The Oral History of John Engbring

March 4, 2019

Interview conducted by Cindy Barry

Corvallis, OR

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: John Engbring

Date of Interview: March 4, 2019

Location of Interview: Corvallis, Or

Interviewer: Cindy Barry

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 30.

Offices and FWS Stations Worked, Positions Held: Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, bird surveys in Micronesia (1980-1990); Recovery Coordinator for the Hawaiian islands (1990-1992); Habitat Conservation Plan Team leader (Olympia, WA 1992-1998); Geographic ARD of the Klamath ecoregion, Sacramento (1998-2006); ARD of Fisheries and Water, Sacramento (2006-2010).

Most Important Projects: As an undergraduate studied pheasants/nesting success for the Illinois Natural History Survey in summers; Master's thesis at Oregon State University, research assistantship, Corvallis OR, Finley National Wildlife Refuge studying pheasants. Joined Peace Corps 1977-79 and conducted bird surveys in Palau. In 1980, started as GS-4 Park Ranger in Corps of Engineers, Southern Illinois, Carlyle Lake, St. Louis District. In 1981, he took a FWS job conducting bird surveys in the Territories/Trust Territories in the Pacific. In 1982, surveyed Mariana Islands, Rota, Tinian, Saipan and Aguiguan. Surveyed Federated states of Micronesia, Kosrae and Pohnpei (1983), Chuuk and Yap (1984). Surveyed American Samoa 1986-87, including main island of Tutuila, Manu'a islands, Ofu and Olosega and Ta'u. Bird survey of Palau in 1991. Moved to Olympia in 1992, completed HCPs under Endangered Species Program and supervised the HCP team. Worked with timber companies doing HCPs in Pacific NW, the State of Washington DNR, Port Blakely, Murray Pacific, Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek and other timber companies. Negotiations with Washington State, 1992-1998 forest practices. In 1998, became Geographic ARD for the Klamath Ecoregion, supervising the Arcata, Yreka, and Klamath field offices. Federally designated official to the Klamath Task Force. Also in 1998, helped establish the new regional office (Region 7) in Sacramento. In 2006 became the ARD for Water and Fisheries in Region 7, dealing with water issues in California, Nevada, and the Klamath Basin.

Colleagues and Mentors: Dad influenced him early with love of outdoors and wildlife, wildlife ecology. Ernest Kosaka, Robert Smith, Curt Smitch, Mike Spear and Steve Thompson were all important FWS mentors.

Brief Summary of Interview: After college schooling, took first position with Smithsonian Institution Peace Corps Environmental Program as ornithologist in Palau, 1977-1979. Worked for Trust Territory Conservation Office in Koror, capital of Palau. Worked for Robert "Bob" Owen, supervisor and chief conservationist covering Trust Territory in Pacific. Conducted bird surveys in Palau, doing transects and bird counts along these transects. Met Greg Bright (limnologies) and Joan Canfield (botanist), fellow Peace Corps Volunteers. In Palau, met Gene Kreidler, Ernie Kosaka, US Fish & Wildlife Service

employees stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii who got the initial bird surveys going in Hawaii and the Pacific. In 1980, started as GS-4 Park Ranger in Corps of Engineers, Southern Illinois, Carlyle Lake, St. Louis District. In 1981, he took a FWS job conducting surveys in the Territories/Trust Territories in the Pacific and the first survey began on the Island of Guam. In 1982, surveys of Mariana Islands, Rota, Tinian, Saipan and Agiguan. The Federated states of Micronesia were surveyed in 1983-1984 (Kosrae and Pohnpei in 1983 and Chuuk and Yap in 1984) Surveyed American Samoa in 1986-87, including main island of Tutuila, Manu'a islands, Ofu and Olosega and Ta'u. In 1991 surveyed Palau. Odd surveys, spring 1992 survey of Hawaiian crow, EA in Solomon Islands, EA in Sri Lanka, and EA in San Tome and Principe (West coast of Africa, Gulf of Guinea). Worked doing HCPs under Endangered Species Program in Olympia, WA and supervised that office. Worked with timber companies in Pacific NW, State of Washington DNR, Port Blakely HCP, Murray Pacific, Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek and others. Negotiations with Washington State, 1992-1998. 1998, Geographic ARD for the Klamath Ecoregion, supervising three field offices, Arcata, Yreka, and Klamath Falls. Federally designated official to the Klamath Task Force. Helped set up the new region in California-Nevada. Water and Fisheries ARD for Region 8, Sacramento, 2006-10.

Interview

Cindy Barry: This is Cindy Barry. My full name is Cynthia Uptegraft Barry, and it is Monday, March 4th, 2019, and I'm doing an oral history interview.

John Engbring: My name is John Engbring, that's my full name and I am retired Fish and Wildlife Service employee, I worked for the service almost 30 years. I was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where my dad was stationed. He worked for the U.S. Air Force at that time and was a military man and during World War II, he flew as a fighter pilot off of carriers in the South Pacific. After the war, he got out of the Navy for a few months, but immediately went back in the military service and joined the Air Force where he was a flight instructor for a few years and then he went into air traffic control. His career while I was growing up was air traffic controller in the Air Force. We moved around quite a bit, in fact, I only lived in Kentucky as a child. I was there for a few months, and then we moved from there to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. I was the second child, so I had one older brother. In Biloxi, Mississippi, three more boys were born, and I think the first memories that I have were from Biloxi, Mississippi. My Dad was a great outdoorsman. He was always fishing or hunting, and I remember going fishing with him when I was less than 5 years old. I did not go hunting with him then, but I remember him bringing back ducks and watching him pluck ducks and smelling ducks being dipped in hot water so the feathers could be plucked readily.

From Biloxi, we moved to Madrid, Spain, where Dad was stationed for 3 years. I was 5years old when we moved there, I was 8 years old when we left and that was 1955 to 1958. We had a fairly large family. There were five boys, and another boy was born in Spain so there were six of us there. We never did live on base, in part because we had a big family. In Spain, Dad rented a large house that was outside of Madrid. It was actually formerly Generalissimo Franco's headquarters during the Spanish Civil War and there were bullet holes in the kitchen. There were secret tunnels that we found that dad would not let us explore. I think the tunnels were ways to secretly get in and out of the house. My first childhood friends were little Spanish boys because that's where we lived out in the country, and I think I spoke Spanish about as well as I spoke English when I was eight years old. I have forgotten most of that now. But we had a great time in Spain, from Spain, we moved to Rapid City, South Dakota. Dad was stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base, and it was a great place for kids. We were always outdoors, always hiking, and always hiking up in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We lived right on the edge of the Black Hills in Rapid City and as kids, we would hike up to the reptile gardens. It was a small zoo with a lot of reptiles and if you hiked up there, they would always let us in free. It was a tourist attraction, *laughter,* and I remember staring at the alligators and the giant tortoises and the snakes.

I think my love for the outdoors came largely from my dad and he was always interested in hiking and camping and fishing and hunting, and all of his children were the same way. From Rapid City, South Dakota, we moved to…. Actually, I should mention that while we were in South Dakota at that time, there were nine kids in the family, and Dad got stationed in Vietnam, so he was gone for one year in Vietnam. That was during the early years of the Vietnam War, about 1962, ’63. So, it was mom and nine kids at home for a year and that was before there was any way to communicate with the Internet or by telephone. *Laughter.* Dad was fighting a war in Vietnam, and Mom stayed home with her nine children.

Cindy: Nine boys?

John: Nine? No, at that point, there were two girls and seven boys, *Laughter,* so dad was stationed in Vietnam for a year. He came back and was…we were all moved to Loring Air Force base in Limestone, Maine. At this point, I was beginning high school. I think I started eighth grade in Limestone, Maine. Again, we lived off base. Dad bought an old, very large farmhouse and with two huge barns and as kids, we just had a blast running around, fishing, hiking and up there, snowshoeing and skiing. We always had a great time. I know a lot of people wonder about, well, wasn't that difficult for you to move or was that hard? And I don't…it never was. Dad and mom always made it very exciting for us to go to a new place and our playgroup was really our siblings, so our siblings went with us, we had our playgroup and we never really worried much about the move. Dad retired from the Air Force when we were in Maine, and then we moved back to Wisconsin, which is where both mom and dad were from, they both grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They knew each other as…I think in high school they knew each other, but not well. Dad was the German side of town and mom was the Italian side of town and I think Milwaukee at that time had all of the little discrete pockets. There were Irish, there were Polish, there were German, there were Italian and probably other nationalities, but as Mom said, we were all taught to speak English. That was important. Both of her parents came over from Italy. On Dad's side, I think they spoke German in the household when he was young.

So, from Maine to Wisconsin and we were in Wisconsin two years. I was in 10th and 11th grades in Wisconsin and dad at that point was working for the phone company. It was not really his expertise. He was air traffic controller and I think he was looking for something that was a little bit more challenging in his field and he applied for a position with what was called the Aeronautical Chart and Information Company or Defense Mapping Agency as a cartographer in St. Louis, Missouri. He got that position and so we moved the entire family to southern Illinois at that point. It was between my junior and senior years so it would have been 1967. I finished my last year in high school in Valmeyer, Illinois, I graduated in 1968 from Valmeyer, Illinois and I started at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. I had always been interested in wildlife and the outdoors. Mom said I was always bringing pets home, I had frogs and turtles and gophers and birds. And I started…I actually think when I was in sixth grade, I knew I wanted to work with biology or with animals and I think in the sixth grade, I said, I want to become a zoo doctor. *Laughter.* I actually started in pre-vet at Southern Illinois University, it was a vet school. After the first year, I realized I probably didn't have the proper bedside manner to be a veterinarian. I might have been able to work with stock and big animals, but my interests really were more in wildlife and wildlife ecology, so I shifted my emphasis slightly and my degree was in zoology, I got a B.S. in zoology from Southern Illinois University.

