

National Heritage Team of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oral History Program

Subject/USFW Retiree: Edgar Bailey with Nina Faust

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Interviewed by: John Cornely

John Cornely:

This is John Cornely, it's the 30th of October [2006] in Homer, Alaska, at the Islands and Oceans Visitor Center at the Maritime National Wildlife Refuge as part of the Oral History Project for the Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Committee. I'm here today to visit with Ed Bailey about his life and career with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and any other experience that you care to share.

So first Ed, I'd just like [you] to tell us kind of when and where you were born and when you grew up, and go from there.

Ed Bailey:

I was born in 1937, in Medan, Sumatra, which was then Dutch East Indies before the Japanese invaded and changed all of that. I don't remember any of it since I was too young. My father was a world explorer and petroleum geologist and spent most of his 30 years in farm work all over the world. He actually was one of the discoverers, one of the chief discoverers of, ironically, the oil fields in Sumatra, Java, Borneo and that area, Venezuela, the mid-east and so forth.

I grew up in a place I despise, called Los Angeles, California. I was always, I guess, an odd ball from day one. I rebelled against living in a city. I saw pictures of ranches and things like that and the forest. My dad took me on vacation to some places. I remember Jasper National Park in Canada and things like that and I said, "I don't want to live in the city." I raised such a ruckus that I was becoming a juvenile delinquent; playing practical jokes and having the cops come to my door, or my parents door.

I finally got sent to a ranch school in Ojai, California. They had camping trips next to the Los Padres National Forest and they had horses. I ran the weather station and I was the captain of the animal yard because, obviously, my formative years were directed into the wildlife at a very, very early age and even there in the animal yard I had ducks and chickens and homing pigeons and all that sort of stuff.

I went through junior high there, and started at another place called Midland School for high school, which was another remote place back there in California in Santa Barbara County. Unfortunately, I got ill and temporarily hospitalized for strep throat and a kidney flare-up, and I was taken out of that school because of that.

Then I got the rude awakening in my life; I got plunked from a situation like the ranch school at Ojai, which I loved, back into the big city in Los Angeles and Hollywood, at Hollywood High School, a big city high school. I was totally out of it, where everyone else was involved in the movie stars. I had absolutely zero interest in Hollywood and the

mystique and the movie business or entertainment. I didn't worship movie stars, quite the contrary.

At any rate, I went through high school there and survived. Luckily my folks had a home that was on the edge of the Hollywood Hills. It was between two canyons that hadn't been developed. Everything else had houses stacked on houses and some of them on pilings, you name it, they are all over the Hollywood Hills. But there were two old estates in two canyons there, and luckily we were just a couple of blocks from it so I could have my outlet. My dad used to take me up in the brush and whatnot, and they still had deer and hares and rattlesnakes, you name it, coyotes and all of that, owls. So that was my escape there in the city.

When I graduated from Hollywood in the Hollywood Bowl, which was so glamorous to others, it didn't mean much to me, I said, "I'm out of here." And so I went to the University of Redlands, which was a small liberal arts college in southern California, about 80 miles away from L.A., but it was right next to the San Bernardino National Forest and beautiful mountains and everything all around there. I don't know if you've ever been there in Redlands, California. Back then, in 1956, when I graduated from high school it was a small town, not anymore.

I went to the University of Redlands, got a bachelor's degree with honors in biology and then went on to Utah State University on a research assistantship for my master's degree.

Back then the Vietnam War was raging and I was extremely anti-war, and it was a real impetus to study and get an A-average or whatever you could do, because if you didn't you'd end up being drafted. I worked my butt off and actually went three years, an extra year towards a Ph.D., and I was in that program.

But what really sold me in wildlife in that early era, besides the things I already talked about, my affinity for animals and the outdoors and whatnot, was a brochure that I got sent to me when I prospected for different colleges in graduate school. One of them came back with a little thing like this and it said, "Your outdoor career." I read that, about range management, forestry, and wildlife management. When I went through that little brochure I knew what I wanted to do for sure for a career, and I got my masters in wildlife biology.

In the meantime, I was working for the forest service in the summer times as a biological technician. I didn't complete my Ph.D. because I got a job offer. Back in those days you jumped on any federal opportunity if you didn't have veteran's preference, and I didn't have veteran's preference, and I didn't want to have veteran's preference to put it mildly.

So, I went on to Utah State after the three years and instead of finishing for a Ph.D., I went on to a Park Service job. I didn't want to go back east because I was thoroughly a westerner, and I knew the east was more crowded and whatnot. It didn't have the magnificent big mountains like the Rockies and the Sierras and whatnot, not where I used to work.

I decided to jump on this job opportunity at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park as a park ranger, a GS-5 park ranger, because it was permanent, and that was my foot in the door. I thought 'Well, this place can't be all too bad because even though it's a historical park where Daniel Boone went through Cumberland Gap (and that wasn't my thing), it had 20,000 acres of forest that went with it and it's in the Appalachians, I can take this.' Which I did, and it was an interesting assignment for a couple of years.

I learned a whole new world back there living in Appalachia and the strip mining country, which absolutely horrified me. The "buckle of the bible belt" and all the stone crosses and "get right with god" and "Jesus saves" and all this. That wasn't for me, and still isn't.

But I figured I could use that as the foot in the door to get myself back west, which it did. So I got an offer for a GS-7 appointment at Capulin Mountain National Monument in Northeastern New Mexico. A little square mile area of a perfect cinder cone that is supposedly is the country's most perfect cinder cone; I don't know if you've been there.

John Cornely:
Yes, I have.

Ed Bailey:
Near Raton, New Mexico.

John Cornely:
I actually do a breeding bird survey route just north of there, it runs east of Trinidad [Colorado]. So I get around that country some.

Ed Bailey:
Yes. I didn't mention it, but while I was in graduate school I did get married (not to my current partner) and subsequently got divorced years later. But at any rate, I stayed at Capulin Mountain for about a year and realized I didn't want to be a park ranger. I didn't have any interest in law enforcement. I certainly didn't like sitting behind the visitor's desk, you know, telling people where the bathroom was and things like that. I wanted to do biology and so I started fishing around, and lo and behold I had two offers. But I'll backtrack a minute.

While I was back east there at the Cumberland Gap, I wanted to visit the Washington office to see if I could facilitate a transfer from the Park Service to the Fish and Wildlife Service, and that's where I met Lynn Greenwalt, who was head of refuges back in those days. I remember seeing all of the wildlife pictures and scenic pictures of refuges and marshes all over the walls and I was just licking my chops, you know, this is for me. Why he had the time to talk to me, just a lowly GS-5 basically, I guess I was a GS-7 back then at Cumberland Gap, but still, or Capulin Mountain (I'm always mixing those two up).

I noticed a very interesting thing that always stuck with me. When we were talking, he always walked around and looked at the pictures and named this refuge and that refuge and talked about his field experiences (while I was trying to see if I could land a job somewhere by switching from Park Service to Fish and Wildlife Service, and I was living nearby there in Kentucky/Tennessee anyway). I learned something very interesting there and I got to thinking after our interview and whatnot and he said he'd see what he could do. I noticed he was talking about all of the places he had been in the field, all of these beautiful places, and yet he was sitting in a desk job in a big city in Washington, D.C. I said, 'I don't want to ever make that mistake,' I want to stay in the field and lo and behold, two job offers came almost simultaneously.

One was a Park Service biologist at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, which would have been great. I don't think it would be now with the immigrants coming over the walls and everything else, or you might get shot like one did, a ranger. But at the same time, I got an offer from Fish and Wildlife Service at the most remote refuge in the lower 48, and remote was just what I was looking for.

That remote refuge was Fish Springs. They told me, "You've got 60-some miles of dirt road and there are no telephones out there and you have to get your stuff brought in from the commissary. You go get the mail once a week and you have to generate your own electricity and all this sort of stuff." I said, "That's just what I want."

John Cornely:

Excuse me, but did you skip Death Valley?

Ed Bailey:

Oh yeah, I did. I somehow skipped Death Valley.

John Cornely:

Why don't you go back and talk about that briefly. But let me ask you a question first, did you know when you went to Fish Springs that Lynn Greenwalt had been there?

Ed Bailey:

That's how I got the connection, there's the connection, yes. For some reason I blanked out on Death Valley. I was temporary Park Service in the wintertime, working at Death Valley National Monument back then, now it's the National Park, which was a very interesting assignment in the winter, not in the summer. But like I say, I was only on temporary status there.

But, at any rate, back to where I was; it was Lynn Greenwalt who, of course, thought I must like the wilderness and he sized me up very correctly. Apparently, they just had a turnover there and whatnot and remembered me. Very soon after our interview and whatnot he had that job offer, but warned me all these things about it. The more he told me these so called detrimental things, the more I liked it.

