

BEAR WITH ME

A Lens, a Grizzly, and the Adventure of a Lifetime



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Foreword

If I told you that a 19-year-old kid on his honeymoon in Bermuda standing there with a borrowed Instamatic camera that one day he'd publish his first photo book after 50 years behind the lens, I might have laughed. Yet I am here, holding a desire that's been decades in the making.

My journey into photography started with a simple borrowed camera, but it quickly turned into a passion that refused to let go. I taught myself everything from reading, experimenting, and learning through trial and error. My first real camera was a Canon AE-1, and I worked every angle I could to master this craft. After ten years of pushing and growing, I made one of the biggest decisions of my life: I left my job at General Motors and committed fully to photography.

Over the years, this career has taken me places I never imagined. I've had the honor of photographing for ABC, the NBA, NFL, Major League Baseball, and even two Summer Olympic Games in 2004 in Athens and Beijing in 2008. My work has been featured in USA Today, Black Enterprise Magazine, Time, Newsweek, TV Guide, and ESPN. I've covered corporate assignments for companies like Six Flags, Eastman Kodak, Continental Airlines, CVS, PepsiCo, and many more. I've traveled to countless parts of the world doing what I love, telling stories with my camera.

And yet, through all the years, this book remained on my bucket list: to produce a wildlife photography book, dedicated to the awe-inspiring grizzlies of Alaska. *Bear With Me* represents not just a photography project, but a personal milestone. After decades spent shooting athletes, celebrities, and corporate campaigns, this time it was just me, my lens, and the raw, untamed wilderness.

While standing in Alaska's vast open spaces, watching these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat, I was reminded of why I fell in love with photography in the first place, the thrill of capturing a moment that lives far beyond the instant it's taken.

This book is my way of sharing that adventure with you and culminating 50 years spent chasing light, moments, and stories. I hope as you turn these pages, you'll feel the same sense of wonder that inspired me from the very beginning.





Imagine standing by the edge of a roaring river, the crisp mountain air filling your lungs, as a grizzly emerges from the shallows, water cascading from its golden-brown fur. In that moment, it's not just about shutter speeds or composition; it's about respect, patience, and the thrill of being present in the wild.







Bear Hierarchy in Action

Bigger, older males take the best fishing spots, while younger bears and mothers with cubs must be strategic for scraps. Photographers can capture incredible storytelling moments like a cub learning to fish or a younger bear challenging an elder.



Bear Etiquette for Photographers

Bears don't see humans as food, but they do expect personal space. **50 yards away is the standard safe distance.** A long lens (400mm or more) is a must for capturing close-ups without disturbing the animals or becoming part of their lunch.



Timing is Everything

Peak salmon runs happen between **July and September**, depending on the river system. For photographers, this means golden opportunities for action shots bears leaping, claws swiping, and jaws snapping mid-air.







The Great Bear Buffet

Every summer, Alaska's grizzlies (coastal brown bears) gather at rivers to feast on spawning salmon. A single bear can eat up to **90 pounds of salmon per day** equivalent to about **360 sushi rolls!**



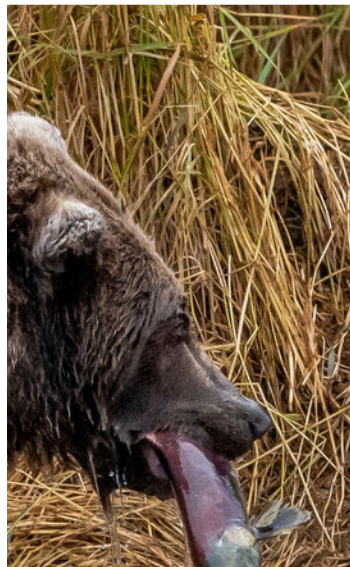






The “Plunge and Snatch” vs. “Sit and Wait” Strategy

Not all bears fish the same way. Some charge into the river, splashing dramatically perfect for high-speed shutter shots while others patiently wait at waterfalls for salmon to jump right into their jaws.



Salmon Give It Their All, And Then They Die

After making the treacherous journey upstream, salmon spawn and die, leaving behind a feast for bears, eagles, and wolves. Their sacrifice fuels the ecosystem **even trees benefit from salmon nutrients!**

Photographers can capture the life-and-death cycle in every frame.



5 Reasons Why Bears Fight Each Other While Fishing for Salmon in Alaska

1. Dominance Over the Best Fishing Spots

Bears establish a hierarchy based on size, strength, and experience. The biggest, most dominant males claim the **best fishing spots**, like waterfalls where salmon jump right into their mouths. Younger or weaker bears are forced to challenge them or find less productive spots downstream.

