

Conservation History

REMEMBERING FALLEN COMRADES

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE



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The mission of the U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service
is working with others
to conserve, protect, and
enhance fish, wildlife,
plants, and their habitats
for the continuing benefit
of the American people.



Contents

ii From the Historian

Mark Madison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Historian, Founder, Conservation History, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

iii Editor's Note

Sarah Gannon, Conservation History Editor, Team Lead, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Library, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1 Memorable Lessons from a Memorial: Fallen Comrades of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mark Madison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Historian. Founder, Conservation History, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Maria E. Parisi, Former Editor Conservation History, History, Library, and Partnerships Branch, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5 Researching and Writing the Fallen Comrades' Biographies

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

7 Guest Associate Editor

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

8 Trends in Service Employee and Volunteer Deaths, 1904-2024: Learning from the Fallen Comrades Memorial

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

17 Fallen Comrade Biographies

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

85 Oral History Program

Fallen Comrade Ray Bentley and Philip Thorpe (Excerpts)

93 The Service Honor Guard: Reverence Made Visible

Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, Headquarters, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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From the Historian

Mark Madison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Historian, Founder, Conservation History, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

One of the most profound privileges of my role as the historian for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the opportunity to witness and preserve the deeply personal stories that form the true history of our agency. These narratives, woven from the dedication, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment of those who have served, are more than historical records. They are testaments to the enduring spirit of conservation.

“It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.”

- Abraham Lincoln, 1863

For years, I have wanted to share the histories of our fallen comrades, stories that deserve to be widely known. With this issue of *Conservation History*, we are finally able to do just that. Thanks to diligent research by Hannah Selby, our Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, all available information has been reconstructed for 37 of our fallen comrades in a timeline spanning a century, from 1904 to 2024. Hannah has spent three years leading this effort, delving into historical fact-finding missions and analyzing trends over time. We deeply appreciate Hannah’s invaluable contributions, which have not only enriched our understanding of individual biographies but have also shed light on significant patterns that have unfolded over time.

This issue also marks an important milestone for the National Conservation Training Center. For the first time, we are chronicling in the pages of our journal the story of the creation of our Fallen Comrades Memorial—a labor of respect and remembrance that unfolded over 13 years. The memorial stands today at the heart of the training center, bridging past and present by bringing the names of those who have gone before into the presence of those who gather now. It is my sincere hope that the following pages convey

the reverence with which we hold our fallen brothers and sisters. Their stories deserve to be remembered, their dedication never forgotten. We also invite you, our readers, to join in this act of remembrance. If you have additional information or insights that can further enrich these histories, we encourage you to share them with us, ensuring that the legacy of these brave individuals remains as complete and enduring as the work to which they devoted their lives.



The Service Honor Guard stands at the Fallen Comrades Memorial with family and FWS colleagues during a ceremony.

Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS



Visitors look at the memorial wall at the National Conservation Training Center.

Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

Editor's Note

*Sarah Gannon, Conservation History Editor, Team Lead,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Library, National Conservation
Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

We are pleased to introduce a refreshed look for *Conservation History*—one that honors its established identity while bringing new visual elements and cohesion to each issue. Developed by graphic designer John Embrey, Visual Information Specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), this update reflects our ongoing commitment to thoughtful scholarship and engaging presentation. We hope the new design enhances your reading experience in meaningful ways.

In the early days of conservation work in the United States, many Service employees found job opportunities in remote and rugged environments. These locations offered adventure but provided little in the way of formal safety practices. Offices often kept few or no reliable records of accidents and fatalities, and the agency had not yet established national-level ceremonies or memorials to honor those who died in service. At the time, the Service's organizational culture did not include formal recognition of fallen conservationists.

Since then, the Service has made significant progress in both safeguarding its workforce and commemorating those who gave their lives in the line of duty. This issue of *Conservation History* examines broader trends in workplace safety and ceremonial recognition and pays tribute to conservationists who made the ultimate sacrifice.

We begin with the research of Hannah Selby, our Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern with San Francisco State University. Through detailed investigation, Selby reconstructs the biographies of individuals lost in service, beginning with a detailed overview of the methods used to uncover their stories. These personal narratives offer insight into the Service's evolving culture, highlighting the enduring values that connect staff across generations, as well as improvements in safety protocols that reflect our responsibility to protect our employees.

At the heart of this issue is a tribute to 37 colleagues whose lives and service are most fully documented. For reference, we include a list of their names, final duty stations, and dates of death (see page 18).

We conclude with a spotlight on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Honor Guard, established in 2012 to provide final honors to any Service member upon family request. Members of this elite unit undergo specialized training in military funeral traditions, including color guard, rifle volleys, and flag presentation. The honor guard serves as a powerful symbol of the Service's enduring commitment to upholding the legacy of those who gave their lives in service to conservation. Their legacies underscore the cost of stewardship, reminding us that learning from the past is essential to protecting both the people and the wild places they served.

As you read, please note that individuals who died prior to 1940 served under either the Bureau of Biological Survey or the Bureau of Fisheries. These two agencies merged in 1940 to form the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, combining their missions to protect wildlife and aquatic resources.

BUREAU OF
FISHERIES

Merged in 1940



BUREAU OF
BIOLOGICAL
SURVEY

Memorable Lessons from a Memorial: Fallen Comrades in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mark Madison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Historian, Founder, Conservation History, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Maria E. Parisi, Former Editor of Conservation History, Team Lead for the History, Library, and Partnerships Branch, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The centerpiece of the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, is the Fallen Comrades Memorial. Although the campus just celebrated its 20th anniversary [at the time of this writing], the courtyard is meant to look timeless, a reminder of those former colleagues who sacrificed their lives for wildlife. The design is simple. The journey to creating this wall was anything but straightforward.

NCTC was established in 1997 as the training facility for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)—the primary federal agency tasked with protecting the

nation's wildlife. NCTC's motto is "Conservation through Education," and the colloquial description of the place was "the home of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." As the home of the Service, it was the perfect place to remember former colleagues who died protecting our nation's wildlife. As such, when NCTC was constructed, its centerpiece was a courtyard with a base for a statue and a stark stone wall, flanked by three flags. Now all that was left was to finish the memorial.

The first challenge (which is ongoing) was to find out who belonged on the wall. Previously, there was a small memorial plaque in the Department of the Interior building with approximately 25 names on it. That was a starting point, but it was a short list of our fallen comrades. Compiling a complete list turned out to be easier said than done. The Service is the oldest conservation agency in the U.S., tracing its roots back to the 1871 U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries. This longevity has meant complexity. The Commission evolved into the Bureau of Fisheries in the U.S.



Credit: USFWS

The Service Honor Guard participates in a ceremony at the Fallen Comrades Memorial in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.



A Fish and Wildlife Service employee sits on a bench in the memorial courtyard looking at the fallen comrade wall.

Department of Commerce. A parallel agency emerged in 1885, eventually called the Bureau of Biological Survey in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 1940, the two bureaus were combined as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, now housed in the Department of the Interior. (Incidentally, this is the historical source of our redundant name, as fish are a subset of wildlife.) The effect of being in three departments over the last 147 years was that our records and historical legacy were scattered across the bureaucratic universe.

There is no agency database of deaths in the Service and its predecessor bureaus. The long-lived Bureau of Fisheries was particularly underrepresented, as many early deaths from fires and drownings were lost to the mists of time. Luckily, as part of the construction of NCTC, a National Heritage Committee assisted the historic interpretation of the campus. With a representative from each region of the country, they began to solicit possible missed names, ideally accompanied by a yellowing obituary or old refuge

or hatchery annual report. Eventually, the number of names on the list doubled with a clear indication that more would be forthcoming as the project proceeded. This process raised two logistical issues:

1. What information should go on each plaque?
2. How should the plaques be arranged on the wall?

As for information on the plaque, the obvious data points involved the name and date of death. After that, things became murkier. Place of death was another possibility, though not always known. For example, a plane wreck in Alaska was not discovered until 21 years after the initial crash. Also, many of the fallen died in their homes or hospital beds as a result of wounds inflicted in the field. However, to give no geographical location seemed a disservice to interpretation. Our agency's peculiar structure allowed another option that provided both a location and occupation. By citing their field station (e.g., fish hatchery, wildlife refuge, or law enforcement office) information was conveyed about both location and occupation. So the template was set: name, date of death, and last office or station.

The plaques themselves were engraved slate screwed into the wall. How do we arrange them? Since new historic names were being discovered every year, if the plaques were placed in chronological order, the entire arrangement would have to be reset every time a new historic death was unearthed. So, for the first two decades, the plaques were purposely mixed. A game warden shot by poachers in 1922 lay adjacent to a refuge officer killed in the September 11, 2001 attacks. This had some advantages, including a visual representation of the continuity, danger, and sacrifice embodied in our wildlife mission. But it was also not



The logo of the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries made into a uniform patch.

what visitors expected. We have been trained to expect a chronological narrative for historic displays, and this memorial was no different. So after the final list of deceased seemed to have stabilized (with no historic deaths unearthed in the last few years) the plaques were rearranged in chronological order.

There was still that empty statue base. The original plan called for a statue in the center of the courtyard. A few ideas were bandied about, including a sculptural, three-dimensional depiction of the agency logo, but eventually it was decided to disseminate a request for proposals. The three best designs were produced as small-scale maquettes about a foot high. This allowed the selection committee to both see the actual sculpture literally in-depth and use new (at the time) Photoshop technology to see how each statue would look when placed in the courtyard. The winning design, by sculptor Eli Hopkins, featured a base of 65 animals from which arose an iconic USFWS employee. The animals were easy—we are a wildlife agency after all — and naming 65 species we work with (ranging from butterflies to tundra swans) was a simple matter. The human was more problematic.

Should it be male or female, named or anonymous, with specialized tools or uniforms or more generic? None of these choices was easy. Eventually a male was chosen as the vast majority of fallen comrades were male. The statue did have a name badge, and we toyed around with using the oldest name or devising some clever name (e.g., T. Roosevelt), but decided to leave it blank to better represent all the names on the wall. The original design had the employee holding a walkie-talkie. But in the period from design to creation, cell phones had largely replaced these radios and raised the specter of technological obsolescence with any equipment. So we gave the statue a pair of binoculars, a nice metaphor for seeing the natural world more clearly, and our most timeless piece of field gear.

