



E. JOHNSTON / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE VIA AP

This image provided by the National Park Service shows bear 32 Chunk at Katmai National Park in Alaska on Sept. 19, 2024.

# Fat Bear Week opens for Alaska’s heavyweight crown. Can Chunk, the 1,200-pound champ, win again?

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska— After a summer spent packing away sockeye salmon, Alaska’s heftiest brown bears are ready to throw their weight around. Online voting began Tuesday for Fat Bear Week, the annual contest that pits the rotund residents of Katmai National Park and Preserve against each other for the title of most oversized ursine. Last year’s winner, Chunk — known officially as Bear 32 — is hungry for a repeat. Chunk’s weight in 2025 was estimated at 1,200 pounds, which gave him a narrow victory. This year he’s back and facing corpulent competition like Gully — aka Bear 903 — the offspring of two-time champion Grazer. The contest, which is in its 12th year, celebrates the resilience of the 2,200 brown bears that live in the preserve on the Alaska Peninsula, which extends from the state’s southwest corner toward the



GUY RUNCO / KATMAI CONSERVANCY VIA AP

In this photo provided by Katmai Conservancy, a bear munches a salmon in Alaska's Katmai National Park and Preserve in Sept., 2026.

Aleutian Islands. Fat Bear Week was started in 2014 as an interactive way to inform the public about brown bears, the coastal cousins of grizzlies. The event this year features 16 bears facing off in a single-elimination, bracket-style tournament. All voting is done online at [www.fatbearweek.org](http://www.fatbearweek.org), with the winner declared Sept.

29. The public can watch the bears on [explore.org](http://explore.org)’s livestream cameras before deciding on their favorite. “Fat bears are successful bears,” the nonprofit’s website says. They gorge on the abundant salmon that return to the Brooks River starting in late June in order to accumulate fat reserves, sometimes

chomping the fish in midair as they make their way upstream to spawn. Adult male brown bears typically weigh 600 to 900 pounds (about 270 to 410 kilograms) in midsummer. By the time they are ready to hibernate after feasting on migrating and spawning salmon — each eats as many as 30 fish per day — large males can weigh well over 1,000 pounds (454 kilograms). Females are about one-third smaller. During winter hibernation, the bears do not eat or drink and lose one-third of their body weight. Voters in the online contest can review before-and-after photos of the bears, lean at the start of summer and fattened at the end. The bears are not actually weighed — imagine that process — and some fans choose their favorite based on their looks or backstory. To be featured in the contest,

See **FAT**, 9B

# To H\*\*\* with robots

Right now, the news media is in an uproar over AI. The headlines are bleak. Experts are saying our cherished way of life is in danger. Pretty soon, if things keep going this direction, they say we will lose basic human abilities, such as empathy, sustained focus, and the ability to spel withot autocorrek. And while I know I’m supposed to be terrified of AI, I’m not worried. Namely, because right now, I’m busy watching “The Dog House.” “The Dog House” is a TV series about people who adopt pets in God-manchester, England. The show documents stories of animal rescues from the Wood Green Pets Charity, and it is crack for dog lovers. After a few moments of watching, you’re rooting for families, for rescues, for the rescue staff, and you’ve finished two bags of Chili Cheese Fritos.



Sean Dietrich

This show is nearly perfect. On the “International Sean Dietrich Adorable-TV Scale,” a scale ranging from 1 to 10 (with 10 being, say, “Lilo & Stitch,” and one being “A Clockwork Orange”), “The Dog House” receives a score of 632,348. This is because the show is positive. Have you ever tried practicing positivity? Have you ever actively been positive for a full 24 hours? Yes. I know. Some see positivity as willful ignorance. Others see positivity as pure stupidity. But personally, I have always seen positivity as a five-syllable word. Even so, positivity is not just ANY five-syllable word such as “geometrical,” “vegetarian,” or “Lithuania.” Those are regular five-syllable words. No, positivity is real. Everything in this world is made of energy. If you were to magnify any object to the atomic level, you’d see only waves or particles. Many particles carry an electrical charge. That chair in the corner is really just energy. The phone you’re holding: Energy. The crumpled Frito-Lay bag lying next to you on the sofa: Also energy. So, in electrical terms, “positivity” actually means something different than you might think. Let’s go back to high-school physics class for a moment. Quit doodling in your history textbook and altering that image of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, you pervert. Let’s talk about electrical circuits. Recall that an electrical circuit won’t work if each point carries the same voltage. Take your house. Light and power only happen in your home when there is a potential difference between high points (positives) and low points (negatives). Now apply this to life in general. Daily life is filled with high and low points. A high point in your day might be finding \$50 in your coat pocket, whereas a low point would be,

See **ROBOTS**, 9B

# Tiny wild cat newly identified as a species draws curious visitors in Bolivia

Associated Press

COROICO, Bolivia — A tiny wild cat hidden away in the cloud forests of Bolivia has become an unlikely tourist attraction, drawing a stream of visitors hoping for a glimpse of the animal that scientists have identified as a brand new species. There is just one problem: Tigrino, as he has been affectionately dubbed, doesn’t like the attention. The small, spotted feline with large, leopardlike spots is easily stressed, so caretakers at the wildlife sanctuary near La Paz keep him out of public view, turning away the crowds eager for a closer look. When The Associated Press visited Sunday, Tigrino cautiously emerged from his shelter, sniffed the air and

paced around for a few minutes before slipping back into the foliage. Tigrino belongs to *Leopardus tilcayo*, the first living wild cat species described by scientists in more than a century. At just 18 inches (46 centimeters) from head to the base of his tail and 3 pounds (1.4 kilograms), he is smaller than the average house cat. The discovery published Thursday in the journal *Current Biology* set off a flurry of excitement on social media. Visitors from across Bolivia and beyond have flocked to the Senda Verde Wildlife Sanctuary, where Tigrino has lived since 2017, when a family brought him there after trying unsuccessfully to

See **TINY**, 9B



JUAN KARITA / AP

A small spotted wild cat identified as a new species, *Leopardus tilcayo*, rests inside Senda Verde wildlife sanctuary in Bolivia's Yungas region near Coroico, Bolivia, Sunday, Sept. 20, 2026.