

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

Release - Immediate

July 2, 1935

E. A. PREBLE, VETERAN
NATURALIST, IS RETIRED

- - -

Edward A. Preble, veteran naturalist and writer of the Bureau of Biological Survey and explorer of the Athabaska-Mackenzie region of Canada, retired from the U. S. Department of Agriculture on June 30, after 43 years of service beginning in his 21st year, on April 1, 1892.

The Biological Survey, says a Bureau statement, deeply regrets the necessity for Mr. Preble's retirement. His regular presence at his office will be sorely missed; but his desk will still be available to him, and it is expected that he will be a frequent Bureau visitor. Relieved of his routine duties for the Government, Mr. Preble will be able to devote more of his time to writing; and he has accepted the position of associate editor of Nature Magazine, a publication with which he has been connected as consulting naturalist since 1924. He will maintain his residence in Washington and will thus be readily available to the Bureau as a consultant and advisor.

The results of most of Mr. Preble's early work are recorded in scientific publications of the Bureau, most notable of which is his 574-page North American Fauna No. 27, "A Biological Survey of the Athabaska-Mackenzie Region." Published in 1908, this work was based on investigations by Mr. Preble and his assistants in 1901, 1903, and 1904. In addition to making a comprehensive report on the natural history of the region, Mr. Preble also contributed to its geography, a contribution

recognized a few years ago by the Canadian Government in naming for him Preble Island in Great Slave Lake and Preble Bay in Great Bear Lake.

Earlier, in 1900, Mr. Preble had conducted a biological investigation of the Hudson Bay region that formed the basis for his North American Fauna No. 22, published in 1902. His early experience in the north country included also a 6-months canoe journey in 1907 to the Barren Grounds about Aylmer Lake, northeast of Great Slave. This expedition, during a leave of absence granted for the purpose, was made with Ernest Thompson Seton, who reported the results in "The Arctic Prairies".

In northern British Columbia, also, Mr. Preble made extensive natural-history explorations, in 1910 and 1913. The first of these trips, from July to November, involved a traverse by boat, pack-horse, raft, wagon, and sled from the mouth of the Stikine on the Pacific Coast to Edmonton on the Saskatchewan. The 1913 trip was in the country immediately south of the route followed through the mountains of British Columbia three years before. The results of these two trips were not published by the Department but have been used in systematic and faunal reports issued by other agencies.

Last year Mr. Preble again investigated the Athabaska region, in connection with the Bureau's studies of waterfowl conditions throughout the continent, and he was one of the authors of Miscellaneous Publication No. 210, "Status of Waterfowl in 1934".

A special study by Mr. Preble in 1911 and published in Biological Survey Bulletin No. 40, "Report on Condition of Elk in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, 1911", was the basis for the purchase of the Elk Refuge and its administration by the Biological Survey.

In 1914 Mr. Preble was made a member of the Fur Seal Commission to study the status of the great herds of fur seals on the Pribilof Islands, in Bering Sea. The resulting report "Fur Seals and Other Life of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, in 1914"

of which Mr. Preble was a joint author, was published in 1915 as Document 820 of the Bureau of Fisheries and also as a Senate document. This report, it has been said, "marks an epoch in seal conservation."

Though an "all-around" naturalist in a sense considered remarkable by his associates in the Bureau, Mr. Preble in his scientific work has been primarily a mammalogist. In 1899 he published a "Revision of the Jumping Mice of the Genus *Zapus*" as North American Fauna No. 15, and he has critically reviewed and assisted in the preparation of other scientific publications of the Bureau on mammals, and also on birds. He is a charter member of the American Society of Mammalogists, was for several years editor-in-chief of its *Journal of Mammalogy*, and is now one of the Society's two vice presidents. He is also a member of the American Ornithologists' Union and other scientific organizations and of several humane and wildlife protective associations.

During the more recent years of his service Mr. Preble has been most deeply interested in matters pertaining to conservation, especially of the migratory birds. He has served as consultant and advisor in the formulation of Bureau policies and protective regulations, his extensive first-hand knowledge of conditions in the field combining with his personal concern for wildlife to make him especially valuable in this phase of the Bureau's work.

Mr. Preble's extensive and detailed knowledge of nature and his ability as a critic have made him particularly valuable to the Bureau in connection with the preparation of reports, publications, statements, and information items of many kinds. Though his writings are still available, the loss of his personal helpfulness will be seriously felt by his former associates.

Honored at Farewell Gathering

At a farewell gathering in the offices of the Chief on June 28, Mr. Preble was honored by his associates in the Bureau and presented with a testimonial brochure and the complete works of Henry David Thoreau, John Burroughs, and John Muir.