The courtyard itself was to be composed of engraved bricks. This early fundraising attempt had a secondary virtue. USFWS employees who died of natural causes (as opposed to dying in the line of duty) were not eligible to be on the wall. But they could be easily added to the courtyard as a brick making up the foundation of the memorial. This was pure serendipity, allowing broader participation and support for the increasingly popular memorial.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

A maquette showing a father and child looking into the distance is one of the sculptures considered for the memorial statue.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

This maquette is the one selected to become the memorial statue, however this version shows the radio in the Service employee's left hand instead of the binoculars which were added to the actual statue.



Credit: Brett Billings/USFWS

A crane lifts the memorial statue onto its base in the center of the memorial.

The most important interpretation of the memorial remains, alas, unfinished. Each of the 91 names on the wall deserve to have their story told. Edgar Lindgren was a newly-minted game warden in Iowa in 1922 who was shot at point-blank range by turtle dove poachers. Another example can be found in the story of Richard Guadagno, a wildlife biologist turned refuge officer and, eventually, refuge manager, who was on United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001. Rich was almost certainly a member of the passenger group which tried to overpower the terrorists and, ultimately, thwarted their plans at the cost of their own lives near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

In 20 years the wall has evolved from conception to consecration. Many mistakes were made (some in stone), lessons learned, including humility in the wake of such astonishing sacrifice on behalf of non-humans. Yet in spite of all the mistakes made by a biological agency entering the interpretation field, it is indisputably the most important single element of the 540-acre NCTC campus. Our memorial is part of thousands of years of human history of remembering our forefathers that

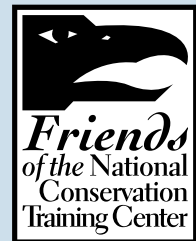
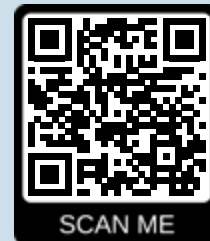
Memorial Brick Program

The Friends of NCTC, a community non-profit organization, coordinates a memorial brick program focused on providing bricks inscribed with the donor's chosen words in the Fallen Comrade Courtyard which surrounds the memorial statue. Anyone interested can learn more by visiting www.friendsofnctc.org or using the QR code below.



Credit: Ryan Hogerty/USFWS

A close up of donated and inscribed bricks placed in the Fallen Comrade Courtyard at the National Conservation Training Center.



goes back at least as far as the Egyptian pyramids. A nation and agency that does not remember the sacrifice of its fallen is bereft of history and undeserving of loyalty. Those of us who carry on the Service mission cannot match the sacrifice of our 91 fallen predecessors, but we can, at the very least, remember it and honor them.

As of now, only a small percentage of the fallen comrades have had their story told, a result of incomplete historical records and the tyranny of time. Eventually, each name on the wall will, we hope, have its story told.

This essay originally appeared in the March/April 2018 "Interpreting Death" issue of the National Association for Interpretation's Legacy Magazine.

Researching and Writing the Fallen Comrades' Biographies

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Since September 2022, I have served as the Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern. In this role, I dedicate my time to researching and writing the biographies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees and volunteers who died in the line of duty. The ultimate purpose of this project is to preserve their unique stories and assist in the remembrance of their lives and service to the government. When I began, there were only a handful of biographies. I have done my best to ensure that these men and women receive the attention and care they deserve, hunting down information and expanding the preexisting biographies as well as creating biographies for those who previously did not have one.

The first biography I worked on was for Richard S. Bolt, Jr. (1930-1979), who died trying to suppress a wildfire by maneuvering his tractor to cut a fire break at the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Bolt was one of the few fallen comrades who had previously received a biography, but as I began editing his biography, I wanted to see if there was more information about him that could be used to supplement what was already known about him. In my search, I located a Facebook post commemorating his service, which led to the discovery of new sources and information. Ultimately, I uncovered an old photograph of Bolt, his birthday, and the fact that he posthumously received the U.S. Department of the Interior's Valor Award. Not only did Bolt have a pivotal role in changing Service fire protocols, reworking his biography taught me to always keep diving deeper to find information that may have been previously missed, shaping the trajectory of the revitalization of the Fallen Comrade Memorial's biographies.

From these origins, I have learned that writing a biography and reconstructing the life of a fallen comrade requires persistence and creativity in research methods. The goal of my research is always to find all the little



Credit: USFWS

The visitor center at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Folkston, Georgia, named for fallen comrade Richard S. Bolt.

The Valor Award from the U.S. Department of the Interior is the most prestigious recognition for employees who display remarkable bravery with significant personal risk. The act of heroism does not need to be related to official duties or occur at the official duty station. The award is given to those who risked their lives to save another.



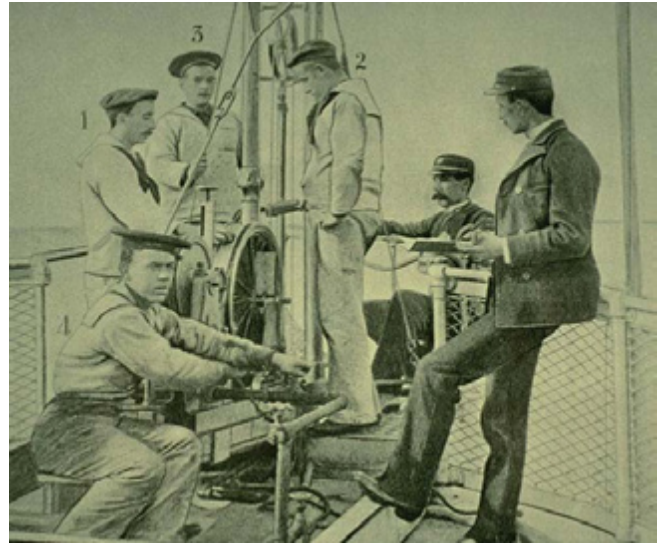
Credit: Tami Heilemann, Interior

Frank Berry, Jr. receiving a Valor Award from Secretary Bernhardt.

traces of their lives. There are common sources, such as census records, refuge narrative reports, newspaper articles, and gravestones, which provide reliable information about the majority of Fallen comrades. However, there are a multitude of other sources that uniquely reflect the individual circumstances of particular fallen comrades, and these can be harder to find. For example, key information about a fallen comrade may appear in a relative's obituary decades later, in a caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) management study, or in an acknowledgement at the start of a wildlife curriculum teacher's guide. Additionally, sources might require extra effort to interpret, such as when I had to reconstruct the route of the *Albatross*, a U.S. Fish Commission steamer ship based on logbooks from 1909 to identify where exactly James Collarey (1880-1907), died in order to have an accurate final station. This deeper level of investigative research is necessary to create a detailed and compelling biography that reflects each individual fallen comrade's life story.

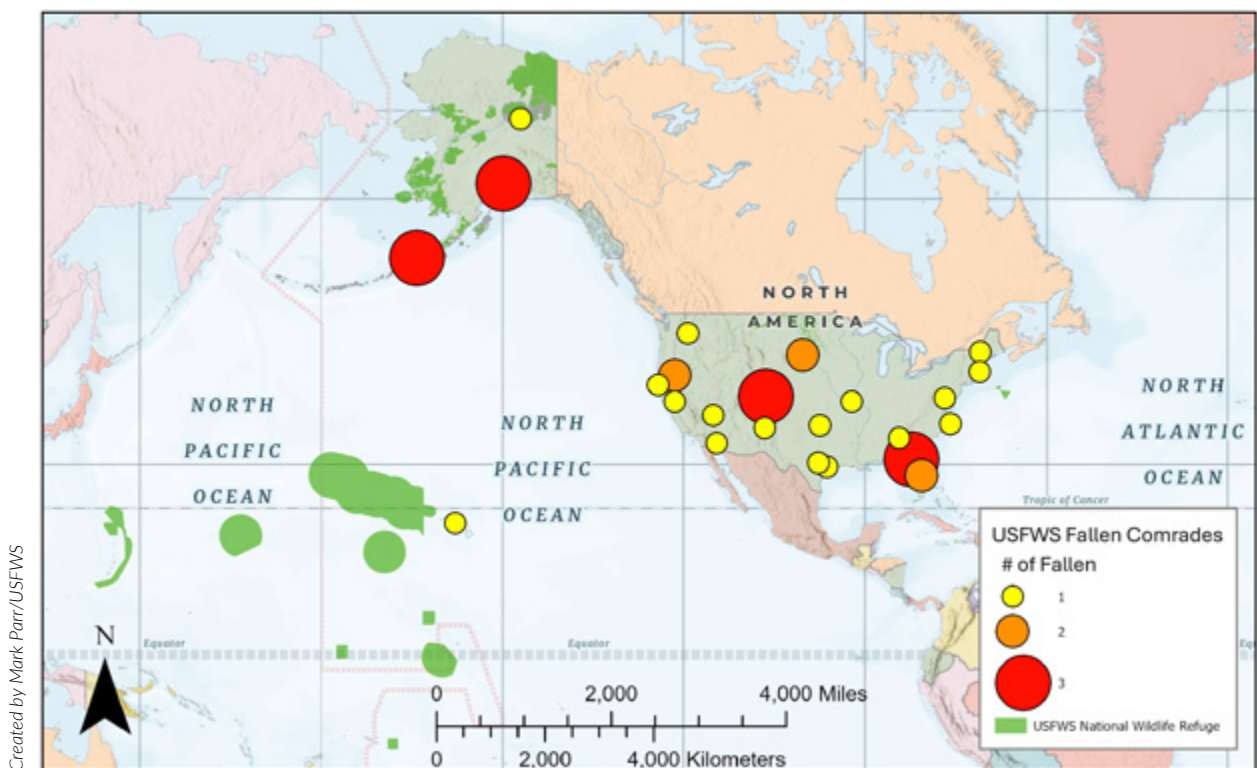
As I have continued to serve as the Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, I have become increasingly passionate about ensuring these men and women receive the recognition they deserve for their dedication to the Service. When I encounter a fallen

comrade who has fewer records and photos due to information being destroyed or never recorded to begin with, it reminds me of the urgency of this project. Every source is essential to memorializing the lives of the fallen comrades; it is important to find these definitive marks that they left on the world and pull them together before they—and the fallen comrade who they tell us about—are lost to time.



Crew members on the USS *Albatross*, the first national marine research vessel, circa 1900.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Map of final station location for 37 of the 91 fallen comrades in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Guest Associate Editor

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

As the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, Hannah Rose Selby spent three years with the Museum and Archives at the National Conservation Training Center. Hannah focused on uncovering the details of the lives and deaths of the 91 Fallen Comrades who died while supporting conservation efforts throughout the past century. In this role, Hannah cultivated the most informed and nuanced perspective yet on the Service's Fallen Comrades. It is fitting, then, that Hannah authored the central articles featured in this issue of Conservation History.