2. Competition During Scarce Salmon Runs

While salmon runs can be abundant, some years or locations see lower fish numbers. When the supply is limited, **bears become more aggressive**, competing fiercely to secure enough food before winter hibernation.

3. Mating Season Residual Tensions

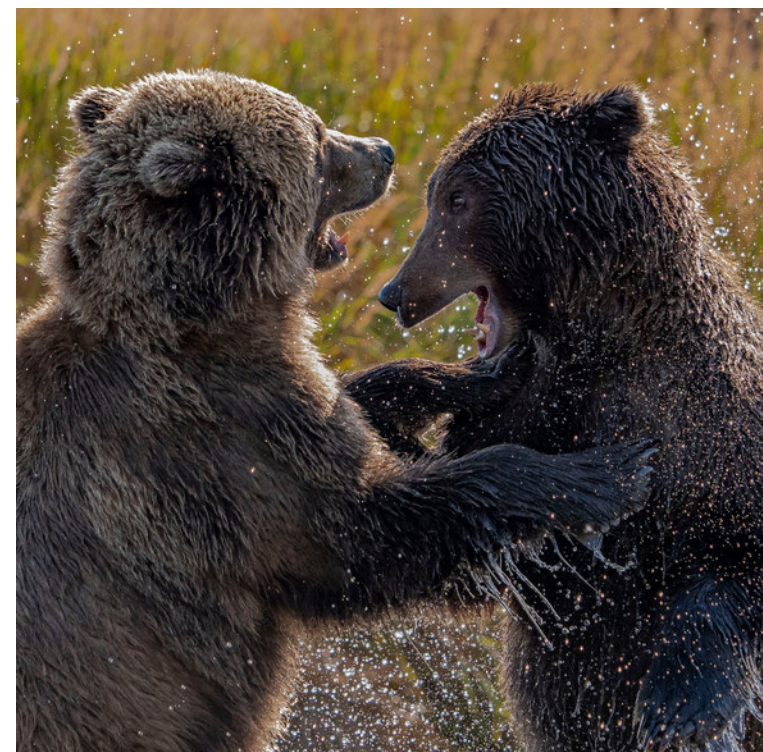
Bears don't just fight over food they also battle for mating rights in the spring. Even though the breeding season ends by early summer, tensions linger. If two males who previously fought over a female meet again at a fishing spot, old grudges can reignite into new conflicts.

4. Protecting Cubs from Aggressive Males

Mother bears (sows) are highly protective of their cubs, as **adult males may attack them** to force the female back into estrus. If a dominant male gets too close to a sow and her cubs at a fishing site, **she may charge or fight to protect her young**.

5. Food Hoarding and Personal Space

Some bears are not just dominant they're territorial. A well-fed bear may **try to monopolize a fishing hole**, even when there's enough salmon for everyone. If another bear invades their space, a fight can break out as a show of power and control.





Bonus for Photographers:

Bear fights create **spectacular photo opportunities**, with water splashing, teeth bared, and massive paws swiping mid-air. But remember **never get too close!** A telephoto lens (400mm+) is your best friend when capturing these wild encounters safely.

Mama Bears and Their Cubs During Salmon Season

1. Mama Bears Teach Their Cubs to Fish

Cubs don't instinctively know how to catch salmon they learn by **watching their mother**. Early in the season, you'll often see cubs standing on the riverbank, mimicking their mom's swipes at the water or curiously pawing at dead fish. This provides incredible photo opportunities of young bears **learning survival skills** in real-time.

2. Cubs Stay Close for Protection

Grizzly cubs stay with their mothers for **2-3 years**, and salmon season is one of the most dangerous times for them. Large males (boars) **will kill cubs** to force the female into estrus. To protect them, sows keep their cubs **close by, often standing between them and other bears**. This maternal instinct leads to some of the most powerful images in wildlife photography

3. Moms Choose Fishing Spots with Safety in Mind

Unlike dominant males, who take prime spots at waterfalls, sows with cubs often fish in **shallower, less crowded waters** to avoid aggressive encounters. These calmer areas allow for more intimate shots of a mother bear patiently teaching her cubs, away from the chaos of larger bear gatherings.