I'm trying to think, what else am I? You know, as a child, I also was very interested in reading, I think the books that I enjoyed most were always about animals. I remember reading books by Sterling North…*Rascal*, a story about a little raccoon, a pet raccoon and Elsa, a story about an African lioness, those kinds of stories. When I was in high school, I really enjoyed reading the old English hunters that were working in Africa and India and hunting man-eating tigers and man-eating lions. *Laughter.* I drifted from that to the English classics. I don't know why, but I really enjoyed the English classics, Dickens and *Tale of Two Cities* and those sorts of stories, so I read significantly when I was younger.

So, I was at Southern Illinois University. There were two summers toward the end of my training there when I worked for the Illinois Natural History Survey at Champaign-Urbana. There was a research study on pheasants, it was actually a roadside nesting success study and so I was one of the researchers that would search for nests and then later in the summer, I would be on the tractor mowing these roadsides. This particular study, **Blair Joslin** was my supervisor. He would convince farmers to not mow their roadsides because they often mowed them early in the spring or early in the summer and would destroy a

number of the pheasant nests. So, what he would do is convince the farmers to not mow until the pheasants had raised their young or gotten their young out of the nest and in exchange for that, he said, well, we will mow your roadsides later in the summer. So early in the summer, I was searching for nests and tracking pheasant nests and then later in the summer, I would jump on the John Deere tractor and mow roadsides. So, and most of my younger life I was doing what I would call farm jobs, starting by hoeing soybeans in Illinois and then later baling hay in southern Illinois and those were hard physical jobs, particularly baling hay, when it was about 95 or 100 degrees and 95% humidity in southern Illinois and you were working for all day throwing bales seven high, so I got used to hard work, it was not foreign to me.

When I finished my bachelors, I was looking to go on and continue studies for a masters, and I really didn't have money. I was looking for a research assistantship or some kind of way to continue schooling and I must say that back then, if you worked all summer, you could pretty much pay for a year of college, which is difficult to do nowadays. At Southern Illinois University, I had one advantage. I had a scholarship that covered all of my tuition for the four years, so I did not have to pay any tuition. I really just had to cover my room and board, so, if you worked all summer, you can just about cover that. So, I came out of my B.S. with no real outstanding debt, but I didn't have any funds to go to grad school. I talked to Dr. Klimstra at Southern Illinois University, who's a well-known professor in wildlife ecology and he suggested that I apply for a research assistantship at Oregon State University and there was one of his former students, Dr. Bob Jarvis**,** who was now a professor at Oregon State who was initiating a study on ringneck pheasants. I had been working with ringneck pheasants at the Illinois Natural History Survey, so I applied for that research assistantship and was accepted and so, I jumped into my car in the fall of 1972, late summer of '72, and drove out to Corvallis, Oregon, where I started grad school. I graduated from high school in 1968 and in 1968-1972, I was at Southern Illinois University. I worked on my Masters at Oregon State 1972-74. I was born in 1950; I don't know if I remembered to say that or not.

Cindy: Your date of birth?

John: August 7th, 1950, so, it's a good birthdate because I can always remember how old I am. *Laughter.* In year 2000, I was 50 and in year 2050, I will be 100.

So, while at Oregon State University I worked at Finley National Wildlife Refuge studying pheasants. The study itself was fairly focused on a hunted population of pheasants and there was a really sharp decline in pheasant numbers in the **Willamette** Valley and actually, this is where pheasants were first introduced into the United States in the Northwest, and the numbers were extremely high shortly after introduction in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but farming practices had changed, and pheasant numbers were declining. Hunters were worried about that, so I was attempting to monitor productivity of pheasants on the Refuge and trying to determine what were the major causes of decline. Oregon Fish and Wildlife introduced pheasants every fall, and it was for a hunting program. I was attempting to track the survivability of those particular birds so I would mark those birds with patagial wing flags and in the summer, I would go out and flush those birds in attempt to see how long they stayed around and how many of them survived. So, every morning I would get up about 4:00, 3:00 in the morning. My professor had a dog, a couple of the other professors had dogs, and I would borrow one of their dogs and we would head out to the Refuge and from very early in the morning when it was cool, about 5:00 or 5:30, we would start looking for pheasants and I would walk till about 11:00, at which point it was becoming too hot for the dogs and I would come back, drop the dog off and then head into school to work in the afternoon on paperwork. It was a research assistantship, so I pretty much had my expenses covered. I finished that thesis and left Oregon State in the fall of 1974. So, at that point I drove back to southern

Illinois where my parents and family lived, still a big family, there were nine boys and two girls in the family, and we had a blast growing up.

Cindy: Nine boys and two girls?

John: Yeah, nine boys and two girls. I was second oldest, so I was changing diapers most of my life. *Laughter.* And my dad was…they lived in the small town of Valmeyer, but he was interested in getting a little bit into the country and he had just bought an old farmhouse just north of town on 5 acres so I went back and helped him rebuild that farmhouse, we dug a basement and put a big addition on, so it was big enough for the family and I worked there for a couple of summers. I was living out at the farmhouse while we were working on it, dad and mom and the family were still in town. It wasn't far, a mile, two miles away.

It's about that time when they moved out to the farm, I realized, okay, what am I going to do? I'm starting to grow up here and I jumped on my motorcycle and took off across country. I just had a little motorcycle. I had a brother who was at that point working in Stuttgart, Arkansas, I drove down to visit him and that would have been the summer of 1976. I had another brother who was at that time in Montana, near Helena, Montana, and I continued to Montana. I think I had $200 when I left, and I was doing just fine, it didn't cost me anything to travel with the motorcycle and I got to Montana, and then I figured well I will continue going back to Corvallis, where I had a lot of friends, and I wanted to come back and see some of those folks. I got back here and then about that time, this was after traveling about two months, my $200 was gone and I realized, I better get a job. *Laughter*. So, I looked around and there was a construction company that was building a big subdivision, or it was actually a set of condos between Corvallis and Philomath, and I just walked in, and I said, hey, you got any jobs? And they said, yeah, you a carpenter? I said, sure, I had no idea what I was doing, but I told them I did, and they hired me and so I worked and that was the summer, it was late summer of '76, and I worked that fall on various construction projects for this particular set of condominiums.

That fall after the construction season, then it would have been the fall of '76, I started looking around for a job in my field, actually, and I happened to be at the university and I noticed there was an advertisement for an ornithologist position in Palau in the South Pacific with what was called the Smithsonian Peace Corps Institution Program and I thought, well, that's something I would be interested in, I might apply for that. The Smithsonian Institution Peace Corps program was a sort of a unique venture, it's no longer in place, but there was a point, and this would have been the mid '70s when the Smithsonian Institution teamed up with the Peace Corps and they would actually advertise conservation-related positions in countries around the world where the Peace Corps worked and interview and recruit professionals to go work in those particular positions. Once you were hired, you actually just went straight through the Peace Corps program, along with all the other Peace Corps members. So, I was accepted for that position, and I actually talked to some other folks who had applied for it as well, so I think it was a fairly competitive process. I was supposed to start that job in the summer of 1977, and it was the winter of '76-77 when I had applied. So, I was not working, I figured, I've got a little while before I need to get back home, and I was going to leave from St. Louis where my family was from. So, I bought an old bread truck, put a new motor in it and that spring traveled back to Illinois in the bread truck. A couple of brothers came out and we had a big adventure going back, I can remember that bread truck breaking down about every 200 miles, but we made it back to St. Louis. I was there for just a couple of weeks and then I took off for Palau in the Peace Corps. I worked for the the Trust Territory Conservation Office in Koror, Palau, the capital of Palau. I lived with a local family, just like all the other Peace Corps trainees, about two months of language training while we were beginning our jobs and there was a conservation office that I would

go to in Koror, Palau. Robert Owen was my supervisor, and he was the chief conservationist for the Trust Territory in the Pacific so, his authority stretched over all of the islands of the Trust, which included the Mariana Islands, excluding Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Caroline Islands**,** Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk**,** Yap, and Palau. I was just stationed on Palau, and I had a great time. It was wonderful in the tropics.

It was not easy for many of the people in Peace Corps in Micronesia. The attrition rate was on the order of 50%, only about half the people made it the full two-year stint and I think there were a couple of reasons for that. One of them was that we were living with local families, and they are very social families and there's no privacy. I lived in a room, maybe is 20 x 20, and there were sometimes 18 of us that lived in that one room, and you just lay down and go to sleep on the floor. Families were very fluid, sometimes there would be six and then cousins or nephews or aunts or uncles would come in and sometimes there'd be 18 and it's not easy to have your privacy. In the U.S., I think we're not accustomed to that much interaction. I think partly why it was okay with me was I grew up in a huge family and it just didn't bother me that much. I was so captured by the culture, many of the Peace Corps members, when they got together, they got together with other Peace Corps, and they talked about how…. our food isn't really that good and about problems here or there. I didn't do that. I was with the locals; I was with my family or with fishermen and the food was quite a bit different. It was mostly rice and fish and I remember eating a green vegetable two times in two years. They did not eat green vegetables. My Palauan father, he called them "Kalel a kaming," goat food is what he would say, nobody eats vegetables. Actually, I think there were studies done in Palau and Palauan's are fairly healthy nutritionally and they couldn't figure out why because they didn't eat vegetables, but there are a number of fish that when they would eat them, you boil the whole fish, and you actually eat the gut and the liver and they found out that many of the vitamins that you get from vegetables, the Palauan's were getting from the guts of these fish, particular types of surgeon fish were the best for that. I did really well there. I needed to get out and do bird surveys on all these islands. My position was actually to conduct forest bird surveys, endangered bird surveys throughout Palau.

