

IS THERE A MONSTER IN LAKE ILIAMNA?

Dear Bud:

I have heard many rumors about a mysterious monster which lives in Lake Iliamna. However, I am still not clear as to the exact legend behind his fame. Can you tell me the straight story on this mythical creature?

G.A. Harris

Dear G.A.:

I wouldn't let some of our more rambunctious Alaskan seamen hear you say that! There are many who swear they have seen the monster, and never having been one to doubt the word of a fisherman, I can't say the thing doesn't exist.

As legend has it, the creature is about 30 feet long. "Many Iliamna natives will not go out on the lake in a boat painted red, nor will many oldtimers show their faces over the side of a boat in deep water," Robert O. Bowen, author of the Alaska Dictionary, says.

"Many white hunters have seen huge creatures swirling the surface, but photographs of the monster show only a vague, dark shape. No authenticated record exists of the monster eating anyone, but many credible witnesses attest to its existence," he says.

Now, I'm not attesting to its reality one way or the other, you understand, but if you happen to run into me at Lake Iliamna it won't be in a boat in the middle of the lake after dark.