Hannah advanced this project while pursuing a graduate degree in Comparative World Literature from San Francisco State University. Hannah is passionate about what can be learned from examining the intersection among different literary traditions, and researches the relationship between readers and writers in both English and Chinese Internet literature. When not working for the Service or studying, Hannah enjoys spending time writing poetry, walking the family dog, and crocheting gifts for friends.



Credit: Provided by Hannah Selby

Hannah and pup enjoying some outdoor time together.

Trends in Service Employee and Volunteer Deaths, 1904-2024: Learning from the Fallen Comrades Memorial

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In pursuit of the study, care, and preservation of wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees and volunteers encounter a variety of dangerous situations. Early game wardens, such as Edgar Albert Lindgren (1900-1922) and Delbert Hubbard (1904-1938), engaged in fatal disputes with poachers as they dutifully protected wildlife from being illegally killed. Before more modern updates to firefighting procedures, Biological Technicians Beau W. Sauselein (1948-1981) and Scott Jay Maness (1948-1981) died fighting fires between Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Other Service members, like Richard S. Bolt, Jr. (1930-1979) who sacrificed himself to save picnickers from a wildfire, protected people at the expense of their own lives. Even routine tasks, such as conducting fish and bird counts, place Service employees and volunteers at risk. Consequently, accidents due to common methods of transportation, like aircraft, land vehicles, and boats, are all reoccurring causes of death.

From 1904 to 2024, the Service has had 91 known job-related deaths, as recorded by the Fallen Comrades Memorial. Beyond preserving and honoring each of the lives of the fallen comrades, the information from the Fallen Comrades Memorial provides crucial insight into the history of Service safety. Therefore, this piece empirically categorizes the causes of death of Service employees and volunteers. It also critically examines how each of these dangers have evolved over time in order to serve as a foundation for how the Service can learn from the memorial to continue to improve the safety of Service employees and volunteers.

Methods

The primary data source used for this study is the Fallen Comrades Memorial, which honors 91 Service employees and volunteers who died in the line of duty. A Service employee or volunteer becomes a fallen comrade if they die as the result of an injury or illness stemming from their duties with the Service, which means each fallen comrade's death reflects a particular danger Service employees and volunteers have historically encountered. The Fallen Comrade Memorial plaques contain the name, date of death, and final station of each fallen comrade, but they do not list the cause of death. Through recent efforts to reconstruct their stories, a range of sources, such as refuge narrative reports, obituaries, and newspaper articles, have been used to collect and verify information about each fallen comrade's cause of death. However, gathering data on Service employees and volunteers can be challenging due to inconsistencies in both recordkeeping and the digitization of historical sources. Ultimately, the data used in this article excludes 10 fallen comrades whose cause of death currently cannot be provided, so this examination of the deaths of Service employees and volunteers in the line of duty centers on 81 of the fallen comrades.



Memorial plaques inscribed with the names of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees who were killed in the line of duty.

Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

How Have Service Employees and Volunteers Lost Their Lives?

There are certain trends in the dangers that Service employees and volunteers confront in their work, and the categories in Figure 1 and Table 1 emphasize

the particular types of death that reoccur across the biographies of the fallen comrades. The major causes of death are as follows: aircraft accidents, boat accidents, land vehicle accidents, gunfire, drowning, fire, and other. Each subsection discusses these categories in greater depth, contributing to a more comprehensive overview of the history of Service safety.

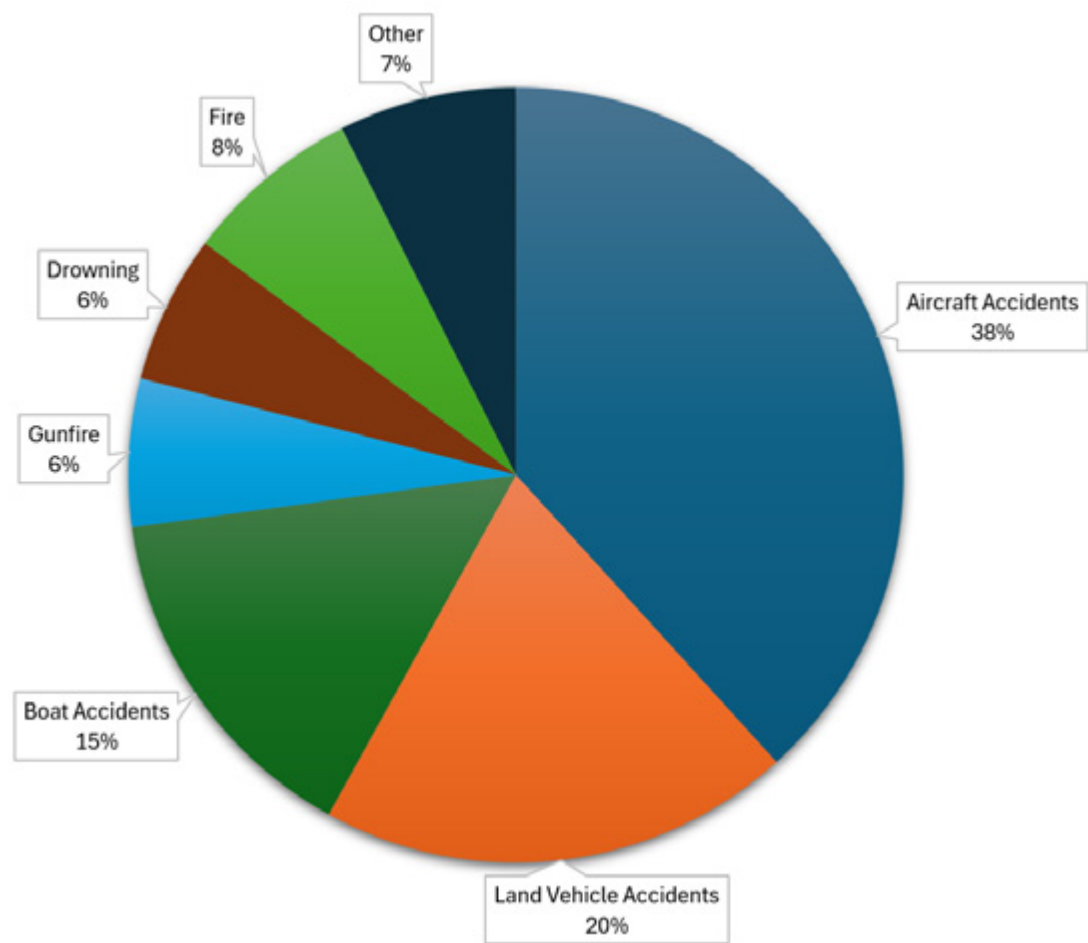


Figure 1. Categories of fallen comrades' cause of death, 1904-2024.
Note. "Other" includes deaths such as being struck by lighting and falling off a cliff; these causes of death are comparatively unique.

Cause of Death	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1929	1930-1939	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	2020-2025
Aircraft Accidents	0	0	0	0	2	7	3	8	2	5	1	3	0
Land Vehicle Accidents	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	2	4	2	0
Boat Accidents	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	3	0	0	0
Gunfire	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drowning	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
Fire	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1
Other	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Total	2	1	3	3	7	11	8	12	7	12	7	7	1

Table 1. Timeline of fallen comrades' cause of death, 1904-2024
Note. Like Figure 1, "Other" includes deaths such as being struck by lighting and falling off a cliff; these causes of death are comparatively unique.

Aircraft Accidents

Aircraft accidents, which include both plane and helicopter crashes, account for 38% of all fallen comrade deaths. Although aircraft accidents are not the earliest cause of death recorded by the Fallen Comrades Memorial, plane and helicopter crashes tend to kill the most Service members per year. As shown in Table 1, the 1940s is the first decade where this method of transportation resulted in Service members' deaths. One of the primary factors that contributes to the particular deadliness of aircraft accidents is the fact that a single incident often leads to the death of two or more Service members; Service employees often fly with a partner or group. For example, the two deaths in the first decade of aircraft accidents stem from a single plane crash on August 24, 1949. Furthermore, the single deadliest day for Service employees and volunteers recorded on the Fallen Comrades Memorial is the result of a plane crash on September 1, 1954, which took the lives of five Service employees. This plane crash is also notable because it resulted in the death of the first female fallen comrade, Patte Davis Bidwell (1928-1954). While most fallen comrades deaths from aircraft accidents include a Service member operating as a pilot and potentially other Service members who accompanied them, there is one consequential exception: Richard Guadagno (1962-2001), who was a passenger on one of the four hijacked planes on September 11, 2001, and very likely took an active role in confronting the hijackers to prevent further tragedy during the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In general, the data in Table 1 also mirrors the history of the Service's use of planes and helicopters. Although the Service began to use fixed-wing aircrafts as a method of transportation for surveying waterfowl in the 1930s, the number of aircraft deaths starts to increase in the 1950s, which likely ties to more aircrafts becoming available to Service members in that decade. After the end of World War II in 1945, the Service acquired surplus military aircrafts and encouraged biologists who had served as pilots in the military to become pilot-biologists. Notably, fallen comrade Clarence J. Rhode (1913-1958) as the Regional Director of Alaska was instrumental in securing a fleet of Grumman Goose, an amphibious flying boat, from military surplus for the

Service, and he directly contributed to their widespread use in Alaska to reduce reliance on dog teams and shorten the month-long waits for mail. This early introduction and particularly high use of aircrafts in Alaska is also reflected in the fact that nearly half of the fallen comrades who died due to aircraft accidents lost their lives in Alaska.

Despite technological advancements, aircraft accidents remain a danger to Service members due to the nature of the work often performed in planes and helicopters. In previous research on job-related mortality of wildlife workers in the United States, Blake Sasse described how "Wildlife flights frequently are conducted at low speeds in order to enhance the ability of crew members to observe animals or locate radio-tagged individuals. Frequent turns are made during these flights to return to a particular site, increasing the chances of a stall from which the pilot cannot recover in time due to proximity to the ground" (Sasse, 2003). Such a stall at low altitude led to the plane crash that killed fallen comrades Gary L. Lambert (1940-1979) and Robert E. Evans (1944-1979) on August 15, 1979. Therefore, routine low-flying tasks, such as the Service's annual mid-winter waterfowl survey and aerial hunting projects, continue to pose a risk to Service employees and volunteers due to the dangers of stalling or crashing into obstructions.



