

## Track, Stalk — Tumasurluni

---

### TUMASURTAALLRIAKUT KAUGYANEK. – WE USED TO TRACK FOXES.

---



Photo: Wooden labret with bear track carving. Karluk  
One site, Koniag, Inc. Collection.

Alutiiq hunters stalk animals with great knowledge of both animal behavior and the Kodiak environment, using their knowledge to intercept animals, improve the success of their hunts, and protect themselves.

Historic sources indicate that Alutiiq men in search of a bear did not usually begin by tracking animals through the dense tangle of brush that backs Kodiak's shores. Instead, they paddled along the coast looking for bears foraging on the beach or fishing at the mouths of salmon streams. The bear was then shot at. If wounded, the hunter would then track the animal inland to complete the kill, following blood trails, broken brush, and tracks.

Another common way to stalk a bear was to learn its habits. Alutiiq men are renowned for spending hours watching a hillside to locate a den, observe an animal's daily habits, or identify a bear trail. Once a hunter knew when and where a particular bear was likely to go, he could pick the perfect spot to ambush his prey. Careful observation and patience brought the animal to the hunter saving a tough slog through the brush and preventing dangerous surprises.

Although animal tracks are not common in Alutiiq art, a prehistoric wooden labret from Karluk features a track that may be a bear print. An artist carved the track into the surface of the labret, which is also decorated with salmon teeth.