U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

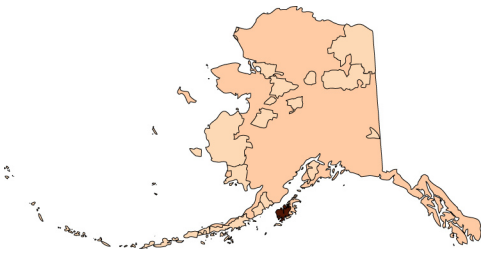
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

A Special Place in Alaska!

- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1941 to conserve Kodiak brown bears, salmonoids, sea otters, sea lions and other marine mammals, and migratory birds.
- The 1.878 million acres of refuge can only be reached by float-plane or boat.
- No place on the refuge is more than 15 miles from the ocean.
- The interior of the refuge is covered with lush, dense vegetation while southwestern Kodiak is covered with grassy hummocks.
- Some three thousand bears roam this enchanted emerald isle of steep mountains, sparkling rivers and rugged coastline.
- Kodiak brown bears – among the largest of all bears – can be as much as nine feet tall and weigh close to 1,500 pounds.

Dave Menke/USFWS

Kodiak brown bears.



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service manages 16 national wildlife refuges in Alaska, or nearly 82% of the National Wildlife Refuge System acreage.

- At least 500 pairs of bald eagles reside year-round on the refuge.
- From early summer to autumn, the bears gather along salmon streams and gorge themselves.
- The refuge provides spawning and rearing habitat for five species of Pacific salmon, and supports 237 species of birds.
- Wildlife observation, photography, rafting, fishing, hunting, and camping are popular activities.
- Geologically, the Kodiak Islands are an appendage of the Kenai Peninsula, sharing the same rocks and structures. Before glacial times the two were theoretically connected by an unbroken chain of mountains, then separated by Cook Inlet ice which eroded the rock in the area below sea level.
- During the Pleistocene Era, 10,000 years ago, ice sheets completely covered the Kodiak archipelago, except the highest peaks and the southwestern area of the refuge, known as the Kodiak Refugium.
- Although the first clear evidence of human occupation of the Kodiak Refuge dates to around 6,000 years ago, it is likely people reached the island earlier.
- The first European sighting of the island of Kodiak occurred in 1741, though no landings were attempted by the Russian ships.
- The refuge offers several public use cabins. Each cabin offers a unique recreational opportunity.

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