So, I went there, and I was there for about two or three years and just loved it. We generated our own electricity with Onan generators. Like I say, except for knowing they were using toxic substances in the nearby Dugway Proving Grounds and thinks like that, that was the only detriment. But the rest of it, it was a wonderful assignment.

John Cornely:

Now they have like reverse osmosis water system there, but you must have had to haul water all the time.

Ed Bailey:

We had a water filtration system from one of the springs and I remember it was delightful, you could go jump in the pools there in the spring and go swimming and in the summertime.

It was a fantastic wildlife area, but I wanted to work my way north and I already had the seeds of "north to Alaska" so to speak. I guess it was part of it was emulating what my father did who was, like I said, a world explorer. I couldn't hold a candle to what he did, but everything's relevant with time and era.

They had the old "green sheets" in those days for job opportunities and whatnot, and after I'd been at Fish Springs for awhile I thought, 'well, let's try something else and move further north.'

A job came open at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, as it was called then. Of course right next to the Steens Mountain. Pete Carter was the manger in those days. Hart Mountain was very, very similar because we had no electricity back then, we had an old Witte generator with great big flywheels, we had no telephones; again, the same thing. It was a long trip to Lakeview, which was the headquarters for that, plus the Modoc Refuge and the Sheldon Refuge.

I found that a fabulous place. But the one thing I really didn't like about that, and I didn't have to contend with it at Fish Springs, was "meadow muffins" everywhere you went. I was horrified to see what was happening to the riparian areas on the refuge there at Hart Mountain. Everywhere you went you didn't have a semblance of wilderness because 'Moo!' Cows everywhere and cow shit everywhere. I saw what they were doing. I guess I had my first tiff, real tiff with a refuge manager at that stage because he gave me an assignment one day, he said, "I want you to go out and help one of permittees brand cattle." I said, "What?" I said, "I didn't go to school in wildlife management to brand cattle that are denigrating the refuge." He said, "Well it's good to get along with the permittees and understand the cattle business." I said, "I want to understand the wildlife business." I actually wouldn't do it, we had quite a tiff.

John Cornely:

This was with Pete?

Ed Bailey:

Pete Carter and Jack Richardson I remember was the assistant manager. They didn't pursue it luckily and I already had my three years in so I wasn't on probation, I was career conditional, or I might have taken a different attack on just for survival. But, at any rate, I got increasingly disturbed with the cattle grazing and whatnot.

I was there just with one maintenance man, Carl Longnecker, just the two of us there on the refuge at that station.

John Cornely:

What years were you there?

Ed Bailey:

Let's see, it would have been the mid to late 60s, yeah, because I moved to Alaska in '69, and it was from Hart Mountain.

So, I finally persuaded the manager after our tiff about the grazing and whatnot and I told him, "Look at what's happening on these streambeds. When all of the willows are gone, there's erosion and all of this going on." I said, "How about if we set aside one little square mile area right near the refuge headquarters (it was called the Buck Pasture)." I said, "What if we just have an enclosure here and keep the cattle out of there and see what happens?" He kind of hemmed and hawed and wasn't all so hot about it but he said, "Well, I guess it doesn't hurt anything, we can do it." I said, "It's only a square mile and cattlemen aren't going to raise hell about losing a square mile. It's right around your headquarters anyway. A lot of other people don't particularly want to come up there to see cows. They want to see bighorn sheep and pronghorns, of course, is what the refuge is for."

Lo and behold, I set up this Buck Pasture, but I never saw the results. But I heard about the results years later, and that was that everything came back. There was resurgence there, a recovery, and it looked like the difference between day and night between the grazed and ungrazed areas. It was the beginnings of what finally happened in kicking the cows off of Hart Mountain. I would dearly love to go back there now, and I plan to some time. Not in the winter, of course, but in the summer and see the change of vegetation, which I read in conservation magazines and whatnot. It's incredible.

So restoration was accomplished on that refuge. I was sowing the seeds for it, even though I didn't get to see the fruits of my labor, but I will be able to.

But my urges to go northward and also get away from cows because I really got a thing about it back then, they were really overstocked; it was really bad back then. An offer was made, I went through the green sheet again, and here was a place called Aleutian Islands. I didn't know anything about it. Besides that it was in a place called, an ominous name, Cold Bay, Alaska.

I fished around and asked some people and they said, "Oh, you don't want to go to a place like that." And, "The name tells you what it's like. The weather is horrible and it's extremely remote, you know its 600 miles from the nearest city in Anchorage. There are no roads. It's just a really awful place." I asked around and whatnot, but it sounded very intriguing to me.

John Cornely:

There seems to be a pattern here.

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, yeah, and it sounded even more remote and it was going to get me to Alaska, where I really wanted to go because I sensed that that was really then the last frontier. Unfortunately, now it's becoming the lost frontier.

So in 1969, I left Hart Mountain and went to Cold Bay from Anchorage. You have to fly on Reeve Aleutian Airways and it's a couple of hours of flying. Like I say, it's more than 600 miles from Anchorage.

I'll never forget meeting the infamous "Sea Otter" Jones, Bob Jones, Jr., who'd been the refuge manager there since World War II, and he had served in the Army in World War II, rousting out the Japanese in Kiska, Attu and so forth.

He met me at the airport. He was kind of an odd figure like I am. I'll never forget, I got off the plane and the wind was blowing and it was drizzling and fog and low visibility, and he shook my hand and he said, "Well, welcome to Cold Bay." He said, "You're coming in such fine weather." I thought, "This is fine weather?" I said, "Well, okay."

I had refuge housing there just like I did at Hart Mountain and Fish Springs. I took to it; I thought this was a really neat place. Hell, I had a view of a volcano when you could see it, which certainly wasn't every day. And you learned to walk with a lean because the average wind speed there is 17 miles an hour. It gives you a good chill factor, to put it mildly. But the pluses though of Frosty Peak, which is right next to town there, which then had a brown bear hunting enclosure. So, you could go down there and watch brown bears fishing and whatnot. Luckily, there was a guy that was on the Board of Game back then was from Cold Bay, he set this enclosure. Certainly a different Board of Game than what we've got in this state now, which is a bunch of Neanderthals to put it mildly; kill all the wolf, kill all the bear and jack up caribou and moose artificially for hunting. But that's another matter.

I soon really got with it, being able to see a live volcano and beautiful scenery and brown bears and fantastic hiking country and the magnificent Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. In those days the Izembek Refuge was also under Cold Bay, as it is right now. But the Aleutian Islands Refuge and a few scattered islands like Saint Lazaria and a few others, Simeonof and whatnot were refuge status back then before the Lands Act.

I love the Aleutians actually; I thought they were really neat, magnificent seabird colonies and huge rookeries. I would be aghast to go back to some of those places now and see what isn't there as far as the crash in marine mammals and some seabirds and so forth.

The one thing that marred my situation there was, but in retrospect it was a beneficial thing, my wife then ran off with a bush pilot, the local [Grumman] Goose pilot with Reeve Aleutian Airways. I was the last one to know about the affair and all that sort of stuff. I had a son who unfortunately had an unusual genetic disorder. I had a tough decision, it was a very personal type thing; whether I sacrifice my whole career and take a desk job in Juneau or Washington or who knows where ultimately, one of the regional offices; or pursue my dream of being a field biologist and a seabird biologist primarily. Finding someone, you know, like in Anchorage or temporary while I was living in Cold Bay, a foster home right there in Cold Bay, which I finally elected to do. Because it was either give up my whole career, and I know there'd be resentment and I'd be bitter about it. It's still something that haunts me to do this day because I could have made that choice.

When I moved later (I had him when we were in high school) and he was in high school, that's later after leaving Cold Bay and the Aleutians, that largely precipitated having to go to the Anchorage office because not only there was gossip all over town, it was kind of uncomfortable for me and this guy was still here, you know, with my ex (because I had divorced her naturally after that). That was another unpleasantness to go through. So I moved to the Regional Office, but with the understanding that in the summer I'd be doing nothing but fieldwork.

Nina Faust:

Ed, before you leave Cold Bay would you tell him a little bit about your experiences with Bob Jones, because that was the foundation that set...

Ed Bailey:

I was going to get into that retroactively, but yes, Bob Jones or "Sea Otter" Jones was a masterful seaman and a marvelous person at judging the weather on his own and whatnot. He taught me just absolutely invaluable skills. A lot of previous assistant managers and whatnot didn't like him because he was such an odd figure. He was. He was a strange type of guy, but so was I, as I am today.

I was always teased, going way back to school. I was called "nature boy" and called all kinds of names, and really had very few friends because I was interested in totally different things. Sports and parties and all that sort of stuff, I never was into any of that stuff.