At that point, the Endangered Species Act had recently been passed, I think 1972, and there were a number of species from Micronesia that were included on the list, and they were included there because of reports primarily from World War II of military personnel who passed through and jotted down a few notes, but many of those islands were obliterated during the war, literally, the island of Peleliu and Palau, the Island of Angaur and Palau were really just, there were no trees left, it was just white limestone rock, pretty much was all that was left and it was not a good time to survey birds because the habitat had been completely destroyed for many of them. So, it was time to really try to find out which birds were in trouble, which ones were really endangered, and which ones were doing okay. My job was to survey forest birds throughout the islands. I didn't have a good way of getting around there. I think there's something like 300 islands in Palau. many of them are tiny little dots, but it's a pretty big island chain from the north to the south. So, I built a boat, a small skiff. I didn't have any money to buy an engine, I applied to the Hawaiian Audubon Society for funding to put an engine on this boat and I got a grant, I bought a 25-horse engine, and I put it on the boat and I was gone. I was on the water and on these islands and out for the next year and a half, watching birds and doing transects. I was impressionable, and it was a fascinating place.

I remember when I first walked into the office, the Trust Territory Conservation Office, where Bob Owen was my supervisor, and there were two other Peace Corps that were in there with me, one was Greg Bright, who was a limnologist, and the other was Joan Canfield, who was a botanist. We were all three in that conservation office together and we were all in the same group. I remember walking into the office the first morning and there happened to be a photograph on Bob's desk. It was a photograph of an x-ray,

and I was looking at it and it looked like human arm bones and inside of a crocodile. I said, Bob, what's this? He said, well, we had an incident a few weeks ago, *laughter*, a Palauan spearfisherman and his buddy were fishing at night and one of them was on a raft, on the little raft and his buddy was with his flashlight underwater and all of a sudden, the spearfisherman's underwater flashlight just disappeared, and it was gone and his friend said, I think a crocodile got him, so Bob Owen had a trap built and I think they went and looked for the body the next day, and they actually found it, the crocodile had stashed it up under a rock ledge, it was mostly eaten, partly eaten. So, Bob Owen had a trap built and baited it with a dog on the far end, the dog wasn't hurt, it couldn't be harmed by the crocodile, it was in its own cage, and they actually caught that crocodile, but Bob said, we didn't know if it was the correct crocodile, so, we tied it up and we took it into the hospital, and we had it x-rayed and sure enough, that's the picture I was looking at, you could see the arm bones of this guy, his flashlight was in there. The crocodile wasn't around, and Bob said, well, I wanted to keep it here as a specimen, because they had some ponds there at the conservation office where they could have kept it. But Bob said the family who's relative had died was very upset and they actually came in and they killed the crocodile, so the crocodile was gone. That's the kind of adventure that was around me all the time. *Laughter.* And every time I went spearfishing where that guy had been taken, I always thought about crocodiles, but luckily none came and got me.

Cindy: Was there anything significant about your methodology, your survey methodology for the birds that would be…what equipment you had to use at the time or how your methodology…?

John: Well, I was working with the Smithsonian Institution, which would actually send me some equipment and by sending papers, articles that, there was no way to access out there on survey methodology and if there was some equipment that you needed, binoculars, they could get you those sorts of things. I was using point-counts at that time, so, I would mark a transect and then every 150 meters I would do 8-minute counts. I pretty much covered all of the islands that were there from **Angaur** all the way up to **Kayangel** and I was also able to get on a couple of what they called field trip ships to the Southwest Islands, which are a couple of hundred miles south of Palau, and those are mostly seabird islands out there. I was more interested, and I think my boss was more interested, in the native forest birds and their status. There were four birds on the U.S. endangered species list from Palau. There was the Micronesian Megapode, now known as the Micronesian Scrubfowl, the Palau Owl, an endemic species, actually, all of these would be endemic, the Palau Fantail and the Palau Ground Dove. The Palau Owl was actually very common for an owl, virtually everywhere. I would do counts in early evenings for the Palau Owl, you don't see them during the day, so transects during the day didn't help, but I would do counts in the evenings right after sunset and when they would start calling and virtually everywhere I went in the forests you would hear an Owl or two or three, depending on where you were, three pairs sometimes so, they were fairly common. Palau Fantail numbers were reasonable, and it was not a bird that I was worried about that was going to become extinct. There was really not much of a threat to the habitat at that time, in particular the Rock Islands, south of Koror.

And then the Palau Ground Dove that is probably the rarest, but it's a secretive bird, they're not easy to find and I don't think there was any real danger of their habitat in the Rock Islands, south of Palau, which is mostly where they're found, of being developed. It's pretty steep limestone habitat and there aren't villages down there or anything like that. The Megapode, I was probably the most worried about, but I think they're still doing okay and there have been a number of studies since I've been there, but I think three of the four that were listed were actually delisted, in part because of the work that I did when I was in Palau, and I think those species are still doing well. I had a great time there and it was a real learning experience for me. I became much more interested in the history of the area and particularly the World War II history and that's in part because these are the same islands where dad flew when he was a pilot,

he flew in the Marianas, he flew in the Philippines, and this is where he was fighting the Japanese. I remember one time…and there was a lot of World War II wreckage you know, if I hiked on the big island of Babeldaob, you could find shells from 50 caliber guns from our planes that had been shooting, and there were Japanese tanks scattered here and there and sunken boats and all of that was all around on Peleliu where there was a major battle.

I was in areas where nobody had been since World War II The Japanese had come back for years and years, and they may still be coming back and they would find the bones of their ancestors and then burn them, you know, as part of their religion, but I would…I remember going into caves and hiking down in there and you would find skulls and I remember looking at the skulls and they were young, they were young boys, the wisdom teeth weren't erupted, and I remember looking in one cave and finding skulls and then climbing out and looking out and the birds were singing and it's jungle and green and thinking how much different it had been and actually not that much before I did those surveys. I started in '77, you know, just a little over 20 years since the end of World War II, but the World War II history interested me in part because these were the same islands where my dad had fought during the war.

I remember one time there was a Japanese ornithologist who came to the islands and my boss, Robert Owen, asked me to take him out, show him some of these birds, so, I took him to one of these…there was this trail on one of the islands south of Koror that I had a regular count. There were 12 stations, I think, and I did that every month, There was a big Japanese cannon along this trail, I think it had been hit by our artillery so, it was sort of askew, but it leaned out over a cliff. I took this Japanese individual who spoke absolutely no English, and I spoke no Japanese, birding and, you know, I could point the birds and I could tell him what the scientific name was and he was all excited about this and I remember I got to this cannon. He looked at it, I looked at it, and I walked to the end of it and turned around and looked at him. He was standing on the other end, looking at me and I was thinking, I wonder what he's thinking, because 25 years ago, his dad was maybe here, and my dad was here as well in a completely different situation. We couldn't communicate, and I didn't know what he was thinking, he didn't know what I was thinking, but it was just an eerie interlude along our journey.

Well, let's pause for just a minute.

Okay. Peace Corps in Palau doing bird surveys throughout the islands. I wanted to mention that this is where I first met two employees from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Gene Kreidler and Ernie Kosaka, who came out to actually look at the islands in a natural history context. Palau at that point was part of the Trust Territories of the United States and in theory, the United States was responsible for the conservation of species in the Trust Territories, it was part of the Trust. Gene Kreidler and Ernie Kosaka were Fish and Wildlife Service employees, stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii and I think Gene Kreidler might have been one of the first Fish and Wildlife Service employees in Honolulu. He was the one who actually started the office in Honolulu. He came from Refuges, I think he at one point was at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and others, but he was interested in the forest birds of Hawaii and in Micronesia, and he was the one along with Ernie, who was actually a new hire at the time, who were interested in establishing some surveys to find out what the real status was of many of these birds. I give them credit for getting many of these initial surveys going. But they came out and usually as it happened, my boss, if there was anybody from either the public or another government agency who was interested in birds and they wanted to see the birds, my boss would always say, hey, John, why don't you take these guys out and show them some birds, so, I had my little boat, and we would go down and jump into this little skiff that I made, and I would head out to the Rock Islands usually and I would show them some of the birds. Usually, I would jump in the water and spear a fish or two and cook it on the beach, and they all

loved it and so that's where I first met Ernie and Gene. I started the Peace Corps in1977. It was a two-year stint and I left…I finished my two years in the middle of '79.

The Peace Corps didn't pay us much, I think it was $200 a month and you were supposed to spend half of that for your family, your host family and so, you were able to save just a little bit. What we got at the end of our service was airfare home, so, I had enough money for one ticket home, but I didn't want to go home immediately. There was a yacht, a boat with a couple of crew who were in the harbor in Koror at that point, and they said they could use some help sailing, so, I jumped on the yacht with a buddy of mine who was also in the Peace Corps, and I spent pretty much the next six months sailing and traveling. We headed south to New Guinea, the outer islands of New Guinea, and we stopped in Manus Island and from there we sailed to New Britain in the Admiralty Islands, we had engine trouble in New Britain and Bruce and I traveled through the Solomon Islands.

Cindy: Bruce was?

John: Bruce Auchly was his name, and he was a fellow Peace Corps member and he and I traveled together, we sailed together on these boats coming home. We made our way to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, and there we jumped on another boat which happened to be going to Australia, so, we sailed from Guadalcanal to northeast Australia, got off the boat there and all the way I was able to watch birds and it was a great adventure. We travelled down the coast of Australia, northeast Australia, eventually to Sydney and I think it was there, we had really not spent any money up to that point because we were on a boat and we would fish, so we were eating fish and we always had rice and we didn't need much more. We bought our ticket home from Sydney, and it included a stop in New Zealand, so, we flew from Sydney to Christchurch and Bruce and I travelled all around the South Island, then we travelled all around the North Island and we finally flew home, and it was about…we got home just in time for Christmas 1979.