A Grumman Goose N741 amphibious aircraft, image taken from the Jim King Collection, original slide PH-King-041.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Land Vehicle Accidents

Land vehicle accidents make up 20% of all fallen comrades deaths, and starting in the 1940s, there have been between one to four deaths per decade. Land vehicle accidents is a category which primarily refers to car and truck crashes. However, there are also several instances of tractor and mower incidents, such as Paul R. Schneider (1917-1947) who became caught in the bulldozer blade attached to his tractor. Unlike aircraft accidents, land vehicle accidents tend to only result in a single Service member's death. A primary factor for this difference is the more solitary nature of the work performed using land vehicles. For example, transporting equipment with a truck or breaking ground for planting with a tractor typically only requires a single Service employee or volunteer.

However, an exception to this single death trend begins in the 2000s with the deaths of both James Abram Schneck (1985-2009) and Kelson Vaillancourt (1987-2009) in May 2009 and continues into the 2010s with the deaths of Maegan Spindler and Robert Klumb on July 8, 2013. In both cases, the pairs were performing surveying work together; Schneck and Vaillancourt were traveling together to count waterfowl, and Spindler and Klumb were hit by a car while talking in a parking lot outside of a hotel in Pickstown, South Dakota, as part of their work to assist in the recovery of endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*). Similar to the aircraft accidents, land vehicle accidents remain a danger to Service members due to the prevalence of land vehicles in the 21st century.



Credit: USFWS

A pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) swims in a holding area at Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery. Listed as endangered in 1990, the pallid Sturgeon faces threats from habitat loss, declining water quality, and dams that block access to its natural spawning areas.

Boat Accidents

Boat accidents are the third highest cause of death for fallen comrades, accounting for 15% of deaths. This category includes boats capsizing, a head wound from falling on a boat, and explosions and gas poisoning stemming from technological malfunctions. Significantly, a boat accident is among the first deaths recorded on the Fallen Comrade Memorial, making it nearly the earliest cause of death in the Service. James Collarey (1880-1907) is the second oldest fallen comrade, and he served on the *Albatross*, a steamer ship built by the government for marine research. During its 1907 to 1910 expedition to the Philippines, Collarey died in an explosion in the engine room. Other early boat accident deaths, the three in the 1910s and 1920s, related to service with the Bureau of Fisheries of the U.S. Department of Commerce, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In other words, these early boat accidents directly highlight the challenges faced by employees in early efforts to further studies of fish, providing insight into a unique point of time in the Service's history.

As shown in Table 1, after the 1930s, there was typically a single fatal boat accident per decade until a small peak in the 1990s. In that decade, there were two boat accidents: one when a sudden and severe snowstorm in Alaska capsized a boat, resulting in the death of John T. Cantu (1949-1990) and Karen L. Norton (1965-1990), and a second when Suzanne Sterling (1944-1990) fell and hit her head on a boat while serving on Protection Island. However, as highlighted in Table 1, there has not been another fatal boat accident since this peak in the 1990s, indicating greater reliability of equipment and improved safety measures.



The USS *Albatross*, the nation's first deep sea research vessel, in 1901. The steamer was commissioned in 1881 by the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries and sailed until decommissioned at Woods Hole in 1921.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



The *Harlequin*, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service patrol boat on Prince William Sound, where it is collecting data and surveying marine habitats.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Service Biologist Chelsea McKinney (right) talks with Refuge Project Leader Erin Holmes during a trip to Protection Island National Wildlife Refuge with the Olympic Mountains and Salish Sea in the background.

Credit: Brent Lawrence/USFWS

Drowning

Although many boat accidents did result in fallen comrades drowning, drowning is distinct from boat accidents, and it highlights fallen comrades who died in water-related ways that did not involve a boat. Specifically, the two fallen comrade drowning deaths in the 1950s were due to a storm causing a flash flood in Alaska. On the other hand, later drowning deaths were the result of accidents near bodies of water. For example, on July 3, 1997, Joshua B. Nove (1973-1997) drowned after his partially rolled-down hip waders prevented him from staying above water, and on June 15, 2011, Joshua Griffin (1986-2011) drowned after the sand on top of a sandbar gave way. When considering these drowning deaths in conjunction with the boat accidents, they emphasize the necessity of proper safety equipment, like personal flotation devices, for any water-related tasks, regardless of if they involve a boat or not.

Gunfire

There are five total fallen comrades who died due to gunfire between 1904 and 2024, and they all lost their lives in the decades of 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, accounting for 6% of all fallen comrade deaths. Similar to the early boat accident deaths, these gunfire-related deaths showcase a unique point of time in the Service's history. All of these fallen comrades served with the Bureau of Biological Survey (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and many of them were game wardens.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MTBA) of 1918

protects nearly all avian species native to the U.S. (excepting non-native birds and some game species). It prohibits the acts of killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transporting of migratory birds without prior authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The MTBA was updated in 2004 to clarify that it applies solely to migratory bird species that are native to the United States or its territories. A native migratory bird species is defined as one that exists due to natural biological or ecological processes. To learn more or see the list of species, visit us online.

Consequently, a primary factor that contributed to their deaths was a specific historic moment. In 1913, Congress passed the first migratory bird regulations, and in 1918, they strengthened regulations with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which made the possession of migratory birds illegal. Especially during the 1920s, these new regulations were unpopular with hunters, resulting in antagonistic interactions between game wardens and armed poachers. However, as shown by Table 1, since this particularly violent period, there have not been further gunfire-related deaths, demonstrating how fatal armed conflicts with poachers have lessened over the years.



Service Pilot and Wildlife Officer Cody Smith loads supplies into a boat on the Yukon River, reflecting present-day Service operations shaped by lessons learned from the past.



U.S. game management agent seizes skins of mink that were hunted illegally in Wrangell, Alaska.

Credit: Kris Pacheco/USFWS

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Fire

Fire-related deaths account for 8% of all fallen comrade deaths. This category includes both deaths due to fire and illnesses stemming from firefighting chemicals. While two of these deaths are the result of fires occurring at a hotel and home respectively, the other fire-related deaths are the result of fire management activities. Significantly, the death of Richard S. Bolt, Jr. (1930-1979) at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the deaths of Beau W. Sauselein (1948-1981) and Scott Jay Maness (1948-1981) at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge all directly shaped modern fire safety procedures within the Service. In the aftermath of their deaths, a review team conducted a thorough investigation, and they proposed procedural changes, such as greater communication about weather, equipment upgrades, the addition of a permanent fulltime forester and a technician to refuge staff, and modifications to fire suppression tactics to allow for rapid retreats. In addition to these changes, the Service placed great emphasis on protecting human lives over preserving private property and natural resources. As a consequence of these updates to fire safety procedures within the Service, there has not been another fallen comrade who has died due to burns received while managing fire, despite the inherent risks. However, the most recent fallen comrade death, Brian Wolgamott (1982-2024), represents a shift in the understanding of fire-related dangers. In 2024, Wolgamott passed away after battling for over 2 years with adenocarcinoma rectal cancer, which is identified as a high-risk cancer related to wildland firefighting by the U.S. Department of Labor and stems from environmental exposures on the fire line. There is now greater awareness that the risks of wildland firefighting extend beyond the burns firefighters may receive, and current research efforts focus on developing knowledge about the links between firefighting and cancer to pave the way for new safety measures to reduce the risk of cancer among U.S. firefighters.



A fire manager working on a prescribed fire to improve habitat at Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

Credit: Claire Hassler/USFWS

Other

As previously mentioned, this category includes deaths that are comparatively unique and do not typically reoccur across the biographies of many fallen comrades. Notably, this category contains the earliest fallen comrade death: Byrd Surby (1882-1904). His death also perfectly encapsulates how sudden many of these “Other” category deaths are. In 1904, Surby participated in an expedition to the Kern River watershed, and as part of this mission, he accompanied several scientists in their climb to the summit of Mt. Whitney to gather weather data. However, at the time of their visit, there was an electric storm during a snowstorm, and he was fatally struck by lightning. Another fallen comrade’s death whose death falls within the “Other” category is Robert Goris (1890-1934), who died after an accident in a sawmill and the following surgery. As a whole, the deaths within this category are more unpredictable, and there are not significant changes to procedure or equipment that would result in greater safety. However, they serve as a reminder of the wide variety of dangerous situations Service employees and volunteers face.

Conclusion

Service employees and volunteers continue to encounter a variety of dangerous situations in the pursuit of their work, but this comprehensive overview of the history of Service safety demonstrates that certain dangers have lessened over time. While the number of fatal accidents due to common methods of transportation, like aircrafts, land vehicles, and boats, have held relatively steady over the decades, gunfire-related deaths and fire-related deaths where the Service member received fatal burns have greatly reduced in recent decades. Changes in historical context and updates to safety procedures have played a key factor in this minimization of the loss of life. Furthermore, nearly halfway through this next decade of the Service's history, there has only been a single new fallen comrade added to the memorial, reflecting a sharp decline in the deaths of Service members and indicating the Service's continued dedication to improving the safety of employees and volunteers. Each fallen comrade's death reflects a particular challenge Service employees and volunteers have historically confronted, and it is only through analyzing trends across the fallen comrades biographies that greater recognition can be given to the lessons learned from the dangers they encountered, the advancements made following their deaths, and the lives saved thanks to their sacrifices. Ultimately, it is necessary to continue to learn from the past so that the Service can continue to advocate for a safer future.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Report of Review Team: Ransom Road Fire, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge." 24 June 1981.

Credit: Clarence Rhode/USFWS



U.S. Game Management Agent Holger Larsen confiscating over 1,300 beaver (*Castor canadensis*) skins which were hunted illegally.

Fallen Comrade Biographies

Hannah Selby, Fallen Comrades Remembered Graduate Intern, San Francisco State University, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The biographies that follow are presented in chronological order; to locate a specific loved one, please consult the index on page 18, where fallen comrades are listed alphabetically by last name. This account remains incomplete, with biographies available for 37 of the 91 individuals currently listed on the memorial wall—these represent the service members for whom information could be found; the search continues. It is important to note that individuals who died prior to 1940 served under either the Bureau of Biological Survey or the Bureau of Fisheries, two agencies that merged in 1940 to form the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, uniting their missions to conserve the nation's wildlife and aquatic resources.



Credit: Ernest P. Haddon/USFWS

Hatchery workers at Springville Fish Cultural Station in Utah use a seine net to catch rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) for weighing and distribution to fishing streams in 1949. The station is managed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR).

What You Can Do

Contribute to biographies of our fallen comrades as we continue researching those featured here as well as the other fallen comrades included on our memorial wall.