But Jones, like I say, took me out in a dory, just like what you've got out there [on display in the visitor center], the Wandering Tattler and the Phalarope and whatnot. That's the way we traveled in the Aleutians. It was really exciting. When we had to go up on the

beaches with a wooden boat and put out air rollers and whatnot to get up there and set our camps up. It was sometimes a pretty scary and exciting way to travel.

I remember, he always used to sleep in the boat and I would be in a tent. He always said, "I always sleep in with her in case of a sudden change in weather." Even if we had it rolled up on the beach, if a big enough surf came with a storm or something like that, he's right there to do something about it.

Nina Faust:

What was your scariest adventure with him?

Ed Bailey:

Oh boy, I had several.

Nina Faust:

Pick one.

John Cornely:

Yes, pick one now and tell us about it.

Ed Bailey:

Probably when we went from Cold Bay out to the Shumagin Islands to check an island called Bird Island (which would be certainly something that would sound interesting) because Dave Spencer, who was the Refuge Supervisor in those days in Anchorage, asked Bob to go out there and check Bird Island to see if maybe it should be included in the Refuge System, this was before the Alaska Lands Act, and so we did. And in crossing, it's way off shore from the Alaska Peninsula, and we went through the Sandman Reefs, in that area, and got into some pretty wild weather there and I remember we really got slammed around. But we always wore Helly Hansen raingear and everything all tightened up so to keep ourselves dry, and this was before survival suits and we had no radios, nothing. I mean a flare is about all we had. We were on our own. I remember we finally made a surf landing on a boat or beach there at Bird Island and it was a pretty hairy ride.

But we had others too out in the Aleutians, from Shemya and Agattu and out around Amchitka and other places too.

But you throw in high waves and tide rips and those 30 to 40-knot winds, which come up like that sometimes. As good a weather forecaster as he was, you didn't hit it right every time, but we hit it right most of the time or we wouldn't be here. But his skills were just incredible and I learned so much that it kept me alive later for what I did.

But in the Regional Office, once I got there, that was in 1973, and then in 1974, I met Nina and started chasing her around. She's an outdoorsy type person obviously and a fellow Sierra Club Member and loved to hike and that sort of stuff, so.

John Cornely:

This was in Anchorage, you met in Anchorage?

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, yeah, right. I lived in Eagle River, which is a suburb of Anchorage. There again trying to get on the outskirts a little bit, I didn't want to be in the biggest city in Alaska, but because of that situation with my son, divorce and all of that, that precipitated it. Otherwise I probably would have stayed there a lot longer maybe, who knows. I might have stayed there forever for all I know.

So I worked largely with the planning section for refuges because, of course, approaching all of this was the Alaska Lands Act. And we had the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA, as you know that was passed by Congress and everything in 1971[ANILCA was passed by Congress in 1980; Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed in 1971]. So the planning was already starting when I went to the regional [Area Office] office there in 1973.

I was assigned because of my experience out there in the Aleutians with Bob; I was assigned the Alaska Peninsula Unit of the proposed Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Back then in the original EIS and everything from the refuge, a lot of people don't realize that here today, the headquarters was designated in Seward. And I fought that long and hard. Not because I would prefer to live in Homer, which I would. Because I figured being the planner I probably would be one of the first employees. And if it became a refuge, because it was tenuous because there was a lot of fighting, particularly by Alaskans and our politicians trying to kill it, of course, as they were trying to get into ANWR [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge] the same sort of thing; totally different agendas. But all the planning and everything kept going on.

Like I say, I was assigned the Alaska Peninsula Unit of the Maritime. Someone else had the Bering Sea Unit and someone was already at Cold Bay, Bob Jones was still there, and that was going to be sort of like a sub-headquarters back in those days.

I fought Seward for a good reason; almost 95% of the refuge was off to the west. Why put it in Seward? It made no sense. Because eventually if we had our own boat or charter or anything, you'd have to go around the Kenai Peninsula and there were only the three little islands in southeast Alaska; Saint Lazaria and Hazy Islands and whatnot.

So I finally won on that and the next go around was I said, "Homer is the logical place because it's closer, it's got better weather. You have more leeways and departures. It's close to the Bering Islands, which was going to become a refuge. The only thing that you are closer to in Seward was the Chiswell Islands and those three little islands in the southeast that already had refuge status, like Forrester Island as well. I finally prevailed with that argument.

Nina Faust:

Plus the Coast Guard was here too.

Ed Bailey:

Well, yeah, yeah. Another argument was the Coast Guard was based here [Homer], but not in the Seward. Back in those days we didn't have a boat and we weren't going to have a boat and we had no such funds, and so a lot of times we hitched a ride to get dropped off somewhere or they'd put fuel caches out for us and things like that.

So every summer I was out in the field. In the beginning it was surveying all of the islands off the Alaska Peninsula, and that's when Nina started joining me in the ventures. Like I say, it was about 1975, I think you first came out didn't you?

Nina Faust:

Something like that.

Ed Bailey:

Something like that. But I was getting paid to explore islands. I mean I couldn't believe a better job, despite the hellacious weather and stuff like that. It took five summers, upwards of four to six weeks to eight weeks of travel and checking all the different islands to find where the bird rookeries were, describe relative abundance, denote all the marine mammal rookeries, everything. From where the eagle nests were, we wouldn't just go around the island and look at it with binoculars and say, "Yeah, a lot of kittiwake's up there in the cliff." But you had to be on those islands and camp in as many places as possible and hike over them. See which ones still had foxes on them, what other alien species were there like ground squirrels or mice or what have you. Luckily, we didn't have any rat islands to deal with then.

I was in seventh heaven exploring islands because I was kind of doing what my dad did, but on a much smaller scale. But there again, if they had helicopters and all of those things it would have been a different era for my dad, too, before they had all of those things.

Then after assessing all of the islands, literally from Cold Bay all the way to McNeil River here where the bear refuge is there, we would have to terminate our trips where there was a capability of a radio or you come into a village or something like that because we didn't have a radio back in those days. We switched from the dorys back at that era to inflatable's because the dory's were just too heavy and, of course, inflatables were fairly new back then in the early 70s, thirty years ago. There were a few Zodiacs and Avons coming out, and that was about it. But they were much lighter and easier to handle, very seaworthy, particularly the Avon workboat, which is the one I chose, which allowed you to have two engines mounted simultaneously.

Nina Faust:

Oh no, that's not true. The first of our surveys, when we were using a 16 foot sport boat, they only had a transom that could hold one engine. The other engine was put inside and

elevated with the head up in case the inside of the boat got flooded, it wouldn't flood the engine.

John Cornely:

So that was an inflatable?

Ed Bailey:

Yes, the very first one. But the one that we prevailed in most of the time was an Avon sport boat, which had a straight transom and you could have two engines mounted, two 25.

Nina Faust:

No, you've got that confused. The sport boat had the one transom, and then later came the workboat.

Ed Bailey:

No, I said the workboat didn't I?

Nina Faust:

No, you said the sport boat, but that's alright.

Ed Bailey:

But, at any rate, it's a minor point. The boat of choice was certainly the workboat, and the big safety advantage of that is that you would have two engines. You only ran with one, but you had the other one in there so if something goes wrong, you can dump that other one. It was on a separate gas line, separate gas tank, all that sort of thing. That saved our bacon a couple of times.

Nina Faust:

Yeah, but I remember the incident when we were in that sport boat with one engine on the back and the engine on the inside covered up and buried, and we were in a nasty bunch of chop and waves and the engine died and we couldn't get it started. So during that time we were very close to a wall on an island and I thought we were going to get smacked and flipped. It took us, I don't know how many minutes, but we had to get that engine off and get the other one on, all the while we were rocking around. We finally did do it, but it was scarier then heck.

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, and that's why I swore I would never go with a cutout transom where you could only have one engine.

Nina Faust:

That's why as soon as that other boat was available we switched to that.

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, and most of the summers it worked, but which is the best of the inflatable's; the thickest in the air and the most seaworthy, and one of the few that allows the mounting of two engines.

Nina Faust:

But to tell you the truth, I can't even remember any of those surveys that we did together that we ever used a double transom boat. The double transom boat really came into use when we started working on the fox projects. So those early surveys all along the Alaska Peninsula and all the way up until we went to McNeil River was a sport boat or that one.

Ed Bailey:

We had an Avon with a straight transom.

Nina Faust:

That one year that we had our boat blow away and pop on the beach. We had to get a new one flown in just because we were lucky enough to be camped where there was a Fish and Game person with a radio who could call it in because it was in Kinetic Lagoon, which is what they call it, the North Coast call it, a maelstrom in a northwester'. Well, we got one of those northwesters' and it just blew the boat...

