



CSF Chairman David Rockland and Tim Richardson of the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust delight in the catch of the day. Editors note: Our Chairman's ego insists his fish is bigger.

August recess — a great time of the year, whether you're a Member of Congress or just a regular "worker-bee" in Washington.

This past August found me in an airplane with Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge manager Jay Ballenger over-flying one of the most spectacular places in the world. Mountain goats adorned the mountaintops; a herd of elk grazed by a pond; and blacktail deer were scattered everywhere. As we crested a ridge and dropped down into a valley, there they were — several Kodiak Brown Bear feeding off a salmon run. Among them, a sow with three cubs of the year trailing behind. WOW!

But the scenery wasn't the only reason this was such a great trip: it was seeing the work of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation in action. As described in Tim Richardson's article in this issue of *The Sportsmen's Voice*, our Caucus and Foundation helped get the first funds dedicated to Kodiak land acquisition to make this a complete Refuge. And, we are committed to seeing through the completion of the Refuge in the next few years.

Also in this issue is a report on our September 24 banquet. The success of this event came from many people and organizations, including the Kodiak hunting and fishing trip donated by the Kodiak Native Tourism Association bought at the auction for \$5,250.

We have a great deal to be proud of in the work of the Caucus and Foundation. In this issue, you'll also read about the highlights of what we've accomplished in the first session of this Congress, and what's planned for 1998.



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A View From The Field

Tangible Results Seen at Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

by *Tim Richardson*

A fact-finding field trip during the August recess provided the opportunity for Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Member and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Livingston (R-LA) to visit several areas in Alaska including the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

Livingston, Appropriations Committee Ranking Member David Obey (D-WI) and CSC Member and Appropriations Committee Member Ed Pastor (D-AZ) spent time at the Kodiak refuge's field headquarters on Karluk Lake and in the Native Alaskan village of Old Harbor.

The Kodiak stop provided a first-hand look at one of the largest habitat protection projects in a national wildlife refuge. The giant Kodiak brown bears, abundant wild salmon systems and Alaska's largest year-round population of bald eagles have been beneficiaries of actions by Congress and the six state and federal trustees of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Fund.

Purchases of large tract private native inholdings in the Kodiak refuge along with conservation easements on retained private lands have been the federal government's number one acquisition priority in Alaska since the Reagan Administration.

The nearly two million acre refuge was recognized as a unique national treasure by sportsmen in the 1930s and President Franklin D. Roosevelt set aside two-thirds of Kodiak island as a bear refuge in 1941. The rugged Kodiak landscape is comprised of mountains, rivers, bays and dramatic sea coasts that are largely unchanged since the Ice Age.

Since 1995, 275,000 acres of critical fish and wildlife habitat along rivers and coastal areas were acquired for inclusion in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge for the Alaska State Park System on neighboring Afognak Island.

All the areas protected will enable fish and wildlife injured by the oil spill to rebound and repopulate the 1,500 square mile oil spill region which stretches from Prince William Sound to the Alaska Peninsula south of the 5,000 square mile Kodiak Archipelago.

Kodiak's stature as a world class destination for sport hunting and fishing made it a high priority for sportsmen's groups in the Exxon Valdez restoration process and the public has hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation access rights on the lands protected.



Appropriations Chairman Bob Livingston greets U.S. Fish & Wildlife representative on his arrival to Kodiak Island.

The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus and Foundation helped direct the first fund dedicated to the Kodiak land purchased by supporting Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) applications.

More Exxon Valdez funds and federal funds will be required to finish the refuge project, but 80% of the large parcels that had been owned by Alaska Native corporations have been bought back and half the critical small parcels are back in public ownership.

Private non-profit conservation groups like the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, The Conservation Fund, Wildlife Forever, Safari Club International and the National Rifle Association have put their dollars into the mix of Exxon Valdez and federal funds for the land acquisition and conservation easements. A realistic timetable for completing the Kodiak campaign would see the refuge intact and much of Afognak Island protected before the year 2000.



Web Site Update

- **The Izaak Walton League of America** - www.iwla.org
- **North American Fishing Club** - www.fishingclub.com
- **North American Hunting Club** - www.huntingclub.com
- **Wildlife Forever** - www.wildlifeever.org

If you want to add your Web site email Melinda Gable at melinda@scgweb.com or call 202/785-9153.