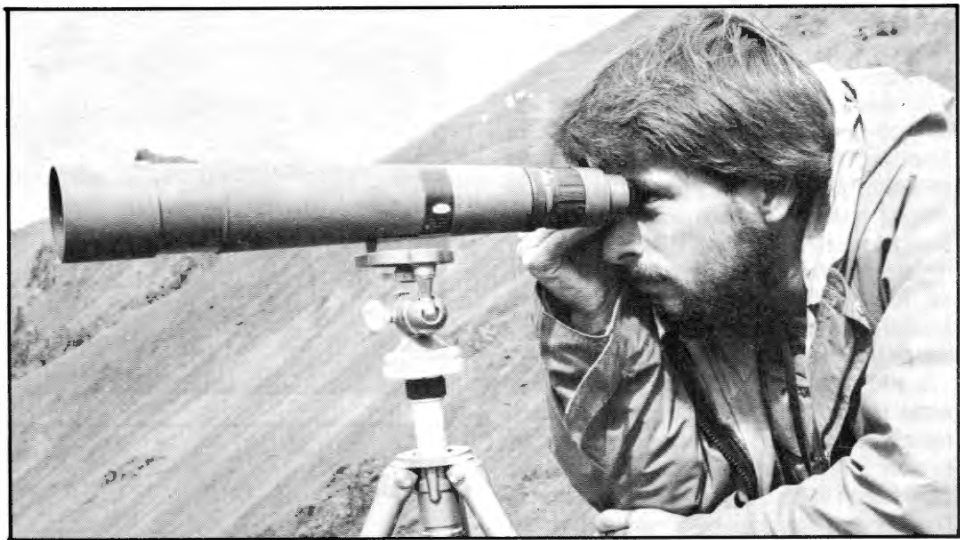




Jim Stelmack, a wildlife graduate student at the University of Alaska who is working with the Alaska Cooperative Park Studies Unit, watches brown bear use of habitat in the Toklat River valley, Mount McKinley National Park. Dall sheep watch the watcher. Fred Dean snapped them all.

McKinley Brown Bear Studies Continue

Knowledge of seasonal patterns of brown bear habitat utilization and activities is important for recreational planning and basic to understanding the biology of bears. Work toward increasing this needed knowledge went forward at two study locations in McKinley Park, both above timberline.

Jim Stelmock, a wildlife graduate student at the University of Alaska, working with the Alaska CPSU, followed the daily movements of bears within study areas at Sable Pass and along the Toklat River – the river area consisting of a wide glacial stream bed and adjacent gravel bars with shrubland and tundra slopes, the pass area composed mainly of sedge, shrub and dryas tundra types with tall shrubland along swale and streams.

Each area was observed from a fixed position on an adjacent mountain for about 500 hours during the field season (May 8 to Oct. 10, 1980) and scats were collected for food and calorimetric analyses. Bear movements were followed on aerial photographs during the mapping of vegetation, and changes in activity or vegetation type were recorded. Habitat use and activity data have been coded and entered on computer files.

The daily activity pattern of bears May through July showed a mid-day/afternoon peak of inactivity. During the fall berry season at both sites bears fed almost continuously throughout the day. Information on bear diets, eating and nursing habits, and the behavior patterns of single bears and bear family groups will be available in thesis form by May 1981. References for the work will include Adolf Murie's *The Grizzlies of Mount McKinley* (No. 14 of the NPS Scientific Monograph series) and L.A. Viereck and C.T. Dryness's 1980 "A Preliminary Classification System for Vegetation of Alaska," a Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station General Technical Report (PNW-106).