Ed Bailey:

It was anchored down.

Nina Faust:

Ten feet in the air, hundreds of yards up the beach, it popped on the rocks.

Ed Bailey:

It took out the Fish and Games camps antenna they had strung there, a dipole antenna and here this monster boat just flew right through it.

Nina Faust:

The guy was standing there, he was trying to save his tent from flying away and he watched that thing going right through his antenna! So they flew us in a new boat with a Grumman Widgeon, and they flew us in this gigantic 20-foot Zodiac that needed a long shaft engine and we only had short shafts. They said, "Well try it out." Okay, so we tried it out, but it was so heavy we couldn't move it. So then we told them to come back and take that one back and bring us another one. So they brought us a 15-foot, which was barely big enough to hold all the gas cans and all the five weeks worth of food. So it turned out we loaded the boat this high and so far back that there was only this much room to stand in the back.

Ed Bailey:

And everything really strapped down.

Ed Bailey:

But we had some incredible times and when the last survey was done... And that incident by the way, we were very, very lucky that happened where there had been a radio available. Most of the coastlines and the islands there's nothing. I mean had that happened somewhere else, we would have just sat there until we could flag somebody down if you ever could. The only thing we had for possible communication in dire emergency was an emergency locator beacon like they have in airplanes. But there are hardly any planes out there, so you might sit there for days between and you might hear a drone of a plane and you'd turn it on.

I used to tell Clay Hardy, who was in charge of the refuge planning session (he retired and went to back Maine and I guess he's still there, I hope he's still alive, I haven't heard from him in a long time), but the standing instructions were if we haven't gotten in touch with you through a boat, through a fish and game camp or ended up at some village site or something like that, like Sand Point in the Shumagin Islands or some place like that, well, you might as well set the search crews out because something's wrong.

We had some pretty exciting times too. For example, I've been in Alaska since 1969, so 36 years, and I've been in bear country, because the other thing that we love to do that isn't related to the refuge, but we're both avid river runners, river rafters. We've done thousands of miles of rivers in Yukon and the Northwest Territories [Canada], in Alaska and the Brooks Range and all over. Like I said, that's our passion and that helped and meshed real well with the skill of boat handling and just isolation and getting off. But what I was getting at, there were other unique hazards that we ran into on some of those islands besides some hellacious weather. Ironically, some of the worst weather you get in the Alaska Peninsula is under a high pressure system with a low in the Gulf of Alaska and it sets up a gradient with a high in the Bering Sea, and all hell breaks through from the northwest. It funnels through the mountains and the Alaska Peninsula with a Venturi effect, and that's what happened in this particular incident.

Nina Faust:

There were other times like in Windy Bay; we were stuck on an island probably for three straight days because it was blowing so hard from the northwest. We couldn't even dare to get off this little tiny beach on an island that was in the mouth of that bay. We were stuck trying to get transited across the mouth of that thing. Then there were other days when the northwest winds blew and we were trying to find a place to camp and we got blown out of the bays, we couldn't even get into the bays. We ended up having to actually go around the south side of an island one time at midnight because we couldn't get into the bays to get on the mainland. We ended up camped on the south side, which in your book was a big fat no-no.

Ed Bailey:

That's the exposed side, the south side of the islands on the Alaska Peninsula, and usually the dangerous and the most waved cut and the roughest. But in a few case we had to.

Nina Faust:

We had to make a midnight landing in the moonlight on a really nasty night just because we could not get in, even though we started early in the day looking for a campsite, we couldn't do it. So we managed to land on that beach because it wasn't a bad surf, but come daybreak it's just get up while the speeds were down going around the other side and the winds down. So we got up and went around to the other side that's the more protected side since the wind had come down, and we landed and went back to sleep.

Ed Bailey:

One of the neatest things about these islands; we did have to operate at night, not always because of the winds coming screaming across from the Bering Sea through mountain passes and whatnot there, but we had to know if there were nocturnal seabirds on these islands. Now some of them you can probe into burrow and whatnot and you can pull out a Fork-Tailed Storm Petrel or a Leach's [Storm] Petrel or other nocturnals, but a lot of times you couldn't get everywhere that way and sample burrows, so you had to go around at night. And, on a decent night, turn your motor off and just listen, identify what was there by calls. Ancient Murrelet, that's what we named our own boat that we have here, our little 25-foot Harbor Craft; that's my favorite seabird.

Nina Faust:

There'd be nights we'd land on an island in the dark and we'd take a flashlight and we'd go for a hike through the rock crevices and everything else, looking and listening for different seabirds. Because a lot of them you wouldn't necessarily even hear from down below, you'd have to go up a little ways to find them.

Ed Bailey:

And you always had to have the motor off of course to hear these birds, it was really neat.

Nina Faust:

You remember that one time we landed on that one island, I don't even remember which bunch of islands it was in. But we had it parked, it was an onshore wind luckily, and we went off and did our little walk, found out what was there. We came back and when I went to pick up the anchor line and it wasn't connected to the anchor anymore. So a valuable lesson there, we learned we had to put an extra little lock on there to make sure that never happened again. And second, we learned that we never go ashore without taking a survival suit and survival gear, and leaving it onshore in the case [the boat] disappeared. Because another time, in the Shumagin's, the boat blew away because it lifted off its anchor. And guess who got to [go] out! Well, it was still anchored because it was double anchored, but the shoreline went off. So he had to go swim for it with the survival suit.

Ed Bailey:

But it didn't get away.

Nina Faust:

But it didn't get away because it was still there, he just had to go swim for it.

Ed Bailey:

And luckily, I learned enough from Bob Jones; we never had an accident with the boat, we never hit rocks, we never sheared the lower end off. We always used stainless steel props and whatnot. But we were very, very cautious about it. I was chided by some of my colleagues later that I was such a slowpoke and everything. I said, "Did I ever wreck an engine? Did I ever wreck a boat?" No. But a lot of these "throttle jocks" did. Sheared props right off, sheared the lower units off, wrecked boats completely and whatnot just from traveling too fast.

But some of the other interesting things that happened on islands like off the Alaska Peninsula, some of the bigger islands like Sutwik was brown bears liked to swim out to the islands off the Alaska Peninsula on the south side to raid seabird colonies. And luckily we'd heard of that, so I took a sawed off shotgun, that was the standard thing, after I heard from another party that they'd been on Ugashik Island and mentioned they saw brown bear tracks on the island. And lo and behold, one morning on Sutwik Island, real early in the morning, about 6:00 in the morning, we were all set up in camp and sleeping and then we heard, "thump, thump" outside and I said, "Oh, shit!" I think I know what that is, there's a brown bear out there playing with our boat or probably in it rocking it around on the beach (it was on a nice sand beach).

Luckily, I had the presence of mind to inject a double-aught buck shell in the chamber. I was going to peak outside, and I was halfway out of my sleeping bag and you were sort of peeking out sort of halfway. I unzipped the tent and looked, and it would have made an absolute classic picture; it would have been on Alaska Magazine or better. The bear had climbed into the boat and sat down in it like it was driving it on the beach. But who thinks of taking a picture, you know, that's your transportation. One swipe with the claw on that Hypalon, no matter how good a boat it is, or one bite into it, there's our ticket home. We would have just sat on that island until somebody finally found us. And so I thought, like most bears I dealt with, 99% of them if you yell at them and wave your arms or something, they take off, but this one didn't. This one, the minute I did that, and luckily I still had the gun in one hand, he jumped out of the boat and nothing was coming but head and sand flying and everything, like from me to you, and it was coming right into the tent. I just went over backwards, I never even got it to my shoulder, I fired a hipshot right in its face and it spun the bear around and I put another one its flank. It limped around and it finally crashed on the beach. I felt real bad about it after, but it was either the bear or us. But then we noticed as we spent the day, and it was one of those lucky clear days where the wind wasn't howling, we spent the day patching up the boat with all the patch material we had, all the glue.

Nina Faust:

There was nothing left when we got done!

Ed Bailey:

I mean not a stitch of anything of the patching material.

Nina Faust:

And it barely patched it. I mean it patched it enough that I could sit in the back with the pump and keep pumping.

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, she had to keep one chamber going all the time, keep the pump going.

John Cornely:

Was this you think because when the bear came out at you?

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, its claws, just swiping because when it came out of the boat it did that much damage, multiple air chambers got holed. I felt real bad about the bear and then I noticed it's not dead. I looked at it real carefully from a safe distance, even though it was lying down there, and obviously looked like it had been in shock. Who wouldn't with all the buckshot from here to there right in the face. But their cranium's are just like armor plating. And luckily none of the pellets hit in either eye. And when the blood stopped rushing it was rather superficial in that respect. I thought, 'Well, maybe this bear's got a chance too and we'll all survive out of this deal.' So I looked at the bear again and I saw it was getting a little more responsive after a couple of hours while we'd been working on the boat, especially later in the afternoon. I started to throw a couple of rocks at it, just small rocks, and it got up. It was real staggered and whatnot and kind of confused, no sign of aggression anymore.