Send additional information or insights to:
Mark_Madison@fws.gov



Credit: Lisa Hupp/USFWS

A pier built during World War II on Attu Island within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

Index of Referenced National Wildlife Refuges

Name	State	Pages
Alaska Maritime	AK	18, 55, 56, 57, 58, 71
Alaska Peninsula	AK	18, 63, 64
Attwater Prairie Chicken	TX	14, 18, 81, 82, 86
Columbia (in Central Washington Complex)	WA	18, 40
Desert	NV	18, 49, 50
Humboldt Bay	CA	18, 67, 68
Imperial	AK	18, 39
Merritt Island	FL	8, 14, 18, 51, 52, 54
Okefenokee	GA, FL	5, 18, 35, 36, 37, 45
Oregon Coast	OR	18, 71
Protection Island	AK	12, 64
Tule Lake (in Klamath Basin Complex)	CA	18, 38, 83, 84
Lake Umbagog	NH, ME	18, 69, 70
Yukon Flats	AK	18, 59, 60

Index of Referenced Fish Hatcheries

Name	State	Pages
Gavins Point	SD	11, 32
Leadville	CO	18, 23, 24, 25, 31
Leavenworth	CO	23
Springville	UT	17

Index of Fallen Comrade Biographies

Last Name	First Name	Birth Year	Death Year	Age	Stat on (last)	State (last)	Pages
Barnett	Elaine	1953	2005	52	Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge	NH	69
Bentley	Vernon	1957	2010	52	Migratory Bird Surveys, Pacific Flyway	OR	71, 73, 85-92
Bolt	Richard	1930	1979	48	Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	GA	5, 8, 14, 45
Cantu	John	1949	1990	40	Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	AK	12, 55, 57
Chabot	Valerie	1962	1994	31	Endangered Species Division	AK	61-62
Collarey	James	1880	1907	27	Bureau of Fisheries	HI	6, 21
Crews	Andrew	1909	1945	36	Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	GA	35
Dean	Arthur	1899	1920	20	Leadville National Fish Hatchery	CO	23, 25
Evans	Robert	1944	1979	35	Animal Damage Control	TX	46-48
Fredericksen	Stanley	1924	1958	34	Regional Office of Alaska	AK	41, 43
Goris	Robert	1890	1934	44	Leadville National Fish Hatchery	CO	14, 31
Griffin	Joshua	1986	2011	24	Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office	OK	75-76
Guadagno	Richard	1962	2001	38	Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge	CA	4, 10, 67-68, 93
Harrington	Ross	1917	1957	40	Columbia National Wildlife Refuge	WA	40
Hubbard	Delbert	1904	1938	33	Division of Refuge Law Enforcement	MO	33
Kindler	Langdon	1924	1948	24	Imperial National Wildlife Refuge	AZ	39
Klumb	Robert	1967	2013	46	Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office	SD	9, 79-80
Lambert	Gary	1940	1979	39	Animal Damage Control	NM	46-47
Lavery	William	1886	1920	34	Leadville National Fish Hatchery	CO	23, 25
Lewis	Thomas	1960	2011	50	Migratory Bird Surveys, Patuxent Research Refuge	MD	77
Lindgren	Edgar	1900	1922	21	Division of Refuge Law Enforcement	IA	4, 8, 27
Lynch	William		1917		U.S. Fish Commision Research Station at Woods Hole	MA	22
Maness	Scott	1948	1981	32	Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge	FL	8, 14, 53-54
Martin	Joseph	1905	1945	40	Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	GA	35, 37
Norton	Karen	1965	1990	24	Alaska Maritime National Wildlife	AK	12, 46, 57
Nove	Joshua	1973	1997	23	Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge	AK	13, 63, 64
Peterson	Darrell	1965	2016	51	Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge	TX	81
Peterson	Murphy	1939	2001	62	Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge	NC	18, 65
Pitkin	David	1960	2010	50	Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge	OR	71, 85
Rhode	Clarence	1913	1958	45	Regional Office of Alaska	AK	10, 41-43
Sauselein	Beau	1948	1981	33	Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge	FL	8, 14, 51-54
Schneider	Paul	1917	1947	30	Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge	CA	11, 38
Simpson	Elmer	1920	1980	60	Desert National Wildlife Refuge	NV	49
Spindler	Maegan	1988	2013	25	Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office	SD	79-80
Surby	Byrd	1882	1904	22	Bureau of Fisheries	CA	14, 19
Whitehead	Edward	1893	1934	41	Division of Refuge Law Enforcement	GA	29
Wolgammott	Brian	1982	2024	42	Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge	CA	14, 83, 84
Young	Stephen	1950	1992	42	Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge	AK	59-60

Byrd Surby (1882-1904)

Biography

Byrd Surby was born in 1882 in Granville, Illinois. In California, Surby served the Bureau of Fisheries (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, which is one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His occupation at the time of his death is unknown.

Cause of Death

On July 13, 1904, an expedition began at the request of President Roosevelt to investigate the presence of golden trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and related rainbow trout subspecies in the Kern River watershed, which is an area of 3,612 square miles and stems from snowmelt originating in the Sequoia National Park to the west of Mt. Whitney in California. Surby accompanied Dr. Barton Warren Everman, Dr. Oliver P. Jenkins, Dr. Rufous Green, Dr. Chancey Judah, the artist Charles Hudson, a cook, and several assistants and packers on this expedition. Notably, Dr. Everman served the Bureau as the Chief of Scientific Inquiry. The other scientists were affiliated with Stanford University and the University of Colorado. On July 26, 1904, the expedition climbed to the summit of Mt. Whitney to gather weather data. However, at the time of their visit to the summit, there was an electric storm during a snowstorm. While most of the group took cover beneath a rock, Surby, Dr. Everman, and Dr. Jenkins¹ stood apart from them. A lightning strike hit this small group, knocking them all to the ground. While the lightning strike only rendered the others unconscious, it killed Surby, likely due to his feet being wet from the snow. In 1909 following this incident, the Smithsonian Institution funded the construction of a stone summit shelter for visiting scientists. Furthermore, in his honor, Dr. Everman named Surby Falls, the waterfall between Agua-Bonita Falls and Stewart Falls, after him.

Footnotes

¹ The exact group that was struck by lightning is inconsistent. History of the Sierra Nevada notes that the group consisted of Byrd Surby, Dr. Barton Warren Everman, and Dr. Oliver P. Jenkins. However, the 1904 newspaper article based on Dr. Green's account states that the lightning hit four members of the party, including Surby.



Credit: Sarah Wiley/National Park Service

Mount Whitney as seen from the mountain's top, straddling Sequoia National Park and Inyo National Forest in California.



Credit: NPS, Taken from NP Gallery

Little Kern golden trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss whitei*), a threatened subspecies of rainbow trout, at Sequoia National Park, California. The Little Kern golden was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1978, and is most threatened today by displacement from non-native rainbow trout.

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Credit: USFWS

Robert Warren "Bob" Hines' drawing of a golden trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss aguabonita*). Hines was the Service's first - and thus far the only - National Wildlife Artist. He served in this role for more than 30 years.

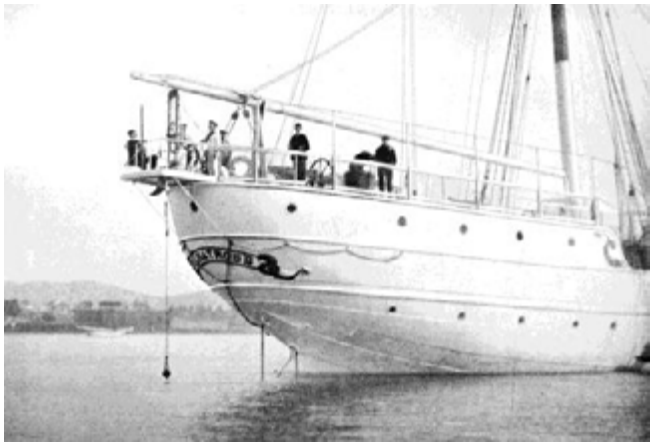
James Collarey (1880-1907)

Biography

James Collarey was born on May 10, 1880, in Detroit, Michigan. He worked as a fireman 2nd class for the Bureau of Fisheries (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, which is one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He served on the *Albatross*, a steamer ship built by the government for marine research, during its 1907 to 1910 expedition to the Philippines. The group was re on a mission to survey the aquatic resources of the Philippines and collect marine flora and fauna.

Cause of Death

On October 28, 1907, the *Albatross* was near Honolulu, Hawaii, and Collarey was working in the engine room with Machinist's Mate 1st Class H.J. Mackey. At 8:20 a.m., a steam valve connecting to the ship's boilers blew out. Collarey died in the explosion, and his body was taken ashore for burial. A funeral party from the USS *Iroquois* and a firing party from the U.S. Marine Corps from the naval station attended the proceedings.



The USS *Albatross* conducting soundings to determine the depth of the water beneath the vessel, a vital practice in early marine research that allowed scientists to better understand ocean topography and safely navigate unfamiliar waters.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

A commemorative patch honoring the U.S. Fisheries Commission's steamer, the USS *Albatross*, and its significant contributions to early American marine science and fisheries research. This symbolic emblem reflects the vessel's legacy in advancing the nation's understanding of ocean ecosystems.

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"Stoker Killed on Government Steamer." *The Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 29 Oct. 1907.

William H. Lynch (Unknown-1917)

Biography

William H. Lynch worked as a machinist for the Bureau of Fisheries (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, which is one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Lynch served at the U.S. Fish Commission Fisheries Station in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, until his death.

Cause of Death

On October 18, 1917, gas poisoned Lynch while he was working in a boiler tube at the fisheries station. Gas from an active boiler flowed into the furnace of the unused boiler tube where Lynch was working. After

noticing the gas, Lynch requested that the automatic damper be opened, and he finished his work. However, he reported chest pain the next day. He did not go to work and sought medical treatment. On October 25, he died from double lobar pneumonia caused by the inhalation of gas.

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Credit: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA)

One of the primary buildings of the U.S. Fish Commission's Field Research Station which later became the Woods Hole Laboratory in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Founded in 1881 and completed in 1885, Woods Hole is the oldest national fisheries station and marine research laboratory.