I finally made it back home and in the spring of 1980 is when I actually started looking for a real job, because up to that point I had, well, my Peace Corps work was a real job, but I wasn't going to go back to work as a carpenter. I wanted to use what I had been trained to do and be in the field of biology. I started looking, and it was not easy. It was a time when Reagan was in office and finding a position in the federal government, which is probably one of the main opportunities for a biologist, was difficult. You mentioned the green sheets. You could apply for a job on the green sheet, but a lot of times you had to already have standing in the federal government to apply for most of those positions. My one advantage was that as a Peace Corps volunteer, I had standing so I could apply for positions on the green sheet, but there was very little open at the time. I eventually was able to get a position, I had a master's degree and two years of experience, I started as a GS-4 Park Ranger for the Corps of Engineers in Southern Illinois. I was working at Carlyle Lake and so, for that, summer, the summer of 1980, that's exactly what I was, I was a Park Ranger. I would patrol all around Carlyle Lake. Corps of Engineers operated that particular facility, and that was out of the St. Louis district. I did that for the summer, there were other positions within the Corps that were more suited to my training and so, I applied for another position which would have been in the regulatory branch issuing permits, for clean water permits, and I applied for that. That was late summer of 1980, and I was accepted to that position and I worked in St. Louis.

Cindy: That was your first permanent full-time?

John: That's right. First well, my Peace Corps job was a permanent full time too, but…*laughter.*

Cindy: Yeah.

John: But those two years counted as federal…

Cindy: Oh, it did?

John: Yeah. As federal employment.

Cindy: Okay.

John: So, '77 would have been the beginning of my career. But I had that hiatus in there when I was traveling from Palau back to the U.S. and then for a while when I was still looking for a position. I worked in the regulatory branch of the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers district that fall and, in the meantime, I knew that Ernie Kosaka wanted to get these bird surveys started in Micronesia, and he was interested in me applying for the position and, you know, I'm not a fanatic birder, and I'm not a particularly a great birder, but what I did do, and particularly in Micronesia, was I worked well with the locals, and Ernie knew he needed somebody that could work in all of those different cultures and he asked me to apply for this position. Ernie Kosaka had just become the field supervisor in Honolulu about that time. Gene Kreidler, I think, had retired by then. I applied for that position, and I was offered the job, and I went to work there in January of 1981, which was two days before the hiring freeze that President Reagan had imposed. It was not an easy time to get personnel actions through. So that was really the beginning of my career with the Fish and Wildlife Service, it would have been January 1981 and my job was to conduct surveys throughout the Territories and Trust Territories in the Pacific. Dr. Michael Scott at the same time was conducting bird surveys in the Hawaiian Islands and my plan was to use the same methodology. He and Dr. Fred Ramsey, a statistician from Oregon State University, were working on developing the survey protocol and the analysis of data, so, I came out there in 1981. I was in St. Louis at the time and I remember packing my luggage and flying out. I had one duffel bag. I flew to Hawaii with one… *laughter,* that was everything I owned and starting work in Hawaii. I was able to participate on one of the last surveys that Mike was conducting in the Hawaiian Islands, on the island of Kauai in the spring of 1981. We went up and into the Alakai Marsh, I was one of the birders on the crew and spent three weeks, maybe more up in the Alakai Marsh doing the bird surveys. I remember doing those eight-minute counts, walking through boggy, marshy, wet terrain, and then camping in the rain and I remember listening to the last **'o'o'** in the world calling in the distance, and I remember that one particular count, I think I actually heard it from more than one survey station because the call carried fairly far. It was the last individual left and we were up there in the **Ohi'a** forest in the misty fog, and you could hear this lone bird calling **'**o'o', o'o', 'o'o. The call would reverberate through the fog, and we knew that was the last bird left of the species. But that same spring, Fred…

Cindy: Did they bring it into captive propagation?

John: They did not.

Cindy: **Or was that the last one**?

John: That was the last one, I think it was heard on Kauai for several more years. I believe the last year they heard it was 1987, and I think that might be the last of the **Kaua'i 'o'o'.**

Cindy: Hmmm.

John: Dr. Ramsey and Dr. Scott both went with me to the Mariana's that spring early, and we worked on setting up the design for those islands. Fred Ramsey and Mike Scott and I went out and in the spring of 1981. I conducted the first survey that year on Guam. Guam was a special case because the birds were disappearing on the island and at that point, nobody knew why they were disappearing. There were theories that it could be disease, it could be pesticides or chemicals, or it could be the brown tree snake. Nobody really knew, but they wanted to get a good snapshot of what the status of the local bird population actually was, so, I went out and we conducted surveys. The birds at that time in 1981 had been confined to the northernmost forests on Guam and all of southern Guam was devoid of native forest birds. So, we conducted those surveys and at that time we actually did find almost all of the native forest birds. We picked up Rufous-Fronted Fantail, Guam Flycatcher, Guam Kingfisher, White-Throated Ground Dove, Mariana Fruit Dove, Bridled White-Eye, Mariana Crow, Guam Rail. Within a few years after our survey, those birds were all gone. Dr. Julie Savage was the one who determined that it was the brown tree snake that was the cause of this disappearance of native forest birds. The brown tree snake was, they think, introduced from New Guinea when, during and shortly after World War II, there was a lot of military material, tanks and heavy equipment and construction material being shipped up from New Guinea. The snake might have been from the Island of Manus.

The next year, and I would conduct these surveys usually early spring, early summer, late spring, March, April, May, June-ish, we surveyed the rest of the Mariana Islands. I surveyed the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in 1982, and that included the Islands of Rota, Tinian, Saipan and Agiguan *(this is listed as Aguiguan in Wikipedia)* and Fred Ramsey, who would design the surveys, would randomly select these transects, and we would establish point-counts every 150 meters along these transects, or 200 meters in some cases and then we would conduct what we called simultaneous counts at each one of these. There were two observers at each count. I would hire three biotechs before each survey, ornithologist birders, and they were the field crew so, there would be four of us that would go out and it was a lot different then…*Interruption by phone*. So, I was saying…it was a little different back then, it was before we really had email or computers or phone calls. I would head out with three biotechs and I was gone for two or three months in the field. I could write letters back, which usually took a week, ten days to get back to the main office in Honolulu and a week or ten days to get another letter back so, by then I was on a different island, and I think I mentioned to you earlier, Cindy, that when I started doing this work, I really didn't know who the Secretary of Interior was, and I probably didn't know who the Regional Director was. I was out doing biology, and that's really what I was mostly interested in doing. We were out there, there was no contact, there was no…we didn't have anything to deal with in the office, we were out in the woods.

So, Rota, the island of Rota was the first one that we surveyed in 1982, and that's a relatively high island, there is a high limestone uplifted plateau, extremely rugged terrain on that plateau and when you walk down and back up some of these jagged limestone crevices, your hands would get cut up and it was not easy traveling through some of those. I remember one time we had these transects, they started at the top of the island and they went over the cliff edges down. After surveys, I would come with a vehicle and there was a road you could pick up the crew. There was one transect, it might have been transect six, that Peter Pyle and Celestino Aguon counted. I dropped them at the top to conduct that count and I started on a different transect and at the end of the day, it was time to pick them. I could not find them and we couldn't…we didn't have radio contact, we had some little mobile radios, but it seemed like they didn't work half the time. Safety was always one of my biggest concerns because we were way out there and there weren't hospitals or any way to get anybody off. We cut these transects with machetes through the jungle and you always worried about somebody getting a machete cut or something else. Peter and

Celestine didn't come out that day and it was getting later and later and I kept driving back and forth on the road where they should have been. At some point, well after dark, they finally came out and it was just, it just took us that long to get down that mountain because it was so rough.

Rota was interesting from the standpoint of birds for a couple of reasons. One is that the Mariana Crow is found on Rota, it's also found on Guam, but the populations on Guam were almost gone or going down quickly because of the brown tree snake. The population on Rota was still relatively healthy and they were fairly widespread. Most forest birds on Rota were doing well, but there were two which were not. One was the Rota White-Eye and for some reason it seemed to be restricted to the upper plateau only and when I read earlier accounts, they described it as being over the entire island. I still, to this day, don't know why that bird is restricted to that particular part of the island and I don't know if that was some sort of a function of vegetation or change in vegetation. Most of these islands during the Japanese administration were farmed. Most of the forests were cleared except for on the very steep slopes and sugarcane and pineapple was grown by the Japanese. The other bird, which was a concern, was the Swiftlet. There was a description of large numbers in caves on Rota shortly after WWII and there were no Swiftlets when we did our survey. They disappeared and that was another anomaly. I could not figure out why the Swiftlets would have disappeared from Rota. There are no brown tree snakes there and I don't know if there was some sort of disease or if it was a population that actually went back and forth to Guam and once, they were in Guam, they were taken by snakes. I still have not read to this day what the main thoughts are about how and why the Swiftlet is gone from Rota.