Finally, it was really getting late, like 10:00 at night or something, it was late (the sun is up practically the whole time now) and it was just amazing, I kind of herded that bear over to a little creek right there because it was obviously in shock and needing fluid restoration. It just drank and drank and drank like it never had a drink. We just literally sailed off the beach; we weren't going to stay on that beach naturally no matter what, unless weather pinned us down. It was amazing, when we got off the beach and looked back, here was the bear walking up a steep headland without even a limp, as if nothing even happened. I know one thing, is that bear would never get near a Hypalon boat again!

So it made me feel a lot better. I'm personally not a hunter; I'm not against legitimate hunting. I'm vehemently against bear baiting and the slob hunting practices, killing them from snow machines or aerial wolf hunting, that sort of crap. In fact, I circulated two of the petitions involving that in 1996 and 2000. I collected 550-some names. And there's another petition going in again for the third try, but the legislature will probably kill that again. But I'm digressing.

When we got through to the survey stage on all these islands and whatnot I thought, 'Well, there's one thing in common here, and that is the islands that have foxes them (which is most of them) have nothing but cliff nesters if they have any birds.' They were

inaccessible in other words. The vegetation was totally different because there was no recycling from nutrients from all that guano, you didn't have that. So I thought, 'Well, the neatest thing we can do is restore the habitat.

I wasn't a trapper. I had no interest in using leg hold traps or anything, but I thought, 'Well, what is the single most important thing you could do for this refuge?' And our conclusion was restore the islands they were before 1750, when it all started when the Russians introduced foxes to Attu Island and then it spread eastern and then the American's started. When it was all over, foxes had been put on at least 450 islands. I wrote a monograph to that extent. I don't know if you've seen it but it's a 50-some page monograph. There were 3000 copies from the Washington office and everything on the whole history of fox farming in Alaska, the effects on avifauna, and the eradication efforts.

Then we switched modes after we ran ourselves out of business, so to speak, exploring the islands of the Alaska Peninsula unit. We did some other areas too. We did the Chiswell Islands near Seward, we did the PI (Pribilof) Islands off the southern Kenai Peninsula and we did the Barren Islands out here. Some of the most hellacious weather you can find in the state. Just like the Aleutians, just 50 miles from Homer are the Barren Islands where you've got...

John Cornely:

This summer I was out there halibut fishing, great fishing. But that was an unbelievably calm day that we were out there.

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, you wouldn't like it out there where you've got Shelikof Strait on one side and the Gulf of Alaska on the other side, the big tidal surges from Cook Inlet. That makes a mix, and you can get some incredibly hellacious weather there.

Nina Faust:

And then we did the Sandman Reefs, which is incredibly...

Ed Bailey:

Oh yes, nobody's ever even gone back there to do some of these places we've done. Sandman Reefs, as the name suggests, are near Cold Bay and it's too shallow for vessels like the Tiglax to even get into. Like I was talking to Vern [Byrd], who ironically when he was in the Navy, and going back a little bit again when I was in Cold Bay, Bob Jones went out for a couple of years to get a master's degree at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I was acting manager back then and I forgot this, Vern was a lieutenant out there in the Navy, and as soon as his term was up I hired him as a biological assistant. Then he ended up being my supervisor later before I retired. But there I digressed a bit.

So we started on the eradication.

Nina Faust:

But Ed, before you did the eradication don't forget the refuge had to come into being.

Ed Bailey:

Oh yeah, yeah, a minor detail.

John Cornely:

So you were planning and you were going out and doing these surveys during the field season?

John Cornely:

So go back to what you did next, the next phase after you were working on some of those plans for the Maritime [NWR].

Ed Bailey:

Refuge in the Alaska Peninsula unit?

John Cornely:

Yes.

Ed Bailey:

Well, when the Alaska Lands Acts finally came. And Jimmy Carter, my hero, the only president I actually shook hands with and she (Nina) did too in a reception. That happened, of course in 1981. That's when I was transferred from the Regional Office in Anchorage, it was called the area office; they were technically still under Portland [Regional Office]. Gordon Watson was the area director [Manager] and everything back then. Bill Reffalt was always interacting. He was Clay Hardy's supervisor from Washington. Clay Hardy was in charge of the whole planning team and he had different units and different guys responsible for different units like Chukchi Sea Unit and the Bering Sea Unit and the Gulf of Alaska Unit and so forth. But I had the neatest one in my view for sure.

At any rate, I was transferred down here as the first employee and the first biologist for the refuge in I think it was June of 1981. We found a little hole of an office down here in the old post office, not much bigger than this room. You remember the old post office? So we were there and then we moved to another office, a little octagon building.

Nina Faust:

That was below the real estate office next to the old post office, under the old real estate office.

Ed Bailey:

Next to the old post office; a little hole in the wall office there.

Nina Faust:

It's where city hall is now.

Ed Bailey:

Right, just a little hole in the wall office there, and like I said, I came down and then a couple of months later John Martin came down as the first refuge manager and then Tom Early came as the assistant refuge manager.

Nina Faust:

And that's about the time you moved to the octagonal building, which is now an art supply place.

Ed Bailey:

Yes, and then we moved out to a warehouse-type building out on Kachemak Drive, and that's when I retired in '95, we were still there and then this place got built.

John Cornely:

That must have been, when I was back here in the early '90s, that must have been where you were. We went out there and kind of got briefed on the refuge and the Tiglax was in port and we got a tour of the boat and stuff. Probably in '92, I think it was or something like that.

Ed Bailey:

That's about right, yes, we were still there. Like I said, it was just such a thrill to do these things. I never forget and I just can't forget some of these astounding adventures we had.

I had various crewmembers on the fox project. We started working island by island; my mission was to get all of the foxes off my unit, which was the Alaska Peninsula Unit. I had realized how damaging it was and I saw the contrast in the Aleutians too because I had some interludes in the Aleutians. Even though we were on the Alaska Peninsula, when we went out with the Tiglax or a NOAA ship or a Coast Guard ship would put out our fuel caches and things like that.

One of the greatest thrills later during this same phase was when we went out into the Aleutians. I always suspected, there was one island out there that had no foxes put on it because it was just too damned rugged, and all the research that I had done for my monograph, there was this one island called Chagulak out in the central Aleutians that was never recorded for having a fox farming permit from the old Bureau of Biological Survey back in that era, or any references to it. Knowing how rugged it was, I always had a hunch that there were Aleutian Canada Geese there. And this was back when there were only about 700 of them, and the only known colonies were Buldir basically and Kiliktagik, a little island there in the Semidis had a handful of them there off of Kodiak.

John Cornely:

The geese that we helped monitor down on the Oregon coast when I was at Western Oregon Refuges.

Ed Bailey:

Right, and you stopped the hunting on them. That was one of the other things that stopped. But they dipped to about 700, as you know, and they were on the Endangered Species List right from the beginning.

One of the greatest thrills we had, and Nina was along too, was finally getting an opportunity to stop it. And the other thing I thought right away, 'Look at the lush vegetation. It isn't just seabirds; I bet there's other stuff here too.' And I just remember landing, going ashore on this rugged island. It's so steep that you couldn't even find a level spot to put a tent, I mean it was that bad, all the way around it. It's an extinct volcano of course. I just remember the absolute thrill of seeing on the beach, seeing some goose tracks. And while these could just be, you know, migrating through to other islands like Buldir, which was to the west. But then we went further and then we found goose poop! And then you're getting more and more elated, and then finally we heard a goose. And this was during the nesting period of June, and lo and behold, I'll never forget that moment, that rush, 'There's a goose!' And then we found a nest, of course, and it confirmed that indeed there was more than just Buldir Island, that little handful at Kiliktagik.

I had another colony that had quite a few, I mean probably 100 to 200 Aleutian Canada Geese nesting on it.

John Cornely:

I'm sure I know this but I've forgotten it, is Buldir also a very steep, rugged island?

Ed Bailey:

It's a rugged island, not nearly as rugged as Chagulak.

Nina Faust:

It's got a big, nice beach. Chagulak doesn't have any of those.

Ed Bailey:

No, Chagulak is boulders and cliff all the way around it.

Nina Faust:

It's extremely rugged.

John Cornely:

Why would they not have dropped foxes on Buldir; some of the same reasons?

Nina Faust:

It's so far out too.

Ed Bailey:

Well, not really. The Russians could have done it; they could have brought them from Siberia.

