



Fishing the Brooks River



A Unique Experience

The Brooks River in Katmai National Park offers tremendous fishing opportunities for rainbow trout, arctic char, and salmon. Its run of sockeye salmon, in particular, also attract one of the greatest gatherings of brown bears on earth. No matter when you visit, fishing the Brooks River requires extra care and responsibility to protect people, wildlife, and the experience.

Fishing in Bear Country

The sheer number of bears, their movements, and behaviors influence most activities at Brooks Camp. The waters of Katmai are a challenging and rewarding place to fish.

A splashing fish sounds like food to a bear. Bears will often move in your direction to investigate a fish on a line. Always be prepared to cut or break your line, so that you can free the fish and move out of the water until the bear passes. Never let a bear acquire a fish from you.

It is easy to become so engaged in fishing, that you forget to be alert for bears. They are surprisingly quiet and difficult to see in dense grass or tall brush, so always have someone spot bears for you.

At minimum, keep 50 yards between yourself and all bears. Stop fishing and move away well before a bear approaches within 50 yards, or you may find yourself in a situation with a fish on the line and a bear in pursuit.

Catch and Release Ethics

The Brooks River sees heavy fishing pressure each year. Many of the fish in the river are caught multiple times in a season. Therefore, it is vital that anglers release fish as quickly and gently as possible to ensure their continued survival.

In general, avoid playing a fish to exhaustion. As a fish is landed, keep it in the water when removing the hook. Fish can quickly suffocate when removed from the water. Use barbless hooks as much as possible. They are easier to remove and less injurious to fish.

The slime on fish helps to protect it from disease and parasites. Handling a fish roughly, with dry hands, or dragging it onto the shore removes this slime and reduces its chances for survival.

A short video, *Letting Go: The Art of Catch and Release*, is available to watch on demand in the Brooks Camp Visitor Center. This video, written and produced by experienced local fishing guides, succinctly highlights proper catch and release techniques.

Fishing Regulations for the Brooks River Drainage

The following is a brief summary of special fishing regulations for the Brooks River. Other state and federal fishing regulations may apply.

The Brooks River is fly fishing only and fishing from the floating bridge is prohibited. Only unbaited, single-hook, artificial flies may be used in Brooks River.

An Alaska state fishing license is required to fish within Katmai National Park and Preserve.

Continuing to engage in any fishing activity within 50 yards of a bear is prohibited. No fishing lines can remain in the water when a bear is within 50 yards of you. In these situations, persons engaged in fishing are required to immediately remove any flies from the water and release any fish from their line.

The Brooks River is catch and release only, except downstream of the floating bridge. Downstream of the bridge, only one fish per

person per day can be retained. Fish hooked elsewhere than in the mouth must be released immediately.

No rainbow trout may be kept in Lake Brooks, Brooks River, or within 1/4 mile of the mouth of Brooks River in Naknek Lake at any time.

Fish that are retained must be immediately placed whole in a plastic bag and transported to the Fish Freezing Building for storage. Each bagged fish must be labeled with the angler's name, date caught, and the date the fish will be removed from Brooks Camp. Fish cannot be cleaned within a 1.5 mile radius of the Brooks Falls unless authorized by the Superintendent. This includes all of Brooks Camp.

More information can be found at the King Salmon and Brooks Camp visitor centers, on the park's website (www.nps.gov/katm), or by calling (907) 246-3305.

Fishing Closure at Brooks Falls

From June 15 through August 15, no person may enter the area within 50 yards of the river within 100 yards of Brooks Falls. Use the designated detours around the closure. These routes are marked with orange flagging tape.

Fishing is prohibited within 100 yards of the fish ladder at Brooks Falls year-round. Please refer to the map below for the approximate location of the detours around Brooks Falls.



This photo shows the approximate location of the closed area around Brooks Falls (within the red dots) and the designated access routes around the closure.