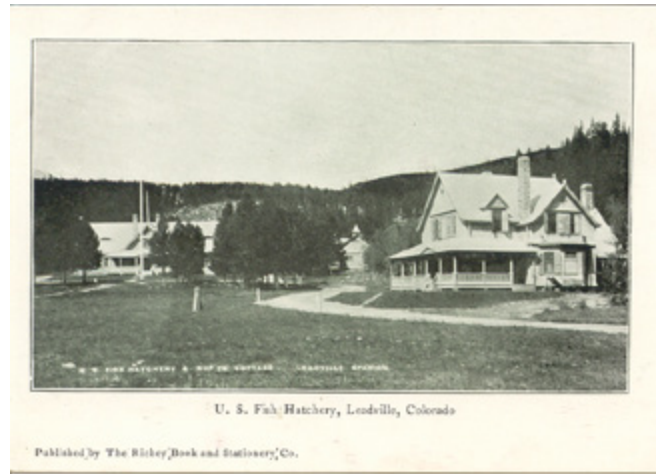
Arthur V. Dean (1899-1920)

Biography

Arthur Vincent Dean was born on October 20, 1899, in Colorado. His father immigrated from Sweden to work as an engineer in the stationary industry, and Dean was raised in Leadville, Colorado, alongside his two siblings: Andree and Arlene. Before beginning to work with the Bureau of Fisheries (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dean worked as a miner in Leadville's Greenback Mine. In July 1919, the Bureau appointed Dean as an apprentice fish culturist at Leadville National Fish Hatchery in Colorado, a station established to collect the eggs of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias*). In this role, he served as one of the Bureau members in charge of the station.

Cause of Death

On May 23, 1920, Dean along with William Lavery, another Bureau employee, drowned in Antero Reservoir in Park County, Colorado. On the day of the incident, Dean and Lavery left the Bureau's camp to obtain supplies from the superintendent of the reservoir. After reaching the dam and obtaining supplies, Dean and Lavery began their return trip to their camp around 5:30 p.m. When the superintendent of the reservoir visited the camp with mail on May 27, he found the two men missing and initiated a search. Bureau members later located their boat approximately 200 yards from the shore, lodged in the mud at the bottom of the reservoir. Both men were confirmed drowned and their bodies were recovered.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

The Leadville, Colorado National Fish Hatchery as seen in 1905. The hatchery was established in 1889 to stock streams and lakes that once supported only native cutthroat trout—or had no trout present—with other trout species including rainbow. It is the second oldest federally operated fish hatchery in the U.S. with Woods Hole being the oldest.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Bureau of Fisheries employees at camp working for the Leadville National Fish Hatchery in Colorado. This hatchery was the initial source for stocking trout in the Black Hills and certain regions of Wyoming where native trout were absent.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, shown in 1947, is an example of what hatcheries looked like nearly 30 years after Lavery and Dean's passing.

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Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Leadville National Fish Hatchery nursery pond with office building in back.



A replica of railcar #3 from 1884, used by the Bureau of Fisheries to transport fish. The replica can be seen today at the DC Booth National Fish Hatchery and Archives in South Dakota.

Credit: Sam Stuke/USFWS

William Lavery (1886-1920)

Biography

William T. Lavery was born on March 29, 1886, in Scotland. After Lavery immigrated to the United States in 1892, he married Lorena Hendricks and worked as a miner for the Western Mining Company. In May 1919, the Bureau of Fisheries (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, appointed Lavery as an apprentice fish culturist at Leadville National Fish Hatchery in Colorado, a station established to collect the eggs of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias*). In this role, he served as one of the Bureau members in charge of the station.

Cause of Death

On May 23, 1920, Lavery along with Arthur Dean, another Bureau employee, drowned in Antero Reservoir in Park County, Colorado. On the day of the incident, Lavery and Dean left the Bureau's camp to obtain supplies from the superintendent of the reservoir. After reaching the dam and obtaining supplies, Lavery and Dean began their return trip to their camp around 5:30 p.m. When the superintendent of the reservoir visited the camp with mail on May 27, he found the two men missing and initiated a search. Bureau members later located their boat approximately 200 yards from the shore, lodged in the mud at the bottom of the reservoir. Both men were confirmed drowned and their bodies were recovered.



Credit: Chris Kennedy/USFWS

A large greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias*) laid on a wooden measuring board to obtain metrics. Greenbacks are one of several species of trout reared at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

The Grand Coulee Dam established a reservoir created for fisheries management, similar to Antero Reservoir. This image shows Grand Coulee under construction in 1936 in Colorado.

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Credit: USFWS



An American bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flying at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, a part of the larger Klamath River Complex of refuges in California, where it is protected.

Credit: USFWS



A view of the Tule Lake Basin, a vital Pacific Flyway stopover with wetlands and croplands managed to support thousands of migratory birds—especially geese—while also providing habitat for endangered fish species such as lake suckers.

Edgar Albert Lindgren (1900-1922)

Biography

Edgar Albert Lindgren was born on December 22, 1900, in Illinois. Lindgren served as a fireman 2nd class for the U.S. Navy during World War I. He married Leona Edith Marble, and they had a son, Edgar. In June 1921, Lindgren began working as a deputy game warden for the Bureau of Biological Survey (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Three weeks before his death, the Bureau appointed Lindgren as a game warden under the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Cause of Death

On August 13, 1922, poachers shot Lindgren in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Although Lindgren had not served the Bureau in Council Bluffs for long, he had already made a name for himself for being very active in arresting poachers who hunted turtle doves (*Zenaida macroura*) out of season. On the day of the incident, Lindgren had apprehended two brothers and their unarmed nephew near Big Lake after they had shot an American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), a bird in the heron family, in violation of federal law. When Lindgren asked for the men's hunting licenses, the men shot him at point blank range. On August 17, 1922, Lindgren died from his wounds. The shooters were convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. Additionally, both shooters were Italian. At least one newspaper cited this fact to advocate that only naturalized citizens be allowed to possess firearms. In the aftermath of his death, the Solicitor of the U.S. Department of Agriculture drafted a bill that would allow assailants of the Bureau to be prosecuted in federal court. In honor of Lindgren's service, the U.S. Employee's Compensation Commission paid both Lindgren's widow and son a monthly compensation.



Edgar Albert Lindgren looks at the camera for a portrait photo.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



An American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) in the wild. Bitterns are secretive, medium-sized herons characterized by their thick bodies and necks, long bills, and short yellow legs. They inhabit freshwater wetlands of various sizes. In the Midwest and Northeast, their numbers are decreasing due to the destruction of inland freshwater wetlands critical for breeding.

Credit: Lane Wintermute/USFWS

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Seven swans illegally killed in 1933 by two men from Havre de Grace, Maryland. The swans were confiscated by Federal Deputies.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



A deputy game warden badge similar to the one Edgar Lindgren would have worn.

Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS



Ex-director of the Service and cartoonist Jay N. Ding Darling's deputy game warden badge from the 1930's.

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Edward Bradford Whitehead (1893-1934)

Biography

Edward Bradford Whitehead was born on July 22, 1893, in Tallahassee, Florida, and he was raised in Bradfordville, Florida, alongside several siblings and stepsiblings. On March 29, 1921, Whitehead married Myrian Scott. However, less than 2 months into their marriage, she died after a medical operation in Thomasville, Georgia. He married his second wife, Anne Cooper, the following year. Before his marriage, he began working as the first game warden of the southern district in Leon County, Florida. Then, on March 12, 1919, the Bureau of Biological Survey (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, appointed Whitehead as a deputy game warden for the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement in Savannah, Georgia. In this role, he served as a game management agent, dutifully enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the Lacey Act until his death.

Cause of Death

On December 8, 1934, Whitehead, accompanied by his wife, stopped two hunters on the highway near Savannah, Georgia. He approached the hunters to examine their game bag, which contained illegally killed ducks. While he attempted to search the game bag, one of the hunters shot Whitehead. Whitehead received treatment at a Savannah hospital for the gunshot wound but died two days later from pneumonia complications.



Edward Bradford Whitehead stands between two men in the back row at the 1920 Game Warden Conference in Washington, D.C.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



An everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*) is one example of an avian species that was protected by Edward Whitehead in his role as deputy game warden. Today these birds of prey are also protected under Endangered Species Act.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

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Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Game management agents gather for a photo during the 1930's.

Robert Goris (1890-1934)

Biography

Robert “Bob” Prosper Goris was born in 1890 in Leadville, Colorado, and he grew up in Leadville alongside his three siblings: Henryetta, Albert, and Emil. Goris’s father and two brothers worked as miners, and from a young age, Goris also worked as a miner and stationary engineer in Leadville’s Dome Mine. Goris later married Hazel Burn, and they had three children: Leonard, Frank, and Thelma. In 1923, the Bureau of Fisheries (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, appointed Goris as a fish culturist at Leadville National Fish Hatchery in Colorado. He served the hatchery in this role until he resigned from his position in 1929. After briefly working as a miner, Goris resumed service with the Bureau in 1931, and he dutifully served as an apprentice fish culturist at Leadville National Fish Hatchery until his death.

Cause of Death

On December 12, 1934, Goris was working in a sawmill at Leadville National Fish Hatchery. He attempted to move a belt of a revolving pulley with a stick, but the stick forcibly hit him in the abdomen. He suffered a rupture of the stomach where he had been previously operated on for a stomach ulcer, and on December 14, 1934, he underwent surgery. The operation was initially successful, but his condition deteriorated over the next several days. After being listed as critical, Goris died on December 17, 1934.

Footnotes

¹ Goris’s exact date of birth is inconsistent. On his World War I draft registration card, Goris listed his birthday as April 21, 1890. However, his father put Goris’s birthday as May 10, 1890, in the “Twelfth Census of the United States.”



Robert “Bob” Prosper Goris is hunting in the field.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Display pond at the Leadville, Colorado National Fish Hatchery which rears several species of trout and stocks them in streams and lakes in Colorado and Wyoming.

Credit: USFWS



A close up of the display pond showing rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery in Colorado.

Credit: USFWS

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Credit: Sam Stukel/USFWS

Service employees gather fish in a hatchery pond using the same technique of seining at Gavins Point National Fish Hatchery in South Dakota.

Delbert Hubbard (1904-1938)

Biography

Delbert Hubbard was born on December 4, 1904, in Dexter, Missouri. He was raised alongside his two sisters and three brothers, and he married Ellen Pruitt on December 23, 1937. After working as a grocery store clerk, Hubbard began his service with the Bureau of Biological Survey (Bureau) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one of the predecessor agencies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Bureau appointed Hubbard as a game warden for the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement in Missouri. He trained other game wardens and dutifully enforced the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the Lacey Act during his three years of service.