Nina Faust:

For some reason or other...

Ed Bailey:

It's a real isolated island all by itself, no other islands nearby.

Nina Faust:

Maybe they missed it.

Ed Bailey:

Who knows, who knows. Sometimes they would have dropped off a couple pairs and they don't make it. Eagle gets the pups, you know, things like that. Not every island that had foxes put on it they didn't always survive.

But backtracking, another real thrill for me was to find the second recorded nest of a Kittlitz's Murrelet; that was at Cold Bay on Frosty Peak. I have pictures of it on the wall. There used to be an office here too. Everything we did, all of the surveys of the islands and all of our discoveries and everything all got published in peer-reviewed journals. So all together, I got about 20 publications, something like that. Some of them were just short papers on like the first record of a Golden Eagle nest on the Alaska Peninsula and then finding that Kittlitz's Murrelet, complete with a picture of the egg when we first found it. Then coming back and finding the downy chick in a real rugged mountain top there below a glacier, because that's the kind of place they nest. But I had those opportunities to find things like that.

Nina Faust:

We found that Marbled Murrelet egg too, that was in the Chiswells.

Ed Bailey:

Yes, right. So we got a lot of first observations and discoveries like that.

John Cornely:

Let's spend a little time talking a little bit more about starting to try and get the foxes off some of the other areas and how you approached that and did you have any hurdles? Or maybe back in those days you just went out and did it.

Ed Bailey:

We just went out and did it.

Nina Faust:

Well, actually you had to convince the administration that it was a worthwhile project. Let's see, when did we start taking foxes off? Was that in '80?

Ed Bailey:

It was in the early '80s. Like I said, it took five summers, starting in 1974, to do all of the exploration of all the islands.

Nina Faust:

And then it became a refuge and you moved down here in '81. Let's see, it was how many years before they said they were going to shut this office down and ship you guys out? When was that?

Ed Bailey:

It was in the early '80s, 1982 or 1983, somewhere in there. There was another crisis for the refuge besides, like I say, fending off going to Seward, which wouldn't have been the end of the world but it would be very inefficient. But there was another maneuver, and that was to close this office. There was a budget crunch and everything like that.

Nina Faust:

Let's see, you already had the boat, right? Or was that before the boat?

Ed Bailey:

No, it was before the boat.

Nina Faust:

It was before the boat, because then they said there was no way you guys were going to get a boat. They were just going to close this office and parcel you guys out.

Ed Bailey:

Yes, they wanted to farm us out. And I fought that tooth and nail and really got in trouble in the regional [Area] office, bucking the area director [Manager] and everybody else. I galvanized all the environmental groups, of which I belonged to many, and probably belong to 10 or 12 right now. We're both devout environmentalists, if you haven't figured that out!

At any rate, the way I got that stopped, because we were already down here; Tom Early was already planning on going back to a refuge up in the interior, John Martin was talking about either a refuge or a private enterprise somewhere.

Nina Faust:

He already had his transfer papers, both of them did.

Ed Bailey:

He did, yeah.

Nina Faust:
You didn't.

Ed Bailey:
I didn't.

Nina Faust:
You were going to quit and go work for state.

Ed Bailey:
Yeah, I was about ready to quit and go work for Kachemak Bay State Park as a park ranger because I didn't want to leave. We already had a home here and she was teaching high school here and whatnot, this was our home. I thought their reasoning was really off the wall, and that was, 'We're going to make the units of the maritime satellites of other refuges.' In other words, the Alaska Peninsula would be a satellite refuge of Cold Bay and the Izembek. Kodiak would take care of some of the northern Alaska Peninsula refuges and the Barren Islands and places like that. And then the Gulf of Alaska Unit would be parceled out to probably the Kenai Refuge, or they talked also of Anchorage as another possibility. And then Bering Sea Unit Islands were going to be under Bethel, under the Y-K [Yukon-Kuskokwim] Delta and Cal Lensink back in those days.

John Cornely:
What convinced them not to do this?

Ed Bailey:
What convinced them was the law, really, that was passed. And the purpose of it was to highlight the importance of seabirds and marine mammals, and that was the purpose of the Maritime Refuge. It was right in part of the act of why they created the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

Nina Faust:
They were going to do it, law be damned.

Ed Bailey:
I said, "Hey, wait a minute, seabirds are not getting their place in the sun, and neither are marine mammals. We're not following the intent of the law, basically, that was passed." I galvanized all the environmental groups to join in and fight it to be sure that seabirds and marine mammals got their place in the sun and got their importance. Otherwise, we'd just be second fiddle and so would those resources. Because let's face it, Kodiak was primarily interested in brown bears, Izembek was primarily involved with black brant and other waterfowl and shorebirds, and Y-K Delta obviously was waterfowl and so forth. So, I didn't want to see these refuges or units becoming second fiddle to refuges that had other main missions, and they would be way down the totem pole as far as emphasis.

So, I fought long and hard on that and got myself in a lot of hot water because I got myself branded again as a real rebel in the regional office, which I was, because it goes back to the Seward thing too. They had another name for it too, and I fought that. It was called the Alaska Marine Resources National Wildlife Refuge. I said, "This just sounds like something the oil company would name, you know, Alaska Marine Resources." And I beat that back with, again, I was leaking all kinds of internal memos to Audubon and the Sierra Club and the Alaska Center for the Environment and so forth. They came to our aid in massive letter writing campaigns and whatnot.

The whole idea of splitting the refuge up and having no cohesive refuge for marine birds and mammals, luckily that proposal finally got ditched.

Then in the long term, the next big battle was, that I got myself in hot water, was in the building you're sitting in. If you know the history of what was going to be part of the Visitor's Center, and I was never against the Visitor's Center, I think it's a great idea, education is extremely important. But I think the biology is the first mission in conservation, it's the foremost thing. It's like the Park Service and some say recreation comes first and then conservation. No, you've got to turn it around. Maybe Bush had it that way. But that's not the way, what the intent was.

So, the bottom line was that when they were planning this Visitors Center, part of it was going to be an alcidarium, which was going to be like a sea life center. I thought, you know, this is going to bleed the refuge dry. There isn't going to be a biological program. That's going to soak up money like you can't believe. I said, "We've got an alcidarium, you just go outside, its right there. It's called Kachemak Bay and Gull Island and 60 Foot Rock. Your seabirds are right there, and there easy to get to and everything. Why put up some fancy sea life center type aquarium with neurotic puffins swimming back and forth, banging across the glass with their bills and everything like I've seen in other aquariums? Besides, they were going to do the sea life center up in Seward. I said, "This is utter nonsense.

This got into a raging controversy, and there's some people still on the staff here that let's say don't like us. I don't know if you've ever gotten the drift, but I won't mention any names, but there are still a couple of people on the staff that dreamed of having this aquarium and the business community did. We are reviled by some of the owners in the business community. I can still see the print in the newspaper by some of the business and whatnot that said, "We want the aquarium because it will generate "lots of rubber tire traffic to Homer." In the debates with the director and everybody else I said, "I mission isn't to generate rubber tire traffic to anywhere. Our mission is first conservation, monitoring research and for marine birds and mammals, then comes recreation, then comes education and the big glorious visitor's center that we may not forever have a Ted Stevens to bail out with funds to do." If they got the boat, which is great, Ted Stevens money and whatnot, but it got real ugly here in town because a lot of the businesses thought this was marvelous because they're going to make money out of this, filling hotel rooms and all this kind of stuff.

Nina Faust:

I think actually in retrospect it turned out to be the best thing that happened as far as stopping the alcidarium because, number one it saved the refuge budget statewide. There were refuge managers and other folks at different refuges that were talking to him and saying, "Thank you for cutting that big pork project out."

But the other thing is I think it would have bled this place dry. And finally, I think, in the long run we ended up with a really much better situation because by having delayed it and gotten rid of the alcidarium, we ended up with a partnership with NOAA and Fish and Game Department. Because in the interim, after all that stuff settled down and it was sort of dead for awhile, a committee of people here in Homer (and I was the co-chair of that committee actually) got together and did all the paperwork and everything to nominate Kachemak Bay for the National Estuarine Research Reserve Program. And then that got through and because of that we then ended up with a joint facility. Which I think is far better for the community because the whole purpose of this facility is partnerships with nonprofits and research and education. And we don't have the alcidarium to bleed it dry.

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, and we got now a whole other agency, Department of Commerce...

John Cornely:

If you would spend a little time then again just about what some of the events with fox eradication.