Moving north from Rota, we surveyed the island of Agiguan *(this is listed as Aguiguan in Wikipedia),* which is a tiny islet off the southwest coast of Tinian. The first time I went to Agiguan is kind of interesting. Ernie Kosaka had gone to Saipan and he was working with the local Commonwealth Division of Fish and Game to get the surveys going and so that we had support when we would go to these islands. There was always some local biologist, well, mostly just a local person, but they would help and Ernie was very instrumental in working with the locals and getting assistance, whether it was through Department of Ag or natural resources agency. I flew out from Honolulu and I had all of the equipment for the bird surveys, but it was in boxes and in luggage. I landed on Saipan and met Ernie. Ernie said the local biologists were going to Agiguan and they're leaving right now. I had nothing, I had my binoculars maybe and a little backpack, so all my luggage was still on Saipan. Ernie said, well, that's okay, you go to Agiguan, and I'll get your luggage for you and have it waiting for you when you get back, There was a car waiting for me, and he said to go down and get on the boat. So, I went down and got on the boat, and this is for a two or three day camping trip. It was a small outboard skiff and we motored down to Agiguan. It's a rough island, access it's not easy, you need to wait till the surge is just so and then you jump off onto the limestone cliff and work your way up. So, I went down there to do some preliminary surveys. Agiguan has goats. It's the one island that has introduced goats on it that we surveyed and much of the vegetation, the understory is cleared because of the goats. We camped out and I had nothing to sleep in or on. There were some cardboard boxes and Ben **Zablon** I remember, was on that trip and a few other locals, Frank **Aldon** was another person. They ripped the boxes up a little bit and said, you can sleep on that. I laid down on the cardboard, looked over my shoulder, saw a 300-pound unexploded bomb.

Cindy: Oh, no.

John: I might have even been using it for a pillow. *Laughter.* I'm not sure. I have a picture of that bomb somewhere, I should probably find it for you, but so, I laid down in the only clothes that I had, I didn't have any clothes except for the set that I had on the flight from Honolulu. I tried to go to sleep and I slept for a little bit and then it started pouring. It rained harder that night than I ever saw it rain in the Marianas.

Laughter. And it wasn't long before I was just soaked and the other guys had light sleeping bags and they weren't in tents either, so they were getting soaked, but it took them a little longer to get soaked than me. So, the rest of the night I huddled under a tree, sitting up in the rain. That was my first night on Agiguan. *Laughter.* We came back to Agiguan later with my field crew. Agiguan is interesting because for one thing, there is an endemic Reed Warbler on the island. It is now, I believe, extinct. We found a few individuals. We heard just a few and it's a tiny island, there's not much habitat available. The other interesting bird there is the Scrub Fowl, the Micronesian Megapode. We found a few birds on the island, and I think it was not there during the war or shortly after World War II, so, it had re-established itself somehow on the island.

We surveyed the island of Tinian. Tinian is a relatively low, flat island and the transects went from one side of the island to the other, east to west. Much of the island had been developed once the U.S. took it over during the war as airfields. There were big stretches of airfields that were all overgrown with what they called **tangan tangan, (leucaena leucocephala**). An interesting species there, Tinian Monarch, which was listed as endangered. I think we had an estimate of 40,000 birds on the island, it was really quite common, even though we had it listed on the endangered species list. I did not see a particular reason to keep it listed and I think eventually it was delisted based on some of the work that we did.

All of these islands were former battlegrounds during World War II and Tinian was interesting because it was where the U.S. loaded and took off with the atomic bombs, which were dropped on Japan in 1945. I remember on the north end of one of the runways on Tinian, there's a pit, like a small swimming pool which is now filled in with soil and I think there was a plumeria tree planted in there. There was a little sign that said this is the pit where the atomic bomb was held before it was loaded and dropped on Japan. It made a sad impression on me. Again, partly because my dad was the one who was out there flying in some of those areas.

We surveyed the island of Saipan, same thing, marking transects across the island, throughout the island conducting counts. I wanted to see all of these islands and all of the transects, so, what we would do is usually two people would mark the transects, one guy, we had a 150-meter line, one guy would walk ahead, stop and then flag it and the guy behind would follow up and so, we would go across the island doing that, marking all these stations. If I was not one who marked the station, then I would count that particular transect, so I got on every transect that we ever put on all of these islands. I doubt if there's anybody who has been through more of these forests on the Territories and Trust Territories than I have. *Laughter.* I can't imagine why anybody would have wanted to go through a lot of these places. *Laughter.* And it was interesting to me because of World War II and the birds that were out there. On Saipan, I remember finding little sealed glass vials with catgut inside, about the size of small test tubes. The catgut was used for surgery on the battlefield. I think I still have some in one of my drawers somewhere around here. The small vials would be out in the battlefield, and I remember on what…

Cindy: Was what was it used for?

John: Well, to sew up people.

Cindy: Oh, sutures. Oh, oh, oh.

John: Yeah, Sutures. Suture material. I'll try to find one for you. I don't know if I can find it.

Cindy: *Laughter.* We'd send it to NCTC for the archives.

John: We can. Yeah. Yeah, I don't need it.

Cindy/John: *Laughter together.*

John: The southern part of Tinian is kind of a rough, uneven limestone area and that's where... actually that's where the best jungle is, some of the more intact jungle, because it couldn't be cleared by the Japanese to a point where they would plant sugarcane and pineapple and that's also where the last battles were fought. The Japanese would hide there because there was forest and it was really jagged limestone. I remember being in some of those places and hiking through and you would find a little pocket where you could see where there were Japanese soldiers that had been hiding out. You would find some of their artifacts, old shoe soles, canteens, broken soy bottles, like that.

Cindy: Yeah.

John: I think I picked up a little a sake cup, just a little sake cup and I could imagine those Japanese, they knew that they weren't going to survive, sipping their last cup of sake. I remember on Peleliu, the island of Peleliu, one time I was walking along, I saw there was a canteen and it was a U.S. canteen. I picked it up, I was just kind of curious. There was the name of a soldier on the canteen, it said Tex…

Cindy: Aww.

John: I'm sure that it belonged to some guy from Texas. There was a bullet hole right through the middle of the canteen and I always wondered what happened to Tex? those kinds of things, you know, there was all of that out there.

So, we surveyed the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in 1982, and from there we moved on to the Federated States of Micronesia, a separate governmental unit and by this time, these islands were not the Trust Territories because they had become quasi-independent, their own countries, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau. So, 1983, we moved on to the islands of Kosrae and Pohnpei**.** Again, I would head out with a crew of three biotechs and we would mark transects over the islands and conduct surveys. Kosrae is way out there, I mean, we had to fly to Pohnpei and from Pohnpei, I think maybe twice a week there was a small plane that would fly to Kosrae at a tiny airport at Lelu. There was no road that went around the island, only a road that went partially around the island. When we were in the interior and on the far side and I always worried about the survey crew getting hurt. I think we were lucky because, we had a couple of machete cuts, but that was the worst. But I always worried, if we for example, on the far side, of Kosrae, had somebody get seriously hurt, it would have been a day for us to get out, (somebody who could walk out), it would have been another day for somebody to get in, it might have been another day or two to get that person who was hurt out, and then even once we got them to the town, you had to wait for a flight to get them back to Pohnpei, where there's still not a good hospital and so, to get it would have been another…so, it was a week or two just to get anybody out if anybody really did get hurt. I think we were really lucky. We had, I think, two machete cuts during the entire survey. Peter Pyle had one and actually I got one on my right elbow and it was when were on the far side of Kosrae. I couldn't get out for a couple of days, but it was a bad cut and I needed to have it sewed up. I couldn't sew it up because we were counting birds for two days, but every time I bent my elbow, the bone would pop out…*Exclamation. Laughter, s*o, I had to try to tape it up and hold it together until I got out, when a nurse sewed me up in Lelu. But I think we were really lucky.

Kosrae, I wanted to find…there were two birds there that are extinct, I think they have only been recorded briefly when Europeans first arrived, the Kosrae Rail and the Kosrae Starling and I wanted to find those birds. We did not and I assumed that they are gone, but some of the other birds, numbers are incredibly dense, the Micronesian Myzomela**,** a type of Honeyeater, huge numbers and on these islands, diversity is not that high, there's maybe only a dozen resident species, but densities can reach almost astronomical numbers, they're like insects, they're so high. Pohnpei is a high island with the interior mostly forested and we had transects that went from one side all the way to the other, and it would take a couple, three days to mark and count some of these transects. On Kosrae and Pohnpei, the locals are quite religious, particularly on Kosrae. One of the first questions they asked us was, you're not going to work on Sundays, right? Because they don't work on Sundays. They go to church on Sundays. I always said no, on Sundays, we just go out and we watch for pleasure. Of course, I was doing bird counts *laughter* if the weather was good because any time you had appropriate weather, you would do the counts. We wanted to finish the work, but I always told them, no, we never work on Sunday, that's always pleasure. I don't know if they bought that or not, but we worked well with them. *Laughter.* Every one of these places, they were always fun to work with.

I remember one time on Pohnpei, it was actually one of those long transects, and the whole crew was working up and over the island. We came out on the far side and of course we'd been in and camping for I think three days. We were muddy, it's really wet and everything's filthy and dirty and we had our packs and we started hiking out on the far side of the island. There was a small village and it was a Sunday, had to be a Sunday and they were all in church. These are of open-windowed churches, they can look out and they're right next to the trail that goes through the village. We come walking out and we have to go past the church where they were singing. They sing, they do, they sing in church, and they have contests between choral groups or singing groups. We came walking through and it was just like a scene out of the *Good, Bad and Ugly. Laughter.* One of these movies where, you know, we're trudging out in dirty clothes and packs and binoculars, and we could hear them singing and we get up right up to this church, and all of a sudden, the singing stops, and everybody is staring at us as we walked past. *Laughter.* We waved and kept walking and I don't think we came back to that village. *Laughter.*

On Pohnpei, there was one bird I really wanted to find and we did not, which was the Pohnpei Starling or Pohnpei Mountain Starling and there had been reports of it. We looked any time we heard a call that we thought might be that bird, we looked and I had some of the best birders that I knew on the survey crew and we never did find that bird. I think there have been a couple of reports after our survey. There's an endemic **race** of Short-Eared Owl on the island, their numbers must have been way down, we did not pick them up on the forest bird survey, but there are some birds like one of the White-Eyes there, the Long-Billed White-Eye also known as the Pohnpei Greater White-Eye, we actually found it in greater numbers than had been previously reported. We found them halfway up the mountains and all the way to the top of the mountain.