Cause of Death

On January 9, 1938, Hubbard and another Bureau law enforcement agent arrested a man and a boy for the illegal hunting of ducks along the Mississippi River, south of Dorena, Missouri. While Hubbard was climbing up the riverbank to lead them back to his car, his gun accidentally discharged from his shoulder holster, seriously injuring his leg. Hubbard received treatment at Poplar Bluff Hospital for the gunshot wound, but a clot formed in his bloodstream, and he died from complications on January 11, 1938.

The Lacey Act (1900) is a foundational U.S. conservation law that makes it illegal to trade or sell illegally harvested wildlife, fish or plants. It is a powerful tool as any violation of U.S., state, tribal, or foreign laws can set in motion the enforcement of the Lacey Act. Originally aimed at stopping commercial poaching, the law was expanded in 2008 to cover plants and wood products, requiring import declarations to help prevent illegal logging. The Act is enforced by multiple federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the USDA.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

A patch used by Bureau of Biological Survey employees. In 1905, the Office of Economic Ornithology, within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was expanded into the Bureau of Biological Survey and tasked with administering the first national wildlife refuges. Later, in 1940, the Bureau was merged with the U.S. Fish and Fisheries Commission to create the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

A man stands on his kayak, holding a shotgun and waterfowl killed for feathers rather than for food. Such practices fueled the plume trade, driving many bird species toward collapse and sparking the early conservation movement.

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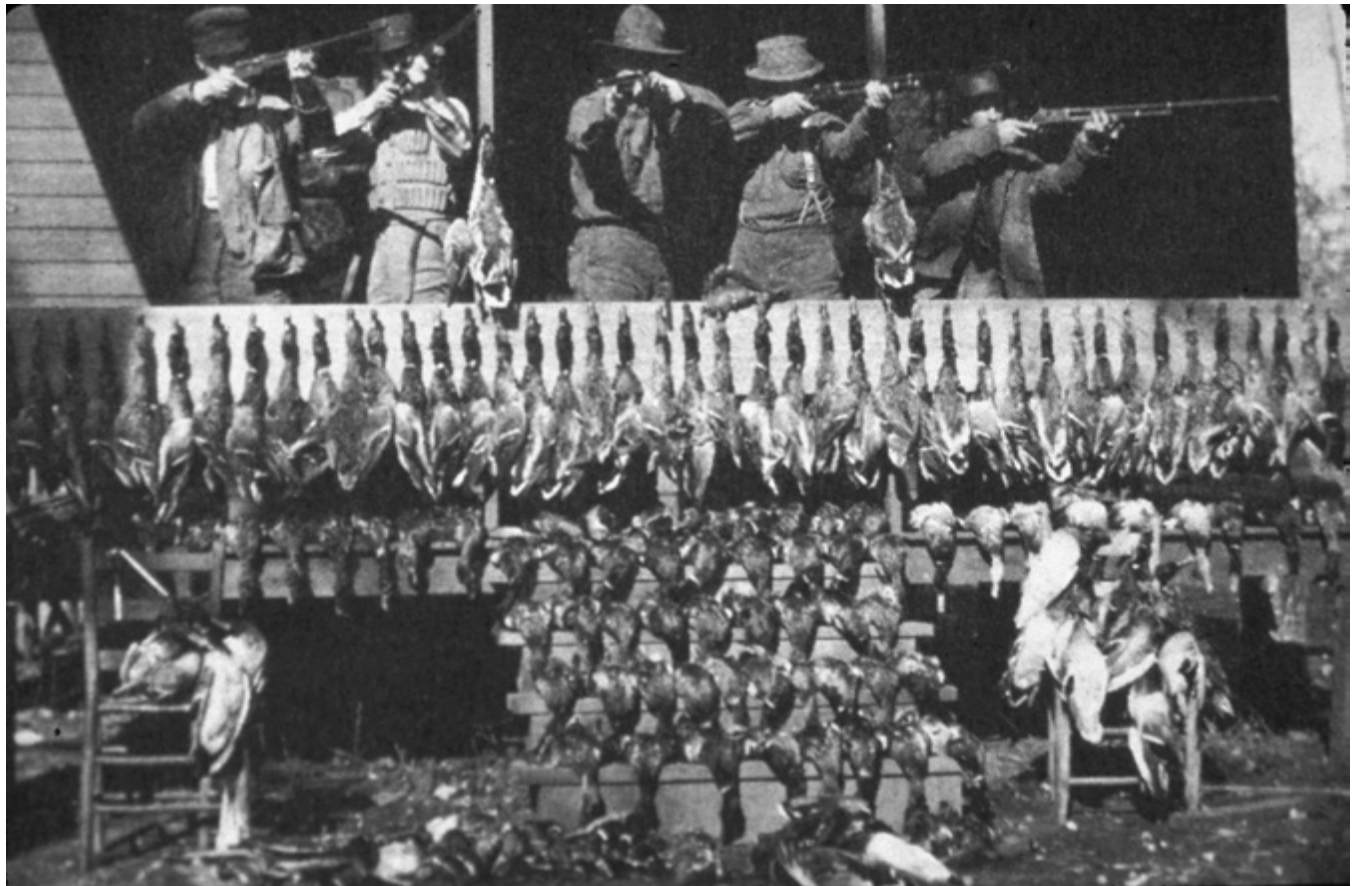
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Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Hunters pose with firearms and hundreds of illegally harvested ducks—a common sight before strong wildlife protections were enforced.

Andrew Bryant Crews (1909-1945)

Biography

Andrew Bryant Crews was born on January 10, 1909, and he was raised alongside several siblings in Braganza, Georgia, on Cowhouse Island in the Okefenokee Swamp. After completing seventh grade, Crews worked as a laborer in a turpentine still. At the age of 20, he married Katherine Simmons, and they had seven children: Katherine, Walter, Ethel Mae, Betty Ruth, Sue, Connie, and Barbara. As a result of his extensive knowledge of the Okefenokee Swamp from living and working there, Crews assisted with the filming of the 1941 noir crime movie *Swamp Water*. He worked as a guide for the film crew and doubled as a swamp native extra. Around 1935, Crews began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia. In his final 5 years, Crews served as a laborer-patrolman and refuge law enforcement officer. Notably, Crews received praise for his skills as a poleboat man.

Cause of Death

On June 2, 1945, Crews and Joe Daniel Martin, another Service employee, were investigating violations of federal wildlife laws and regulations in Okefenokee, Georgia. They received reports of illegally set fires to improve grass growth for trespassing cattle as well as illegal fishing in Boone Lake. While they searched the area along Cane Creek for the arsonist, a local cattle farmer and bear hunter ambushed them. He shot them before they could draw their weapons, killing them both. On June 3, Service employees, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and local sheriffs began working together to locate the killer. Through their joint efforts, they located and arrested a suspect on the evening of June 5. At 3 am the following morning, the suspect confessed to the murders and ultimately was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

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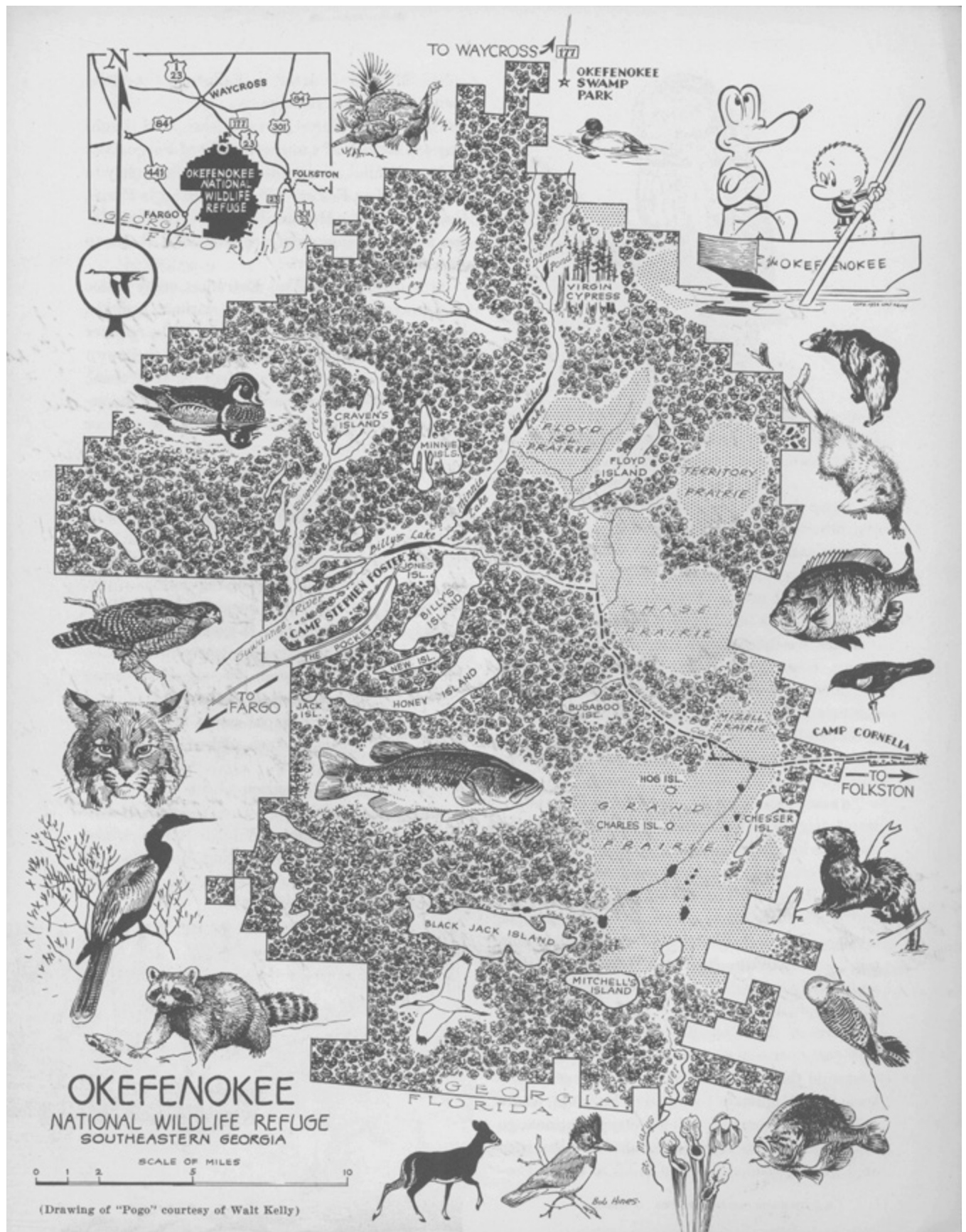
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A historic map from 1954 shows Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia and Florida. The refuge encompasses an estimated 92-93% of the Okefenokee Swamp which is unique among freshwater wetlands due to its integrity and size. Ten cities the size of Washington, D.C. could fit within the swamp.