Ed Bailey:

We picked island by island and scouted out the best campsites, sometimes satellite campsites, and we used No. 1.5 steel-jawed traps. And we... Well, I'm not going to say everything but let's just put it this way, it's historical, but there were some means that no longer were legal that we used to get rid of them, you know, but I'll leave it at that! I'm not worried about it. But my goal was to get the job done, and because there were some bureaucratic things that stopped us from using things like back in the [Bob] Jones Era, we were broadcasting strychnine on the beaches and whatnot. Well, you couldn't do that anymore. But there was still 1080 left, you know things like that, and if you used it properly where no non-targets could get at it.

You don't put all of your eggs in one basket in an eradication program, you don't just use traps. You've got to use snares, you've got to use shooting, and denning, anything you can use. And I used some other stuff I'm not even going to mention. But the bottom line is, as far as I know all the islands that we did, and I had only one left, and it was half native owned, and that was Wosnesenski before I retired. I volunteered to do that one, but that one had cows on it. It came up just this last summer, they asked me, even being retired so long, would we be interested in going out there and doing Wosnesenski. It's a beautiful island with swans and everything there. I said, "Only if the cows are gone."

Nina Faust:

The latest report is there no foxes anyway.

Ed Bailey:

That's what we heard. I don't know why, whether somebody shot them or inbreeding did them in or what happened.

John Cornely:

So how many islands?

Ed Bailey:

Probably 20, something like that.

Nina Faust:

Not that many.

Ed Bailey:

Well, remember I was working with Bob Jones on some of them; Amchitka and Agattu; I'm counting others, not just when I was with you. I say I was involved in probably upwards of 20. My goal before retirement was to clean them off all the islands in the Alaska Peninsula Unit, which was my responsibility, and that's where most of them were, this side of the Aleutian Islands.

Nina Faust:

You almost got there; there were a few in the Sanak Islands that you didn't catch.

Ed Bailey:

Well, Little Elma and Inikla Islands, little tiny islands out there that you could do in a week. They didn't get done and whatnot.

John Cornely:

You just set the stage for making scenarios where the Aleutian Geese could be taken back out.

Ed Bailey:

Right, yes and as you know the success story of Aleutian Canada Geese being de-listed, and now there's probably 70,000 of them instead of the 700.

John Cornely:

I go to the Pacific Flyway Meetings every year, why the last several years why they've been complaining about crop depredation by Aleutian Canada Geese. So yes, wonderful success.

Ed Bailey:

Yes, and it was something so tangible. One of my dreams I'd love to fulfill, and maybe I can, and that is I'd love to go back to some of these islands we did like in the Shumagin's, Big Koniugi and some of those fantastic areas. Some of those islands are just so beautiful and some of them are actually more remote than the Aleutians. You noticed when the talks were given downstairs [Climate Change Seminar] on monitoring stations, you might have noticed there wasn't one monitoring site shown in the Alaska Peninsula Unit, it's just a blank. Where there are several in the Bering Sea and Pribilof's and there are several in the Aleutians and so forth, but the attention has always been largely the Aleutians or other areas for various sundry reasons.

Nina Faust:

Well I have to say too that going out on one of his fox trapping expeditions on the islands, in fact, when he did it, it was considered a really, really tough job. They called it "Bailey's Boot Camp."

Ed Bailey:

Yeah, they gave me a t-shirt with that on it.

Nina Faust:

Yeah, because we didn't have any of the amenities they have nowadays, we didn't have satellite phones, we didn't have laptop computers uplinked to satellites, we didn't have cabins, we didn't have outhouses.

Ed Bailey:

You didn't have a luxury liner squire you around.

Nina Faust:

No, we got dropped off. We had our little tent camp and we spent these arduous days with Mr. Bailey over here taking us out on these 12 to 14 hour days, where you'd be boating around an island all day long and you'd be freezing your butt off, cold, miserable wet. Or you'd be crossing the island in the fog with the rain coming slanting sideways on you. And dragging into camp at 10 o'clock at night and then opening up your cold camp food!

Ed Bailey:

That was our standard diet; a can of corn, can of sardines, and a can of potatoes. Cold because you were too tired and didn't want to mess up even heating up or anything or even washing anything.

Nina Faust:

That was your standard diet!

John Cornely:

The good old days!

Nina Faust:
Yes, exactly.

Ed Bailey:
And you'd have a spoon to wash and that was about it.

Nina Faust:
And I have to say that the guys that were out in camp with him still think nostalgically back about their days. They said, "Boy you know that was probably some of the best days of my life was being out in those fox camps with you guys."

Ed Bailey:
Well, we used to have a lot of fun as well as having our tent days, which were some times pretty miserable and whatnot and pretty scary experiences. But it all paid off from having that basic information that was given to me by Sea Otter Jones. I learned so much from him. If I hadn't have had him as an instructor before I went I wouldn't be here. So many other people got themselves in trouble. In fact, a couple of them got themselves killed going to Adak in the wrong weather and whatnot in a Boston Whaler. You know, just like I used to do seabird surveys by air with the Grumman Goose back in the survey era. I would always read the weather maps myself and I would only go with one pilot. I insisted on Tom Ballou and if it wasn't Tom Ballou I don't fly. I'd look at the weather maps first myself before I decided whether I was going to fly or not. I still say that the weather map... I still can't understand they did it; two guys I went to college with in graduate school went out to do surveys out toward the Bering Islands. They kicked the tires on a nice sunny day in Anchorage and were never heard of again. But I had a weather map that showed it was a 940 millibar low churning in from the south. They flew right into it, and by that afternoon they were having 30 foot seas. How are you going to count seabirds? Obviously, one engine farted or something and "*pthh*," you know, they went into the drink.

Nina Faust:
I think one interesting aspect of a lot of the fox projects that you did is that you did them on a tremendously short shoestring.

Ed Bailey:
Actually, to be honest with you, my nose was rubbed in it as a troublemaker here. So they gave me practically a zero budget.

Nina Faust:
Yes, like \$3,000.00 to do a whole summer project.

Ed Bailey:
I had to use volunteers and I had to get, this was before the Tiglax, I had to get rides from NOAA Ships and dropped off somewhere, rides from the Coast Guard or some other entity, another different NOAA Ship or something that would put out our fuel caches and food caches. We normally had all canned goods, these are freeze dried.

Nina Faust:

That was for the surveys. Although we did have, for some of the fox camps, we did have to go on chartered vessels, chartered fishing boats.

Ed Bailey:

Yes, the Sea Spray and several other boats were chartered too. We had, like I say, myself and volunteers was it.

Nina Faust:

Yes, usually three other people besides him. So you'd do it on a \$3,000.00 budget because you'd be paying people \$3.00 a day, plus food and a tent.

Ed Bailey:

I've heard that too, one woman, Diane Debinski I remember, who's now a college professor in Kansas, was up here for some kind of meeting recently, was just exclaiming that she had adventures she'll never forget the rest of her life out on those camps.

Nina Faust:

Well, one of the early volunteers, Jeff Reilly, said, "You know, those were the best days of my life. It was just incredible the stuff I did."

Ed Bailey:

Well, there was a lot of camaraderie too along with that war on foxes, so to speak.

Nina Faust:

I think one of the interesting aspects too is that one of the people that called you up and wanted information about fox eradication for restoring island biodiversity is now one of the heads of nonprofit down in Mexico that's restoring islands off the coast of Mexico. That was Bernie...

Ed Bailey:

Tushy.

Nina Faust:

Bernie Tushy, yeah.

Ed Bailey:

And Kate Faulkner; I got her interested in getting rid of rats on Channel Islands National Park. Actually, before I retired I said the next battle was get rid of rats, and Art Sowls picked up that banner.

John Cornely:

I interviewed him earlier today, and he talked a lot about that program.

Ed Bailey:

Yes, and I told him, I told everyone else, everyone was so, "Oil spills, oil spills." And I said, "There's something far worse than oil spill." People said, "What do you mean?" I said, "A rat spill." That was the thing I was championing after the fox program was winding down in my unit, there was hardly anything left to do. I said, "We've got to go after, you know, where we can find an island small enough where it can be done to eradicate rats. Not control them but eradicate them." I got the Park Service interested down there when I visited the Channel Islands. I said, "Hey, you've got Anacapa [Island] here, it's small, you can do it real easily." Except you have knot heads that want to adopt a rat, even tried to stop them in court from killing them and things like that.

John Cornely:

But they've done it.

Nina Faust:

They did, and it's amazing what's come back over there now. It's another success story.

Ed Bailey:

Like the Xantus' Murrelet and things like that were about gone, and ashy storm-petrel and so forth. They're all over the place now. And they've expanded the program considerably. So, you know, my legacy, besides the exploration of the islands and where our office is today and what it is today, is all conservation. Like I say, we're devout environmentalists, and I wanted to do something that was tangible. And that was extremely, to put it mildly.

Gosh, I didn't think I could talk this long, but just touching on it.