The following year we surveyed the islands of **Chuuk** (formerly Truk) and Yap, so it would have been the early summer of 1984 when we surveyed **Chuuk** and Yap. **Chuuk** is a difficult place. There's a lot of people and it's not a single high island like Pohnpei or Kosrae, there's a lot of small islands. We had to move around on all these little islands and a lot of times the transects had to go right down the center of the island, because you could hear birds all the way across from one side to the other. Logistics were difficult. The locals helped us. Department of Ag sent a couple of folks with us and they would translate for us. We would get to an island and needed to decide where to stay, how to get to our transects, and that sort of thing. Sometimes the locals would let us stay in the school ground or other community building. We would be camping out and I was just worried about the field crew. I've got to find a place for these

guys to stay and keep them happy and that sort of thing. So, there was a lot of logistics involved in **Chuuk** because it wasn't just a one big island. the far west side of **Chuuk**, the Tol Island group, the locals are more traditional and a little more suspicious of outsiders. There was a U.S. geological group that wanted to do map work out there just a year or two, a few years before we were there, and they got run off at gunpoint. I was aware of that, but we had some locals with us and I think we were lucky, or I talked to the right people, whatever it was, and we did not really have any problems. The main reason we wanted to get to the island of Tol was that there's an endemic species of White-Eye up there, **Truk** White-Eye and it lives on the very top of one mountain. There's a couple of little islands where you might find a few birds, but really the main, was just a tiny little top of the island of Tol and within that area you could find the **Truk** White-Eye, but it's a beautiful chocolate-colored bird and we were able to find that really rare bird. From there, we went to Yap. Yap is a very traditional place, and you don't take pictures of the Yapese. They think you're taking their soul sort of thing.

Cindy: Mmm.

John: so, you're really careful about that. We had help with actually, a Forest Service employee was stationed on that island, she lived on the island. Her name was Margie **Falanruw** and she helped us with talking to the local villages and making sure that access was okay, that was the big issue on all of these islands. They needed to know who it was, what we were doing, and I mean, everybody knows anything that's happening on the island so, you had make sure people knew who you were, what you were doing and where you were going and then they were okay, they were fine with us. So, we finished the island of Yap in the summer of 1984.

From there, we surveyed American Samoa in 1986-87, and that's actually a Territory. It was a couple of years after completing the surveys in the Federated States that we did American Samoa and at this point, I was starting to get a little more involved in endangered species issues in the Hawaiian Islands. I was hired just to do bird surveys, but eventually I became the recovery coordinator for Hawaii so, I was working also with Hawaiian Forest Birds, Hawaii Water Birds, Hawaiian Crow, and all of the Hawaiian species as well, and working on recovery plans, that sort of thing. In American Samoa, there's the main island of Tutuila and the Manu'a islands, Ofu, Olosega and Ta'u. Ofu, Olosega and Ta'u, they're a little more difficult to reach so you fly from Tutuila to get out to those small islands. The Fish and Wildlife Service had a fairly extensive survey done in American Samoa. It was actually more of a generic survey not focused on birds and they looked at plants and animals generically and it was an extensive survey, but it was not easily repeatable so, what we did was something that could be repeated, and we did all these transects out there. One of the bird species in American Samoa, the **Sooty** Crake or Sooty Rail had been reported 100 years, 80 years earlier, but it had not been seen since then and the previous survey didn't find it. It was one of those birds I thought would be fun to find and we surveyed all of Tutuila, we did not find it. We were driving on the island of **Ta'u**, we drove out into a little weedy patch and we walked out and we were looking for birds, I think we might have still been training at that point and I happened to walk back across the trail we had just driven out, it was just a weedy road and I looked down and here was a **Sooty** Rail dead, we had just run over the last Rail…

Cindy: Oh no. *Laughter.*

John: in American Samoa so, I picked the bird up, made a specimen out of it, and sent it to the Bishop Museum and we actually did find a few more birds on the island, but just in that one little area, it's not a common bird on the islands, but my cohorts made great fun of me for killing the last endangered Rail in American Samoa. *Laughter.*

After American Samoa, we went to Palau, and in 1991, we surveyed the island of Palau…

Cindy: Back to Palau?

John: and I knew those islands, because I had been stationed as a Peace Corps there for a couple of years, I knew the birds really well and so I could get around well, and I could actually understand a little bit of the language. I was certainly no expert, but I knew enough to get around. One thing I thought was interesting in the Palau survey, so I was there in 1977 to '79 and we did this survey in 1991, so what, a dozen years later, maybe? Palau had implemented a ban on firearms right about the time I left, shortly after I left and there were some species like the Nicobar Pigeon, which I think was more abundant in 1991 than when I was there in 1977-79. The fruit bat was much more abundant when I was there in the late 70s, you rarely saw a fruit bat in the 70s, because there was a demand for fruit bats. They were eaten in the Marianna and Guam in particular. They liked to eat fruit bats and so Palauans were hunting them and were shipping them to Guam. It was a lucrative thing for hunters to go out and take fruit bats, freeze them, package them up, and ship them to Guam. That was one of the reasons that we found almost no fruit bats on Guam or Rota or Tinian or Saipan, because they were once, I think, much more common there. Actually, we did conduct fruit bat surveys on some of these islands. In addition to the bird counts, we would do evening bat counts where we would survey bats moving back and forth from **roost** sites from different areas. In American Samoa, we actually had a petition to list one of the two species of fruit bats that were found on the island. Samoan fruit bat, **pteropus samoensis** was the species that we had a petition to list and so one of my jobs was to find out the status of this bat. In the petition, it sounded as if there were just a few individuals left. It was interesting because when I first landed in Samoa, I got out of the airport and I think I was walking near the airport and the first thing I see is a Samoan fruit bat flying past. Wait a minute, they're not supposed to be that common. It's an unusual bat because often they're active during the daytime and you actually see them soaring sometimes during the daytime. They will soar above the big valleys during the day and like most fruit bats, they will come out right at dusk and forage all night and they'll move back to their roosts during the day. The Samoan fruit bat is a lot more solitary, and they are in part diurnal. We conducted counts over most of the big, forested valleys in American Samoa and found that they were not as rare as described in the petition. So, I think our recommendation was not to list them. I think they're still doing okay. I haven't kept up, but we did work with fruit bats as well.

I did various surveys as well as the bird and bat surveys in Micronesia. I would help in the Hawaiian Islands so I would work on the big island and I surveyed birds on Molokai, odd counts that sort of thing. There was one interesting survey, it was more of an environmental assessment that I was asked to do when I was in the Pacific and this was a little outside of our normal jurisdiction, but there's **ordnance** all over the South Pacific from World War II. There happened to be a team of Australian military who was clearing **ordnance** from the Solomon Islands where there were battles and there was a cache of artillery shells. The Australians attempted to blow one of these shells up and it didn't blow up. It was a chemical weapon and it happened to be from the U.S. The U.S. never did use chemical weapons during the war, but we had them in case the Japanese ever used them, we were going to retaliate using chemical weapons as well. I think that's what was going on. There were negotiations with the Solomon Islands government. The Solomon Islands said, you know, you've got to move these shells off of our island, they're chemical weapons, eventually they're going to deteriorate and cause problems for us. So, we agreed the, US government agreed to remove this cache of artillery shells…

Cindy: Yeah.

John: …and incinerate them at our chemical weapons incineration plant on Johnson Island, which is way out in the middle of the Pacific. I think it was the Corps of Engineers that was conscripted to conduct an environmental analysis of the actual job of removing these chemical weapons and even when they do work in foreign countries, I think they are required to conduct analyses similar to what is required in the United States as far as the EA, the environmental analysis document. So, the Corps of Engineers needed to do an environmental analysis. They knew me, they knew that I was familiar with the birds and cultures in the Pacific, and they said, hey, can you go down there and do the environmental analysis on these chemical weapons? Sure. They shipped me down there, we flew to Australia and from there to the Solomon Islands and then out to this one island and sure enough, there was this little, it wasn't big, it was just a little maybe two- or three-foot-high pile of artillery shells, maybe six feet wide and sitting out there in the jungle. I conducted bird counts in the area. It was fairly close to the ocean, and I checked for turtle nests. I talked to locals looked for fruit bats and prepared a summary EA. Those were the kind of things that I got to do out there. It was all fun; it was all a great adventure to me. I didn't think about well, where do you want your career to go or what do you want to become later on in your career. It was just not the way it is now, where we have NCTC, you have mentoring programs, you have a lot of discussion about, okay, how would you like your career to develop and what are your real goals? It was like, I'm a biologist, I'm having fun and I'm doing it and that was it, There was not a lot of career foresight, at least when I started compared to what we're doing now. So anyway, that was a lot of my work in the Pacific.

Let's pause for just a minute and then I'll continue.

Okay. I think we're recording again.

Cindy*: In agreement.*

John: So, I think I had just summarized some of the survey work that I had been doing in the Pacific, finished with the island of American Samoa.

One survey that I was involved in toward the end of my stay in Hawaii was the Hawaiian Crow, the ‘**Alala,** endangered Hawaiian bird on the big island. Numbers had been going down for years and years, there were maybe a couple that they'd kept in captivity, but the big issue was the few remaining birds were on a private ranch belonging to Cynthia Salley. There was a lawsuit against Fish and Wildlife Service about not protecting these birds and the need to access this property and do conservation work with the crows. I gave a deposition there and it was a lot of back and forth and I think the settlement was that she would allow a survey, but she was only going to allow me on her property. She had gotten to know me well enough to where I think she trusted me. So, I did, I went onto the ranch on the west side of the big island up in the Koa Forest and conducted a survey and I believe I found all the Crows that were remaining, I found 11 birds and I think that was in, might have been the spring of 1992 and that's shortly before I left Hawaii. At that point, again, I was the recovery coordinator for the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific, and I was involved in a lot more of the endangered species issues and recovery plan process, writing and drafting recovery plans for Hawaiian waterbirds and Hawaiian **snails**, all of the endangered species in the Pacific, essentially.

