

Former Kodiak Bear Finds New Home in Sweden

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Fish and Game biologist Larry Van Daele with former Kodiak resident Taquka, who now lives in Gronklitt, Sweden. Photo by Anders Bjorklund

Jay Barrett/KMXT

A young Kodiak brown bear that was orphaned here a year and a half ago has a new home in Sweden. Bear expert Larry Van Daele, the former Fish and Game wildlife biologist for Kodiak, says Taquka (to-COKE-ah) took up residence in a five acre enclosure at the Orsa Bear Park, that has been landscaped to resemble Kodiak Island. He says Taquka hasn't exactly been exiled.

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-- (Van Daele 1 47 sec "Well, I tell you what, if ... he's really got it made.")

Despite the

two Swedish girlfriends, it's not as if Tuquka (to-COKE-ah) was put out to stud:

-- (Van Daele 2 47 sec "We neutered him before we ... how to live with wildlife.")

From left, Larry Van Daele, ADF&G; Matt Van Daele, environmental scientist for Koniag; Kodiak artist Mary Ruskovich; CEO Anders Bjorklund of Gronklitt Carnivore Center. Photo courtesy Anders Bjorklund

Earlier in the story we mentioned that Van Daele is the former area biologist for Kodiak - that's because he has a new job: Regional Supervisor for the Division of Wildlife Conservation - a job that covers Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and Kodiak Island. He said he accepted the promotion on one condition:

-- (Van Daele 3 11 sec "Yeah, it was originally in Anchorage ... no doubt about that.")

He said the reasons for that stipulation were two-fold: one, his son took a local job with Koniag, and two, because of his dedication to bears and bear biology here on the island:

-- (Van Daele 4 18 sec "We'll hire a new person to ... involved with Kodiak and the bears.")

Van Daele will also be getting a new, roomier office. In fact, every Fish and Game employee in Kodiak will be getting new digs - just as soon as their new building on Near Island is completed.

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