John Cornely:

I've heard from good sources that you could, so.

KEY WORDS:

People:

Ed Bailey; Daniel Boone; Lynn Greenwalt; Peter Carter; Jack Richardson; Carl Longnecker; Bob "Sea Otter" Jones, Jr.; Nina Faust; Clay Hardy; Vernon Byrd; Bill Reffalt; President Jimmy Carter; Gordon Watson; John Martin; Tom Early; Senator Ted Stevens; Tom Ballou; Bernie Tushy; Kate Faulkner; Arthur Sows; Cal Lensink; Diane Debinski; Jeff Reilly;

Places:

Homer, Alaska; Islands and Oceans Visitor Center Maritime National Wildlife Refuge; Cumberland Gap National Historic Park; Capulin Mountain National Monument; Raton, New Mexico; Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument; Fish Springs National Wildlife

Refuge; Death Valley National Monument; Death Valley National Park; Dugway Proving Grounds; Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge; Steens Mountains; Lakeview; Modoc National Wildlife Refuge; Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge; Aleutian Islands; Cold Bay, Alaska; Anchorage; Kiska; Attu; Frosty Peak; Izembek National Wildlife Refuge; Saint Lazaria National Wildlife Refuge; Simeonof National Wildlife Refuge; Shumagin Islands; Bird Island; Alaska Peninsula; Shemya Island; Agattu Island; Amchitka Island; Eagle River; Seward; Homer; Hazy Island; Bering Islands; Chiswell Islands; Forrester Island; McNeil River; McNeil River State Game Sanctuary; Yukon, Northwest Territories, Brooks Range, Gulf of Alaska; Bering Sea; Windy Bay; Sutwik Island; Ugashik Island; Chiswell Islands; Seward; Pribilof (PI) Islands; Kenai Peninsula; Barren Islands; Homer; Aleutian Islands; Sandman Reefs; Cold Bay; Chagulak Island; Buldir Island; Kiliktagik Island; Semidi Islands; Kodiak Island; Kachemak Bay State Park; Y-K (Yukon-Kuskokwim) Delta; Pacific Black Brant; Channel Islands National Park; Wosnesenski; Sanak Islands; Little Elma Island; Inikla Island; Big Koniuji; Anacapa Island;

Books:

Divisions/Titles/Programs/Studies:

Park Service; breeding bird survey route; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Sierra Club; planning board; Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA); Alaska Peninsula Unit of the proposed Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge; ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge); Bering Sea Unit; Cold Bay Unit; Refuge Planning; Alaska Lands Act; Chukchi Sea Unit; Bering Sea Unit; Gulf of Alaska Sea Unit; Fox Farming Permit; Bureau of Biological Survey; Endangered Species List; peer-reviewed journals; Alaska Marine Resources National Wildlife Refuge; Audubon Society; Sierra Club; Alaska Center for the Environment; National Estuarine Research Reserve Program; Rat Eradication Program;

Wildlife/Critters:

"Meadow muffins"; Riparian areas; bighorn sheep; pronghorns; seabird colonies; rookeries; marine mammals; kittiwake rookery; Fork-Tailed Storm Petrel; Leach's Storm Petrel; Ancient Murrelet; brown bears; Aleutian Canada Geese; fox; Kittlitz's Murrelet; Golden Eagle; Marbled Murrelet; Xantus' Murrelet; ashy storm-petrel;

Miscellaneous:

Green Sheet; Reeve Aleutian Airways; Alaska Lands Act; Wandering Tattler dory; Phalarope dory; Helly Hansen raingear; Zodiac inflatable boat; Avon inflatable boat; Tiglax boat; Boston Whaler; Grumman Goose

Remembering Edgar P. Bailey--Alaska Wilderness Explorer, Conservation Activist, and Philanthropist

Edgar P. Bailey passed away peacefully in his sleep on January 14, 2018, in Homer after a protracted debilitating illness.

Growing up with a dad who was exploring the jungles of Indonesia (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PThmPe_u8ks), South America, and Africa, Edgar Bailey learned to do his own exploring. Not content with city life in Hollywood, young Ed got into all sorts of trouble diverting traffic on his street creating fake detours and other pranks that conveyed his discontent.



To keep him out of trouble and assuage his need for a life in the countryside, his folks sent him to Ojai Valley School, a life-changing and memorable experience that included lifelong friends and memories. Illness prevented him from attending high school at a boarding school so he attended Hollywood High and discovered he loved science, especially biology. On hikes in the Hollywood Hills with his dad he gained an appreciation and skills in birding and hiking, fueling his lifelong love of the outdoors.

After earning his undergraduate degree in biology at the University of Redlands, he then pursued a Master's Degree in wildlife biology at Utah State in Logan. He wrote his master's thesis on starlings. Birds became his life's passion for work and pleasure.

He married his first wife and after college hired on with the National Park Service. He did stints in Capulin Mountain Volcano National Monument, Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, and Death Valley National Park. He was disillusioned by life as a park service naturalist since he spent a lot of time in Visitor Centers telling people where the bathrooms were and the cost of a postcard.

He wanted to do biology and exploration. He transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and went to Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge and then transferred to Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge. While at Fish Springs the military experimented with nerve gas and sheep died all around the Refuge. At Hart Mountain his son, Lorne, was born.



In 1969, he and his family transferred to the remote Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Cold Bay, Alaska. During his stay in Cold Bay, he and his wife parted ways. In 1973, Ed transferred to Anchorage and worked in the Regional Office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In summers he was sent out to the field as these

were exciting times in Alaska with discussions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA,) and plans for new refuges and monuments all over Alaska. He was part of the planning team for the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge now located in Homer Alaska.



Ed met Nina Faust, his long-time partner and wife, at a Mountaineering Club meeting in Anchorage in 1973. Cleverly he signed up for the hike she had signed up for, got there early, and was already sitting on top of Bird Ridge when she got there. He asked her to go to the movies with him, the beginning of their 45 years of life adventures together.



Ed's career took him to remote field areas each summer, and Nina became his annual summer volunteer. First projects were exploring all the coastal areas on the Alaska Peninsula, Kenai Peninsula, and offshore island groups counting seabirds and marine mammals. Trips were solo--just Ed and Nina--most of the time. They travelled up to a month along treacherous wilderness coastlines and offshore islands carrying all

their food and supplies for up to a month in a 16-foot rubber inflatable boat. Their only way to contact the outside world then was an ELT (Emergency Locator Beacon).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK4unCRIVuM>

After the 1980s Alaska Lands Act passed, the summer projects took on Restoration of Island Biodiversity, a project to trap off introduced foxes put on islands in the 1800s into the 1940s. The foxes decimated the seabird populations leaving the islands biologically impoverished. Removing the foxes allowed seabirds to recolonize, bringing back their biologically important guano that helps plant life thrive. Trips to the remote Shumagin Islands and the weather-challenged Aleutians were taken each year till Ed retired in 1995.



Each summer after the refuge field season, they floated remote rivers all over Alaska, including some of the largest and best known glacial rivers. Many of these trips are recounted in videos on Youtube.



http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6jFcdH_im3qjgwVa14e9D6hIYf94R-AC In winter they travelled to the desert southwest to explore mountains and parks.

Ed was a devoted conservation activist and worked on many important issues with various conservation groups over the years, including trying to end the practice of bear baiting and aerial wolf hunting in Alaska, stopping the parking of oil rigs in Kachemak Bay, keeping oil and gas drilling out of Kachemak Bay, making Kachemak Bay a jetski free area, stopping the coalbed methane oil and gas lease in Homer, to just mention a few. As an avid birder, he worked to protect local habitat in Kachemak Bay, served on the Kachemak Bay State Park Advisory Board, and co-founded Kachemak Crane Watch with Nina. He also has provided a building to house the Cook Inletkeeper at a subsidized rent. In 2004, the Alaska Conservation Foundation honored him with the *Celia Hunter Award* for Outstanding Volunteer Contributions; in 2014 the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust selected him for their *Land at Heart Award* honoring distinguished contributions to conservations on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula.



In retirement, Ed wanted to start his own wildlife preserve so he bought as many contiguous lands as were available to piece together a wildlife corridor that is managed as a preserve for all wildlife, and especially for Sandhill Cranes. Today that 650-acre private preserve is known as Inspiration Ridge Preserve, and in the



near future it will officially become a preserve actively run by the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies. This will be a lasting legacy of Ed's conservation efforts, a cause he has worked for all his adult life.

Ed is survived by his partner and wife of 45 years, Nina Faust and his son, Lorne Bailey.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations in his memory to the Alaska Conservation Foundation, *Inspiration Ridge Preserve Maintenance and Operation Fund*, 911 West 8th Ave., Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99501.