By this time, I had a small family and I met my wife, **Teri (Teresa)**, when I was flying out to conduct surveys on the island of **Chuuk**. so, it would have been the summer of 1984 and Teri happened to sit on the plane next to me, and she was working for the Department of Interior Territorial and International Affairs. She was working with the radiation problem that the Bikini Islanders were having because the

United States had exploded atomic bombs in the Bikinis and the islands were still not **inhabitable** and there were health issues with radiation. So, we got to know each other, we wrote, she kept in touch. I lived on a sailboat when I moved to Hawaii. The sailboat was first in a small marina off of Sand Island, but then ultimately at the Ala Wai Marina, which was actually very, very easy commute to the office. I'd just get on the bus and go right down to the office, and it worked really well. Teri eventually came to work in Hawaii as the executive director for a nonprofit health group called Marimed Foundation. I would say that she followed me to Hawaii, she thinks otherwise. *Laughter.*

Teri, wife: No way! *Laughter continues.*

John: But so eventually we got married and we had two daughters and we actually lived on the boat so, our first daughter was born, and we lived on the boat and then the second daughter was born.

Cindy: First daughter's name is?

John: The first daughter is Laurel and the second daughter, Gretchen, was born and at that point, Teri became a little uncomfortable with living on the boat partly because Laurel was able to climb around. She was about a year and a half old, and Teri was afraid she was going to climb over the lifelines and go into the water. We eventually moved ashore, but living on the boat worked fine as a single person and I was gone for three or four months out of the year doing bird surveys. The boat was in the harbor, I didn't have much to worry about. In the early '90s, the girls, the two girls, Laurel and Gretchen, were becoming old enough to begin school, and Teri wanted to get back to the mainland, closer to family and get into school systems that were a little better than what was offered in Hawaii, the public schools in particular.

At that point, Robert Parker Smith was the field supervisor in Hawaii and I told him about my issue, about I really should think about transferring, although I really don't think I would have thought about that, I was having so much fun out there, if it hadn't been for having the family and the two girls. Robert said, well, there was a position in Olympia that they could probably lateral me to. Marv **Plenert** was the regional director at the time, and I know Robert Smith knew Marv quite well and it was about the time that the Northern Spotted Owl was just being listed, Marbled Murrelets were just being listed, there were really intense discussions about old growth forests and management of old growth forests and Spotted Owl disappearing. So, I opted to just take a lateral to the Olympia field office and started working under the Endangered Species Program there. I knew listing, I knew endangered species. I started doing some Section Seven consultations, and I think we were working on critical habitat for Marbled Murrelets, Northwest Forest Plan, I was involved in some of the Species Survival committees, where we would have to estimate what the survival expectancy for different species, that sort of thing. It wasn't long after being there that another office was formed to specifically conduct habitat conservation plans. Curt Smitch became the head of that program. He was actually a state employee, but he was hired by the Fish and Wildlife Service on an IPA of some type to head up that program and I was assigned to work for him to complete habitat conservation plans within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl in the Pacific Northwest. We hired staff and I managed that office as we started working on HCPs with a number of the big timber companies, Plum Creek, Weyerhaeuser, Murray Pacific, the state DNR.

Door knocking, dog barking.

Okay. So, I had just talked about doing habitat conservation plans in the Pacific Northwest. We worked on a number of large plans that covered large landscapes, probably the biggest was the Department of Natural Resources for the State of Washington. We also worked on the Port Blakeley Habitat

Conservation Plan, the Murray Pacific Habitat Conservation plan, we were working on plans with Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek and others and it was an interesting negotiation. These companies did not have to do an HCP (habitat conservation plan), but we more or less had to convince them that it was in their best interest to complete a habitat conservation plan. I remember one time talking with Toby Murray of Murray Pacific. His family owned about 50,000 acres of timberland in Washington State, and we were in the middle of negotiations, and I happened to be sitting in a room aside with Toby and I said, Toby, so why are you really doing this habitat conservation plan and his response was interesting. He said, you know, when I was growing up and we were harvesting timber, we were doing what we thought was the right thing for the United States, for our country. We were harvesting timber and it was being used to develop the country, to build homes, in all sorts of construction and he said in recent years, we've been maligned. It seems as if what we are doing is really contrary to what a lot of environmentalists or conservationists would like us to do and he said, I feel bad, that's not the way I want to feel, that's not the way I want to be, so, I decided that I'm going to engage in this negotiation process and if we have to harvest a little bit differently, leave more trees along the rivers and reduce sediment going into the stream then I want to do that and that was his response. I always felt that was a noble reaction. Murray Pacific was a family owned timber company, a little different than working with Weyerhaeuser, or Plum Creek, which are much larger companies.

For several years, that's what I did. I worked on habitat conservation plans throughout Washington and even into Oregon and Northern California. We started on a couple of plans in Oregon, including one with the Department of Forestry here. We ultimately got more involved in what was known as the Timber, Fish and Wildlife negotiation in Washington State, where we actually were negotiating timber harvest practices to be ingrained into state law and that would influence how companies would harvest across the landscape. Our focus was primarily Spotted Owls and Marbled Murrelets and trying to preserve their habitats, but riparian issues I think, were every bit as important and as difficult to figure out: what distance from the stream could harvest actually be, how much of a buffer zone was needed and that sort of thing. I think for the most part, we could all agree on the need to reduce sediment entering streams and improve road conditions, but it was a fun time and we spent many, many hours on these negotiations.

I was in Olympia for about six years, from 1992 to 1998, and HCPs was specifically what I worked on. There were a couple of other details, they actually weren't details, but a couple of other jobs that I did when I was in Olympia, and they sort of related to my former work in the Pacific. The Corps of Engineers knew that I was familiar with birds in the South Pacific and other parts of the world, and they called me up twice, while I was in Olympia. They needed environmental assessments completed for projects that they were working on around the world. There were two of them that I worked on, one of them was in Sri Lanka and they were going to be building a radio tower and I think this was for The Voice of America. I really don't know exactly the dimension of the project or anything or that, but I was told that this was going to be developed as a radio site for The Voice of America. I asked my boss, hey, can I take a couple of weeks leave? He said, yeah and I went down to Sri Lanka and studied this site, looked at the birds, did some bird surveys, completed an environmental assessment, and provided that to the Corps of Engineers. The Corps asked me again to complete a survey in Africa on **Sao Tome y Principe**. These are two islands in the Gulf of Guinea, the west coast of Africa. I really didn't know the birds of Africa well; I knew most of the bird families. I went and looked at that particular site and completed an environmental assessment for again, a Voice of America radio tower site. Those were fun places to visit and really a type of experience that I think not many Fish and Wildlife Service employees get the opportunity to do. It was about 1998 when the regional office in Portland decided to create a new region, essentially split Region 1 into two. The goal was to split off California and Nevada and I think part of the issue there was that the

water issues and the endangered species issues in California were so difficult to negotiate from Portland that Mike Spear, who was the **director at** the time…

Cindy: Regional director.

John: Regional director at the time, felt the best way to do this was to actually create a new region down in California where these issues could be addressed much more directly and quickly. Mike Spear was going to start this new region down in Sacramento. He asked if I would apply for one of the positions, which was like an ARD position. It wasn't a programmatic ARD, it was a geographic ARD and my job, the job that was being advertised was to supervise the three offices in the Klamath Region, which is right on the southern Oregon-northern California border. There are three field Fish and Wildlife Service ecological field offices in that area, one in Klamath Falls, one in Yreka and the other in Arcata. I hadn't really thought much about moving from Olympia, but I talked it over with my wife, Teri, and she said, well, yeah, we've been here for 6 years, and I'd be willing to try something else. I think my main interest was I knew that area ecologically and it is I think, a very interesting part of the world. There's some beautiful country there and I applied for the position and was selected so, was one of the founding members of the new region in California-Nevada (eventually became the new Region 8) and there were only five of us and Mike Spear that started in Sacramento in the new Region. At first, it was called the California-Nevada Operations Office (CNO) and got that started. My job at the beginning was, as I said, supervising the three offices in the Klamath region. Another of my duties was to facilitate what we called the Klamath Task Force. There was an amount of funding, I think on the order of about $200,000 a year, which this task force was supposed to distribute for the recovery of salmon on the Klamath River. This was a federally authorized group, and I was the federally designated official. My job was to manage and chair Klamath Task Force meetings and to help to decide where restoration funding would be spent. The task force included members of the tribes. There were four main tribes on the river, the Klamath, the Karuk, the Hoopa, and the Yurok. There were commercial and sport fishing interests on the group, and then there were agricultural interests on the group, because the big issue is who gets the water in the Klamath basin? For the Fish and Wildlife Service, one of their main interests were the endangered Suckers in Klamath Lake, and on the Refuges side, getting water for Refuges at Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. National Fisheries Service was interested in getting water down the river for salmon and salmon recovery, fishermen were obviously interested in increasing salmon numbers so that they could harvest, and then the farmers were interested in getting water for their crops, so there was always this tension in those meetings. But it was a fun time and I must say it was a learning experience in how to manage a meeting in a group of really divergent interests, have them get along and have them all agree on what projects should be funded, and we did it. You know, it was not a matter of solving the entire problem facing the Klamath, it was a matter of doing the best we could with the funding that we had. Water issues are huge in California.

