



2100 Kachemak Drive, Suite 1 Homer, Alaska 99603  
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#### FAQ's About Our Bear Viewing Trips

- **Are there age limitations?** Our minimum age is 7 years.
- **But my child is well behaved—why can't they go?** We have seen that children under age 7 may not truly understand how important it is they do exactly as the pilot / guide instructs (sit, stand, be quiet, come closer, etc.). Sometimes the higher pitched sounds that younger children make can excite and/or upset the bears as it may be similar to the tone of wounded prey. For safety purposes, we do not want the bears associating humans with prey for any reason.
- **How active is the trip? Can someone with mobility issues view the bears?** Our requirement is that each passenger be able to walk up to 5 miles (it is usually less) unassisted in hip wader boots over uneven terrain including, but not limited to: sand, rocks, high grasses, thick mud, through moving water and over logs. Passengers need to be able to get into, and out of the aircraft (stepping up or down 14 – 16 inches) with minimal help.
- **Are there facilities? Bathroom?** There are no facilities at all. We view the bears in their natural habitat and abide by the 'leave no trace' policy. We walk along the beach, around streams and meadows. Should you have a need, your pilot / guide will help you find a safe, appropriate and private area.
- **Where do you go on your trips?** We visit either Katmai National Park or Lake Clark National Park. The pilot chooses the exact location either the day before or the day of the trip based upon bear activity and weather conditions.
- **When is the best time to view the bears?** Bear viewing is generally the best from mid-May to early / mid September. The reliability for viewing is due to the amazing abundance of food sources along the coast. The bears have no reason to go elsewhere for food. To observe mating behavior, May and June are best. For fishing / clamming, late July to September are the best times.



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- **Can you go to Brooks Falls / Brooks River / Brooks Camp / McNeil River?** No—these areas are only accessible by float plane and we operate only wheeled aircraft. However, where Brooks / McNeil can sometimes offer the iconic ‘bear catching a fish in midair from a waterfall’, our trips offer a much more diverse experience. With Smokey Bay Air, you will be walking amongst the bears—not just viewing them from a platform with several others. You may see mating activity early in the season, digging for clams in the mud flats, grazing and playing in the meadows, mothers and cubs lounging on the beach and bears of all sizes fishing in the streams.
- **How safe is bear viewing?** Bear viewing is safe, especially so given our experience and precautions. Confrontations can be avoided when people have a clear understanding of bear behavior and respect the bears and their personal space. This is why you will be with your pilot / guide 100% of the time. At Smokey Bay Air safety is, and always will be, our #1 priority, whether it is your flight, or the bear viewing experience.
- **Do the pilots / guides carry a gun?** No. Our pilot / guides carry marine flares. If they are ever used, these flares are loud, bright, give off an acrid odor and extremely effective of deterring any potentially aggressive or overly curious bear. Our company has rarely had to use a flare in the field, as simply being able to interpret the bear’s body language and acting accordingly is sufficient to maintain a proper level of safety, while yet still allowing us to get you close to the bears. This is what they are trained to do.