

*Paramount Pictorial*

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KODIAK BEARS GO FISHING

*535 ft neg.*

by

William L. Finley

In far away Alaska when a Kodiak bear goes angling in the spring, he has no rod, reel or net. He uses his wits and his big paws. A salmon has all the advantage because he is a strong swimmer, quick and slippery. If he stays in water a foot or more in depth, the bear has little chance, unless he can maneuver the salmon out on the riffles.

Scenes- Distant view of bear wading in stream hunting for salmon. He is suspicious, hears the camera and runs away.

The Kodiak bear is the largest carnivorous or flesh-eating animal in the world. He has an aggressive and uncertain disposition. At times he is afraid of a man, but if he is hungry and angling for food, he may attack anything that gets in his way. The safest way to see him when he is fishing is to have a good hiding place.

Scene- Man in blind behind log.

As the schools of salmon work their way up stream to the spawning beds, they seek the pools and deeper spots. A bear starts with a rush down the middle of the stream, splashing into the center of the pools to scare the salmon out in the shallows where the water is a few inches deep. It is only here in the shallows that he has a chance to make a catch.

Scene- Bear running up the middle of the stream and dashing into the water near the blind, but misses his catch.

One day we went up another stream and while waiting for bears we made a temporary blind of a few branches to hide ourselves and camera.

Scenes- Finley and guide walking away up stream and making a temporary blind.

A little later a bear came running straight down the bank of the stream watching for a chance to rush in and grab a salmon. It looked as if he was coming right into camp. At a distance of thirty yards he dashed into the water for a fish, but missed. Then he caught sight of the camera. "Good-bye," said the bear.

Scenes- Bear coming toward camera, then runs back.

When he reached the bend of the river, curiosity got the better of him. He stood up to take another look. "What in the world is that?" he said. He suddenly decided it must be a man with a gun, and away he went for good.

Scenes- Bear in distance standing up looking, and then running away.

When a bear is hungry he is not afraid of anything. One day we paddled to the head of the bay. The tide was out leaving a wide flat across which a salmon stream meandered. A bear had come out of the forest and was watching us until we followed up the stream and were about two hundred yards away. Suddenly he started full speed in our direction. He passed us, dashed into the water and made a grab at a salmon, but missed. He growled and made a try for another fish. He seemed to miss every one, and was getting madder every minute. He stood up and looked around, then started toward us.

Scenes- Bear in distance, woods back. Running past and trying for a salmon.

Watching through the finder, it looked like a charge. It was an uncertain moment, and the camera wobbled. The guide yelled, "Keep back!" and threw up his gun ready to shoot. The bear's mind changed quickly. Away he went pell-mell back toward the woods. The guide said the bear only wanted to show us that he wasn't afraid, and was going to get his salmon anyway. But discretion was the better part of valor, and the guide bluffed him out.

Scene- Bear coming toward camera. Guide with gun ready and bear coming back.

It takes a lot of experience for a bear to learn how to catch a salmon. When he rushes down the middle of a stream, and into a school of salmon, they at once dart in all directions. An inexperienced bear tried to grab two at once, and generally gets nothing.

Scenes- Guide at blind. Bear coming down stream, fails to get fish, but sees two men crouched behind camera. Heads of two deer watching above grass.

The next bear that came was older and more experienced. He rushed in, turned all of his attention to one salmon, and caught it.

Scene- Bear in distance catching salmon.

A fish weighing eight or nine pounds is only half a meal for an old bear. A little later, after waiting until the salmon were in the pool again, he came rushing down. He was even more accommodating this time. When he caught his fish he turned toward the camera, used one paw to get a firmer hold, and went out into the bushes to finish his meal.

Scenes- Men in blind. Bear catching second salmon.

Then things began to happen. A big fat darker colored bear came loping down stream toward the blind. He was coming with a rush, but the camera shutter was set to slow down his action. As he approached a pool full of salmon, another lighter brown she-bear came out of the grass to the right. She not only saw the first bear in her own fishing preserve, but also saw the camera man at the same time. She stood up, growling viciously.

Scenes- Men in blind, one bear in stream and one on bank.

As the fat bear came on, splashing water in all directions, just opposite the blind he suddenly got wind of something and stopped. The bear on the bank was getting madder and dropped down as if to charge. The guide, thinking both bears were getting too close and there might be trouble, jumped up with his rifle cocked and let out a loud yell. This ended the scene, much to the disgust of the camera man.

Scenes- Bear in river, and one on bank.

Next, twin bears suddenly appeared up stream a ways. They were about three years, and looked like two school boys. They discovered the camera man, and ran back.

Scene- Two bears standing up in distance.

Later in the day, they were hungry for fish and had forgotten their former experience, for they came down stream full speed, one behind the other. They were scatter-brained and could not have caught a salmon unless it jumped out on the bank. About fifty feet away, one of them suddenly remembered that he had seen something, or he heard a noise, for he stood up and looked, and told his brother. Both stood up and began walking backward, watching the camera man intently. Then they lit out for the tall timber.

Two men in blind, watching.

Scene- Two bears coming down stream, standing up and running away.

This was the climax of two weeks' waiting and watching for Kodiak bears fishing. We were soon on the way down stream, and a little later returned to the yacht.

Scene- Men going down stream and approaching yacht.

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