing rod. Glad I was on this side of the creek and three seconds away.

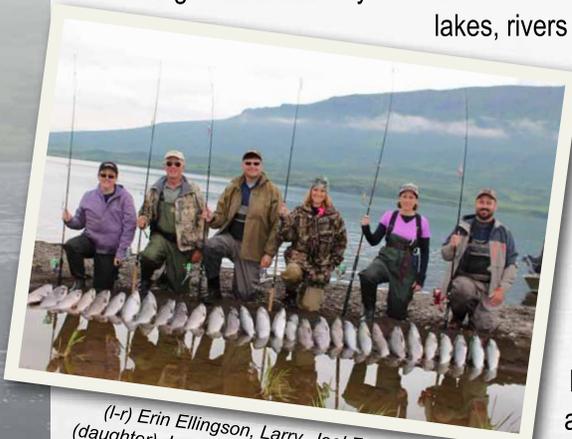
My gun of choice is a Smith & Wesson Model 329PD, in 44 Magnum, carried in a Bianchi #7001 thumb break holster, with a #7202 belt. This is a lightweight rig and I never notice the weight. It isn't a gun I shoot much, with full house loads. I fire it a couple of times before each trip, just to get the feel of the recoil into

"The gun is like a life insurance policy"

Now I'm not afraid of bears, and I'm not afraid of dying, but it seems to me that a prudent man, with due respect for himself, his family and friends, would pack a serious gun when fishing in bear country – I certainly do!



Larry Potterfield
Bear Lake
Port Moller, Alaska
July 2, 2015



(l-r) Erin Ellingson, Larry, Joel Felten, Jenalyn Felten (daughter), Lori Rhodes and Doug Wehmeyer pose with a limit of sockeye, at the head of a remote lake.



When fishing in Alaska's bear country, I carry this Smith and Wesson Model 329 PD, in 44 Magnum, a Bianchi #7001 Holster and 7202 belt.