



# Picture Perfect

*A brown bear awaits the perfect moment to seize a salmon as it jumps its way up Brooks Falls in Alaska.*



*Icy waters flow in this Alaskan bay where the Johns Hopkins Glacier is located. Dr. Michael Dryden took this picture in July 2011.*

## Dr. Michael Dryden combines his passions for parasitology and photography

By Joe Montgomery

**Facing fleas and ticks is one thing, but facing down a brown bear is an entirely different matter.** Dr. Michael Dryden has put himself in both situations and has survived — with pictures to prove it.

“You often hear the bears before you see them,” explained Dr. Dryden, describing encounters he and his wife have had in the Grand Teton National Park and in Alaska. “They typically make a lot of noise, and you can hear them snapping twigs as they walk through the forest. We have even had a few encounters at close range where the bears huff and growl. That will make your heart rate increase. Running is the worst thing to do, so if you have someone with you,



**Dr. Michael Dryden is sometimes referred to as ‘Dr. Flea’ because of his expertise regarding the biology and control of fleas and ticks on dogs and cats.**

it’s better to stand side-by-side to make a wide profile. And then you start talking to the bear in a calm voice. It’s usually gibberish, but speaking seems to help the animal acknowledge you without assuming a threatening position. Then you slowly back away. We always carry bear spray (a deterrent), but have never had to use it.”

Dr. Dryden’s interest in wildlife and nature photography stems from his undergraduate days at K-State, when he was majoring in wildlife biology. He and his wife, Joan, have made numerous hiking and photography trips to places such as the Grand Teton, Rocky Mountain, Denali, Katmai and Yellowstone national parks, as well as Banff in Canada and Kruger and Pilanesburg in South Africa.

“As a parasitologist, I’ve had many invitations to lecture in other countries, which has afforded me the opportunity to take pictures in some very scenic locations,” Dr. Dryden said. In addition to wildlife preserves, Dr. Dryden has visited tropical islands in the Caribbean, the Great Barrier Reef and Hawaii, among other places.

### **They call him Dr. Flea**

Dr. Dryden’s work in the control of parasites, such as fleas and ticks, has earned him



distinction as a scientist and researcher. It has also earned him the nickname of “Dr. Flea.”

“That actually goes back to my college days,” Dr. Dryden said. “After I earned my DVM in 1984 at K-State, I worked in both large and small animal practice for a couple of years in Kansas. In 1986, I was accepted into the graduate program at Purdue University’s veterinary college, and studied veterinary parasitology and medical/veterinary entomology. While I was a graduate student, the veterinary students started calling me Dr. Flea.”

Dr. Dryden earned both a master’s degree and a Ph.D. at Purdue. After that, he was offered a faculty position at K-State.

### **An Avid Researcher**

“I’ve focused my research on three areas,” Dr. Dryden said. “The first area is in the biology and control of fleas and ticks infesting dogs and cats. Second, my research team conducts investigations into the interactions and disease transmission of urban wildlife with domestic pets and humans. The third area is in the diagnosis and control of gastrointestinal parasites of dogs and cats.”

Dr. Dryden’s research team has conducted laboratory and field evaluations of prospective flea and tick products in Manhattan, Kan., and Tampa, Fla. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 journal articles and book chapters. Dr. Dryden has lectured in 21 countries and presented more than 750 invited seminars at national and international meetings.

The flea and tick research has received both national and international media recognition which has led to Dr. Dryden making appearances in segments on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, the Discovery Channel, Mona Lisa Productions in France, and televised appearances in Canada, England and Spain, as well as numerous newspapers and magazines.

Dr. Dryden’s research has changed the veterinary profession’s understanding of flea and tick ecology. In addition, the team has developed novel methods for evaluating flea and tick control products and proposed new concepts that revolutionized flea and tick control.

Dr. Dryden has received several awards within the academic and veterinary profession for his work. He has also been recognized by the North Central Branch of the Entomological Society of America and was honored to receive the 2010 Veterinarian of the Year award at the Purina Pro Plan 56th Annual Show Dogs of the Year Awards presented in New York City. In 2011, Dr. Dryden was promoted to University Distinguished Professor.

Read more about Dr. Dryden’s research and see more of his stunning photos at [www.drmichaeldryden.com](http://www.drmichaeldryden.com). 🏆



***Dr. Dryden’s passion for photography has led him to take pictures in locations such as Alaska, Africa, Canada and Hawaii, as well as taking pictures of fleas and ticks for research purposes.***