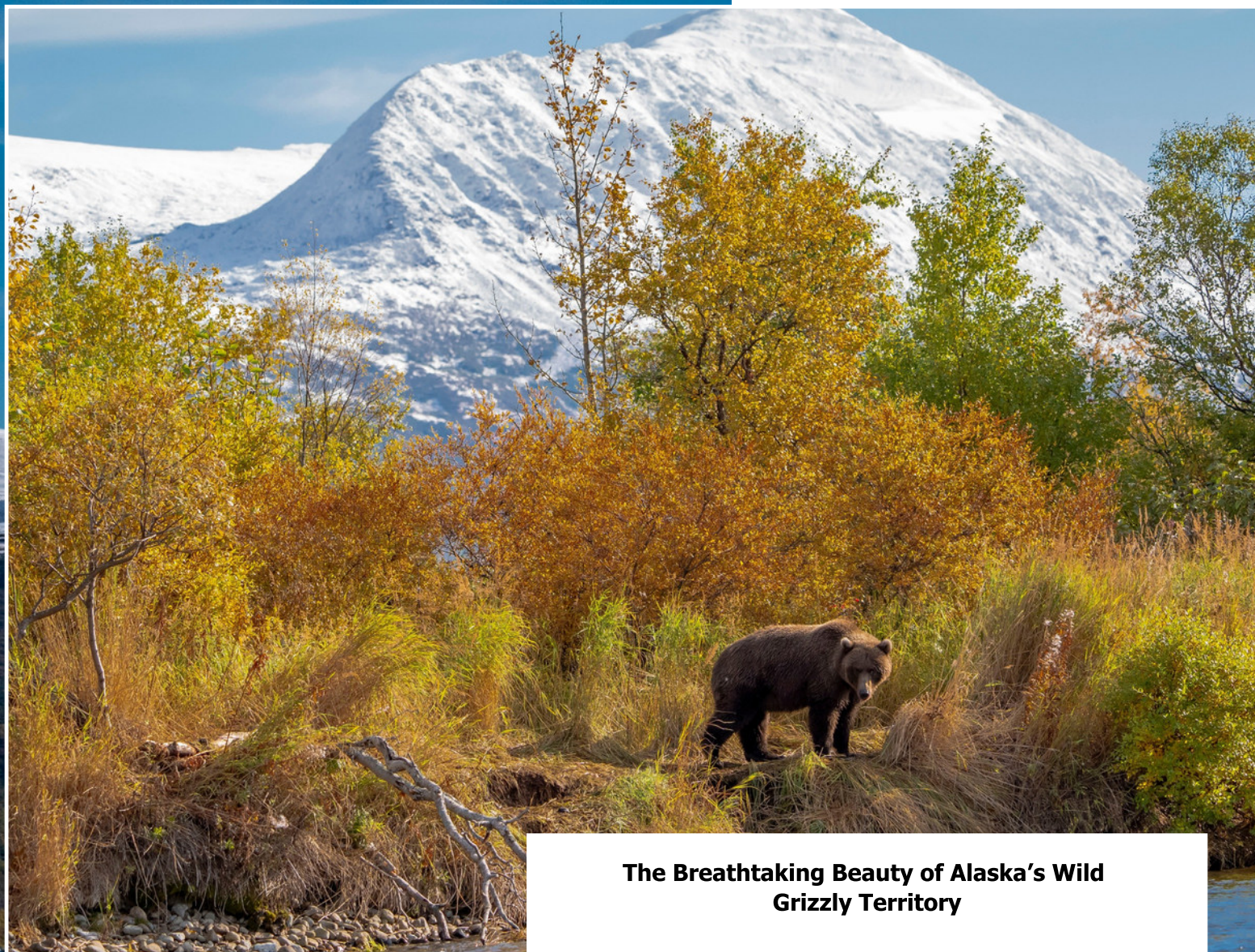


Cubs Play More When They Feel Safe

While fishing is serious business, cubs still make time for **playful moments**, especially when their mother is nearby. Cubs will wrestle, chase each other, and even practice their fishing skills with sticks or small fish. A well-fed and relaxed mother bear will sometimes **engage in play herself**, gently swatting at her cubs or letting them climb on her. These playful moments create some of the most endearing and unforgettable wildlife photos.







The Breathtaking Beauty of Alaska's Wild Grizzly Territory

Alaska's untamed wilderness offers photographers an **unforgettable backdrop** where towering **snow-capped peaks, crystal-clear rivers, and lush evergreen forests** create the perfect stage for nature's most dramatic spectacle. As the golden-hour sun casts a warm glow over the rugged landscape, **powerful grizzlies** emerge to hunt, their sharp eyes locked on the rushing waters teeming with **leaping salmon**. The scene is ever-changing—**bald eagles soar overhead**, mist rises from the river, and in the distance, the **Alaska Range stands tall against the horizon**. At night, the wilderness transforms once more as the **northern lights** dance across the sky in mesmerizing waves of green and purple.