I moved to California in 1998 and I was there until 2010 when I retired. Toward the end of my career the water issues were getting, I think, even more difficult in the Central Valley and that was largely because of the need that Southern California water users had for water from Northern California, which is where much of the water comes from. Water moves from Northern California through the delta to Southern California through the big aqueducts. We had endangered smelt in the delta in the Central Valley. As the Klamath supervisor, I got to know a lot of the Klamath water issues. Mike Spear had retired by that point as the regional director and Steve Thompson had become the regional director in the California-Nevada operations office, now known as region 8. He needed somebody that he could trust to head up the water issues down there and essentially moved me into the position of fisheries ARD. In California, the Fisheries ARD doesn't quite fit in the traditional fisheries ARD position. We are dealing primarily with

water issues in California. I was not a fisheries expert, was not a water expert, I knew enough about fish and managing habitat for fish and water because of my work in the Klamath, but I think what Steve really needed was somebody who could work with landowners, work with irrigators, work with all parties involved and try to come up with solutions which is why he put me in that position. So, from that point on, I was the ARD for Fisheries and Water. There was a big hatchery, Coleman National Fish Hatchery that was under me, and we had a very large budget, I think it was between 30 and $35 million a year just for the fisheries program in Region 8. That went for the hatcheries and all of the fisheries programs throughout California-Nevada. I became involved in issues like the Pyramid Lake Suckers and restoration of those. We had a Cutthroat Trout Hatchery over in Nevada, there were issues with Desert Pupfish, water issues along the Colorado and then primarily in the Central Valley and in the delta with delta smelt and how do we move water through the delta? I became involved in what they called the delta canal moving water from the north to the south and how would that best happen? It was about that time that I had been in the service almost 30 years and it was time for me to retire. I don't think I ever thought, oh, I've got to get out of here because I can't stand this job, it was more, I have so many things I want to do and so much I need to see that I think it would be best if I retired and that's what I did in 2010. It was early January in 2010 when I retired and I've been busy ever since.

If I could summarize, there were three areas where I think I had some influence on natural resources. I conducted a lot of what I call baseline surveys for birds in the Pacific, and that's information that can be used to compare any future surveys. In the Northwest, I worked on the habitat conservation plans and there are hundreds of thousands of acres that are now covered by habitat conservation plans. I always wondered whether or not those plans were the right thing. There were a lot of articles about the Service just giving away resources, and that these plans weren't really going to be effective. I actually asked some of the folks up there recently, 10-15 years after we first completed those plans, whether what we did was right, and indications are that the way they're doing forestry now is a lot better than the way it was done before we started those plans. I think only time is going to tell on that, but hopefully it will help. Then finally, in the Klamath Basin, I don't think that I could solve the big issues, such as lack of fish passage and water for refuges. A lot of these issues are much, much bigger than a single employee can solve on their own, but we have to take the steam out of the system and get people to work together and keep striving to move forward and and keep a representative portion of our natural resources intact. I think one of my goals was maintaining a representative sample of the world's critters on this earth and contributing in any way that I could. I think I've been very, very fortunate to actually have a job that I loved doing and to do it for as long as I did. There were several supervisors that I had that impressed me, I wish I had some of their skills. Probably the first one who really struck me was Robert Parker Smith, he came to the Hawaiian Islands, and he was very convincing, he had a real gift for describing situations and convincing people to do the right thing.

I think another person that influenced me was Curt Smitch. I think he was one of the more fun people to work for, a really good manager of people and of teams. He was not actually a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee. He was on an IPA from the state, so, he never really fit into the "Fish and Wildlife Service culture," but he was a good person to work for and learn from, and politically very savvy. And then the last person that I think really stood out was Mike Spear, the regional director. Some people got along well with Mike and others felt he was difficult to work with, but as a leader and as a person to begin the new region down in California, I think he was pretty amazing, he had a natural instinct for thinking three or four steps ahead of anybody else. Steve Thompson, who came in after Mike Spear was also a good leader, unfortunately, Steve Thompson is no longer with us, he retired and recently passed away. I think those are the main things that I would like to say, Cynthia. I don't know if you have any…

Cindy: I think that's the first time you ever called me Cynthia. *Laughter.*

John: Yeah. Any other questions you might have or…?

Cindy: Well, my impression of whenever I saw you, John, was, um, it looked like you always had your feet in the field because you had this special hat on that you always wore and you usually had flipflops on because that was what you were most comfortable wearing and doing and even though you were involved with some heavy-duty dealmaking and with corporate executives later in your career, it seemed like there was always that "do good for the critters" and conservation was at your core whenever we saw you in your attire so…what style of hat? How would you characterize that hat?

John: Well, that's an Australian Army hat, also known as a digger hat.

Cindy: Oh, an Army hat? Okay.

John: They call it a digger hat because the Australians in World War I were digging into the side of the hill to prevent getting shelled and they called them diggers and they called them digger hats and I have worn that hat since 1968, not the same hat.

Cindy: Not the same hat?

John: They wear out about every five years. *Laughter.* Yeah, they wear out a bit every five years, but for over 50 years I have worn that same …and it kept the rain out of my eyes and the sun out of my eyes, so that's why I always had it on. You know, I started in the field and half my life was in the field and I think I was telling you back when I started, there didn't seem to be a lot of emphasis on career development, and where were you going to go in your job or where you ultimately wanted to be.

Cindy: There wasn't the question about what do you want to do next?

Yeah. Yeah. No, no, we weren't there.

Cindy: No.

John: No, we did not have any NCTC, we did not have mentors like we do now, I think and there weren't a lot of questions about, okay, well, where do you want to go? How do you want to develop your career? What's your career path? And that didn't bother me because I was happy, I was a biologist in the field, I was doing what I wanted to do. I think it was really almost well, my wife says it's time to do something different, *laughter,* that actually got me out of that, and I and I did do it. I mean, at the end of my career, I spent much more time on budgets, personnel issues and lawsuits, working with lawyers than I did on biology, but it didn't bother me, I worked well with people, I enjoyed working with people, I enjoyed the farmers, you know, the irrigators in the valley, even they're all people trying to do what they know how to do, produce food and I never felt they were bad people, they had different views of how water should be used, but I never felt they were bad people or different than any of the biologists that I worked with, and we just had to work through those issues, but it was different, I never did career planning. It just happened and I was never eager to be in a position of any kind of supervisory authority, I might be described as a reluctant supervisor, but in some ways, I think sometimes reluctant supervisors can be good supervisors if you work well with people, and you can suppress your ego a little bit. *Laughter.*

Cindy: So, after retirement, what are the things you enjoy doing now?

John: Oh, I have so many things to do now, I can't…

Cindy: What are some of the things that…

John: Well, you know, part of the reason I retired is I wanted to spend more time with my mother and father, and I wanted to spend more time, I don't think I ever took a vacation more than ten days, maybe a week or ten days for 30 years with the service, because if you are gone for more than that, you could never catch up. *Laughter*. It was just too much. Um.

Cindy: …And you mentioned, and you mentioned, how many sick days did you take during your career?

John: I was never sick in 30 years except for one day and that was in Hawaii, so, I never had to take sick leave. You know, I was just extremely fortunate, but there was one day when I called in sick and what happened was our supervisor, Ernie Kosaka, brought in a crab soufflé that he made the night before.

Cindy: This is in Honolulu?

John: This is Honolulu, Hawaii. He brought it into the office, and we all ate the crab soufflé, except for John Ford, who either wasn't there or didn't eat any, I can't remember which. Nobody came to work the next day, the secretary had to go to the hospital.

Cindy: Oh.

John: Penny **Fujita**, she almost died. It was a bad food poisoning, bad food poisoning and I was, that was the only day that I was ever sick and so, at the end of that week, I'm looking at Ernie, hey Ernie, I'm going to put down admin leave. No, no, no, you put sick leave, you put sick leave. I said, wait a minute, you poisoned us, that's not right, no, no, no, you put sick leave. *Laughter.* So, I had to put sick leave even though it wasn't my fault, it was my supervisor's fault.

Cindy: Yeah, he caused your sick leave.

John: No, I was just very, extremely fortunate to have been able to do the things that I did.

Cindy: And you were going to mention about other things in your retirement after your parents…

John: Well, I wanted to spend more time with my mother and father, they were, well, almost in their 90s at that point and I wanted to spend more than a week on a vacation so, I retired, in early January 2010. Within less than a week, I flew to Pensacola, Florida, where I met my brother who just bought a yacht and a sailboat, and we spent three months sailing down through the Caribbean and in that part of the world and I was able and I have been able to do that ever since and I spent, I went back home where my parents were in southern Illinois, and I was able to do all sorts of things with my mom and dad so, I have been able to spend much more time with my family. I've traveled with my daughters not only in the United States, but also outside the U.S., so, I've been all through Europe, New Zealand, Australia, I just returned from a month in Borneo with daughter Laurel. I live in Corvallis now. I bought five acres north of town, which had an old barn that was crumbling into the ground, I restored that. Now I have a place to build a boat, so I'm working on my boat. When I finish my boat, I'll start traveling in the boat to various places. I

am still working on reports, I'm actually in the process right now of compiling all of these what I call office reports that I did when I did these bird surveys into a single document that would be publishable and accessible online. I think a lot of information, if you can't access it online, eventually it disappears, so that's been a big project and a big goal, but I guess I have no regrets and I can't imagine that I could've done anything that would have been more fun and met more interesting people and from a lot of different cultures than what I did.

Cindy: And you're still climbing mountains?

John: *Laughter.* I just climbed the highest mountain in Malaysia about a month ago. Yeah. Yeah.

Cindy: Okay, well, we'll sign off now.

John. Okay. Thanks, Cindy.

Cindy: Thank you, John.