For photographers, every moment in this wild paradise is an opportunity **a grizzly's reflection in the water, the raw energy of a salmon's final leap, or the stunning glow of twilight over the landscape**. This is not just a trip; it's an **immerse journey into the heart of the wild**, where nature's raw beauty is waiting to be captured through the lens.

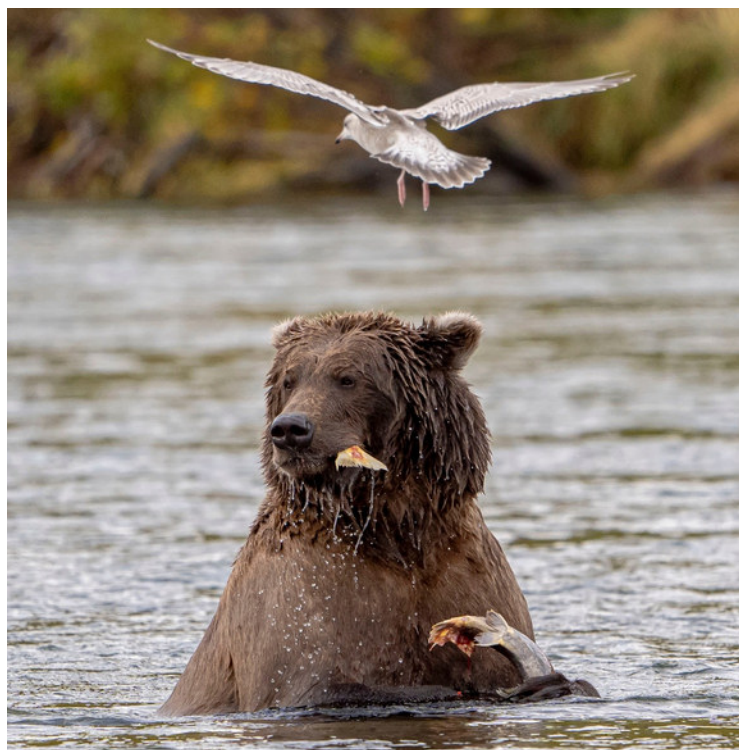




Photo Adventures with Ron: Capturing Grizzlies & Salmon in the Wild

Join **Photo Adventures with Ron** on an unforgettable journey to one of the most breathtaking locations on Earth where mighty **grizzlies roam free, salmon leap through rushing rivers, and the untamed wilderness of Alaska unfolds before your lens.**

This once-in-a-lifetime photography adventure takes you deep into **prime bear country**, where you'll witness nature's raw beauty up close. From towering mountains to pristine rivers teeming with life, every moment offers a chance to capture **powerful wildlife action, intimate mother-cub interactions, and the golden-hour glow of Alaska's untouched landscapes.**

With over **50 years of photography experience**, Ron Wyatt will guide you to the best vantage points, helping you frame spectacular shots of **grizzlies fishing, eagles soaring, and the rugged terrain that makes Alaska a dream for photographers.** Whether you're an experienced wildlife photographer or simply seeking an adventure behind the lens, this trip promises **stunning images, thrilling encounters, and memories that will last a lifetime.**

Pack your gear, adjust your settings, and get ready for an extraordinary expedition **because Alaska is calling, and the wild is waiting to be captured.**



Bear With Me: A Lens, a Grizzly, and the Adventure of a Lifetime takes readers deep into the heart of grizzly country, capturing breathtaking images of bears in action from the raw power of salmon hunts to playful moments between cubs. Through Ron Wyatt's lens, you'll witness nature at its most thrilling and intimate junctures.

Alongside stunning photographs, Ron shares valuable tips and insights for photographers who dream of making their own journey to Alaska during the peak of salmon season. Whether you're an aspiring wildlife photographer or an armchair adventurer, this book delivers an up-close look at one of nature's most captivating spectacles.

An amazing journey into the wilds of Alaska - Travel, Exploration and Photography

About the Author:

Ron Wyatt is a self-taught photographer with a career spanning over 50 years. What began with a borrowed Instamatic camera on his honeymoon turned into a lifelong passion that's taken him around the world. Ron's work includes assignments for ABC, the NBA, NFL, Major League Baseball, and two Olympic Games. His photos have appeared in *USA Today*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *ESPN*, and *TV Guide*, among many others. *Bear With Me* marks his first photo book — a personal milestone celebrating his love for adventure, nature, and storytelling through the lens.