Joe Daniel Martin (1905-1945)

Biography

Joseph "Joe" Daniel Martin was born on May 17, 1905, in Charlton, Georgia. At the age of 19, he married Thelma Adell. After she passed away, he married his second wife, Ruth Steedley. They raised several children together. He spent the majority of his life as a self-employed farmer, following in the footsteps of his father. Martin began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a laborer at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia, serving dutifully in this role for almost 4 years. Several days before his death, Martin received an appointment to the position of laborer-patrolman and refuge law enforcement officer.

Cause of Death

On June 2, 1945, Martin and Andrew Bryant Crews, another Service employee, were investigating violations of federal wildlife laws and regulations in Okefenokee, Georgia. They received reports of illegally set fires to improve grass growth for trespassing cattle as well as illegal fishing in Boone Lake. While they searched the area along Cane Creek for the arsonist, a local cattle farmer and bear hunter ambushed them. He shot them before they could draw their weapons, killing them both. On June 3, Service employees, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and local sheriffs began working together to locate the killer. Through their joint efforts, they located and arrested a suspect on the evening of June 5.

At 3 am the following morning, the suspect confessed to the murders and ultimately was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

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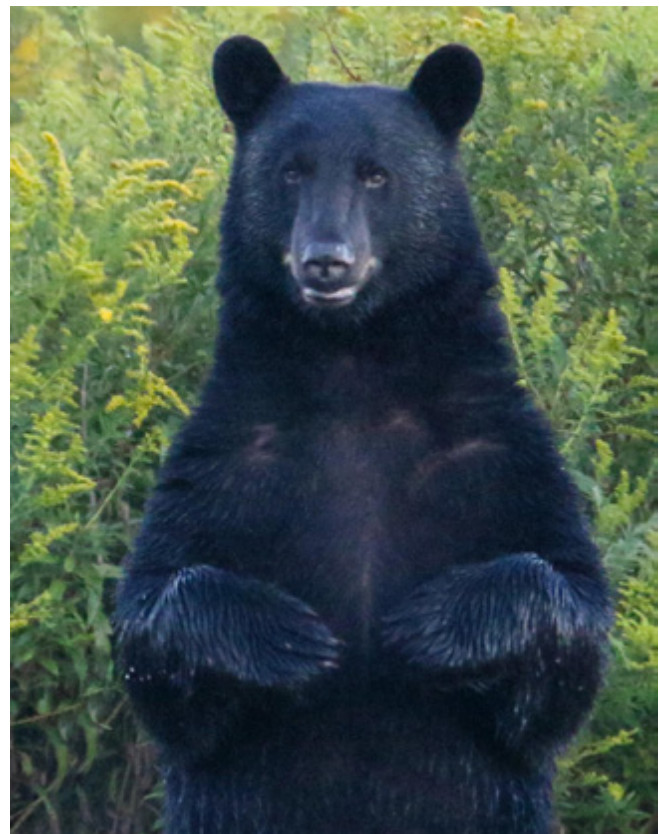
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Credit: Beverly Bowe Meekins

A black bear (*Ursus americanus*) stands on its hind legs on a national wildlife refuge in North Carolina. Black bears are one of many species that call Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge home.

Paul R. Schneider (1917-1947)

Biography

Paul Richard Schneider was born on April 23, 1917, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Schneider grew up playing with his two siblings along the Mississippi River, which shaped his love for nature. With his older brother, Schneider joined the military reserves. Schneider later continued his military service and joined the U.S. Marine Corps. While he was stationed in Massachusetts, he met his wife, Nora Marie, and they had three children: Jeremiah Regan, Noralee Martha, and Richard Paul. Soon after they married, Schneider left the U.S. Marine Corps to work for the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. After learning about a clerk position at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in California, Schneider applied and began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career. However, World War II interrupted his time at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge because he was drafted back into the U.S. Marine Corps in 1944. Schneider trained recruits at Parris Island in South Carolina and sailed to Japan with the U.S. occupation forces. In 1946 after his military service ended, Schneider returned to Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, where he served as a maintenance worker until his death.

Cause of Death

On May 22, 1947, Schneider was operating a tractor with a bulldozer blade and pulling a double-rigged disc. He was breaking ground in a 500-acre field in order to plant grain for geese eight miles south of Tule Lake. In the afternoon, Schneider's left foot became caught in the bulldozer blade shaft, yanking him off the tractor and onto the ground. Schneider was struck by the tractor and died instantly. Another Service employee was operating a second tractor in the field. He found Schneider's body when he noticed that Schneider's tractor had stalled and went to investigate.



Credit: USFWS

The walking wetlands field at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge within the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge Complex in northern California. Tule Lake protects a remnant of a once-extensive shallow lake which supports cranes, geese, swans, pelicans, and raptors within the Pacific Flyway.



Credit: USFWS

A bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) crouches in tall grass at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in California. Bobcats are keystone predators that help regulate the ecosystems they occupy by keeping prey species in balance. They are solitary and can be found in a variety of habitat types, including wetlands, grasslands, and forest.

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L.P. “Ike” Kindler (1924-1948)

Biography

Langdon Paul Kindler, also known as Ike, was born on April 20, 1924, in Waco, Texas. He attended Texas A&M University and graduated from the wildlife management department. Additionally, Kindler was a member of the U.S. Army and fought with the field artillery in Central Europe during World War II. On September 7, 1948, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hired him as a refuge manager for the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona. He leveraged his previous experience working with outboard motors, and he gained recognition for his public relations work with local hunters and anglers during his time with the Service.

Cause of Death

On December 5, 1948, Kindler drowned at the mouth of Fergeson Lake approximately nine miles above the Imperial Dam. Kindler had volunteered to show some hunters a better location for their prey and climbed onto their boat, but the boat capsized on the way to the hunting location. Although Kindler initially made a safe return to the boat, he went back into the water to rescue a drowning member of the group. Survivors of the incident reported the two men missing, and the Service initiated a search for them. The search ended January 8, 1949,¹ when two fishermen found Kindler's body three miles above Imperial Dam in a small side slough of the Colorado River. Both Kindler and the man he had tried to save drowned, and Kindler's family had a memorial service for him in Waco, Texas.

Footnotes

¹ This date is inconsistent with the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge Narrative Report, which states the fishermen found Kindler's body on January 9, 1949. However, this entry lists January 8, 1949, as the date of discovery because The Yuma Daily Sun talks about the discovery of his body within the January 8, 1949, issue.



Credit: John Magera/USFWS

The Imperial National Wildlife Refuge protects 30 miles of critical wildlife habitat along the lower Colorado River in Arizona and California, including the river's last natural stretch before entering Mexico. This lush wetland corridor within the desert supports diverse wildlife and more than 15,000 acres are designated as federally protected wilderness.



Credit: Peter Pearsall

Star trails above a desert landscape at Imperial National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona and California. Imperial also preserves forest and marsh habitats including river corridor along the Colorado River, providing for a wide range of wildlife.

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Ross M. Harrington (1917-1957)

Biography

Ross Morris Harrington was born on April 14, 1917, in Cozad, Nebraska. On March 21, 1942, Harrington married his wife, Maxine Marie Harrington, and they had two children: Ronald and Stephen. He served in the U.S. Navy until his honorable discharge in 1946. Afterwards, he worked for Lockheed Aircraft in Los Angeles, California. In 1948, he began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a maintenance worker at Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada. During his 10 years with the Service, Harrington also worked at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in California, and his final station was Columbia National Wildlife Refuge in Washington state, where he dutifully served until his death.

Cause of Death

On May 28, 1957, Harrington died in an accident that occurred while he was bulldozing on a hillside above a newly cut road grade at Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. The blade of his International TD-9 bulldozer hit solid rock, which caused the bulldozer to slip sideways and roll down to the road grade about eight feet below. Harrington was crushed beneath the bulldozer.

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Credit: USFWS

Service biologists canoe on Ruby Lake within Ruby National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada. Ruby Lake was established to protect migratory birds and species endemic to the Ruby Valley. It is also the first station where Ross Morris Harrington worked for the Service.

Clarence J. Rhode

(1913-1958)

Biography

Clarence Joseph Rhode was born on April 15, 1913, in Sultan, Washington. Rhode never completed a college degree, but by the age of 15, he was dedicated to working with wildlife and became a deputy game warden in Washington state. He later moved to Alaska to work for the U.S. Forest Service. While there, he earned a commercial flying license, which he later used to serve as a commercial pilot during World War II. Notably, he flew the first Grumman Goose, an amphibious flying boat, for the Alaska Coastal Airlines during this time. After the war, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) named Rhode the Regional Director of Alaska. Rhode secured planes from military surplus for the Service, and his work as Regional Director led to the Service's widespread use of airplanes in Alaska, which reduced the reliance on dog teams and decreased month-long waits for mail. Rhode later earned U.S. Department of the Interior and Congressional Record citations for his air rescue work.

Cause of Death

On August 21, 1958, Rhode was killed in the crash of a Grumman Goose in the Philip Smith Mountains of the Eastern Brooks Range. He was part of a round-trip mission from Porcupine Lake to Fairbanks to look over the Arctic wildlife area, count Dall's sheep (*Ovis dalli*), and establish a gas cache. Rhode was accompanied by his eldest son, Jack, and Stanley S. Fredericksen, a game management agent for the Regional Office of Alaska. The flight was ultimately reported overdue, and a search was initiated. Their disappearance resulted in one of the largest air and ground searches in Alaska history, extending from the time of the incident to December 1958. However, it was not until August 23, 1979, that their story reached closure. Two hikers found the wreckage in a steep, craggy area almost 6,000 feet in



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Clarence Rhode in uniform stands next to his car. Prior to working for the Service, Rhode worked as a Washington state deputy game warden and for the U.S. Forest Service. It is unclear which agency is represented by the patch on his sleeve.

elevation. An investigation into the wreckage indicated that the Grumman Goose likely hit a rock wall due to poor visibility in the high, narrow mountain pass, and this impact resulted in the onboard fuel exploding. The death of all three members of the flight was likely instantaneous. In 1961, the Service renamed the Kuskokwim Wildlife Range in southwestern Alaska to the Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Range. This range later became part of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge in 1980. Additionally, the University of Alaska Fairbanks created the Clarence J. Rhode Memorial Scholarship Loan Fund in honor of Rhode's work to support junior, senior, and graduate students pursuing degrees in wildlife management.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

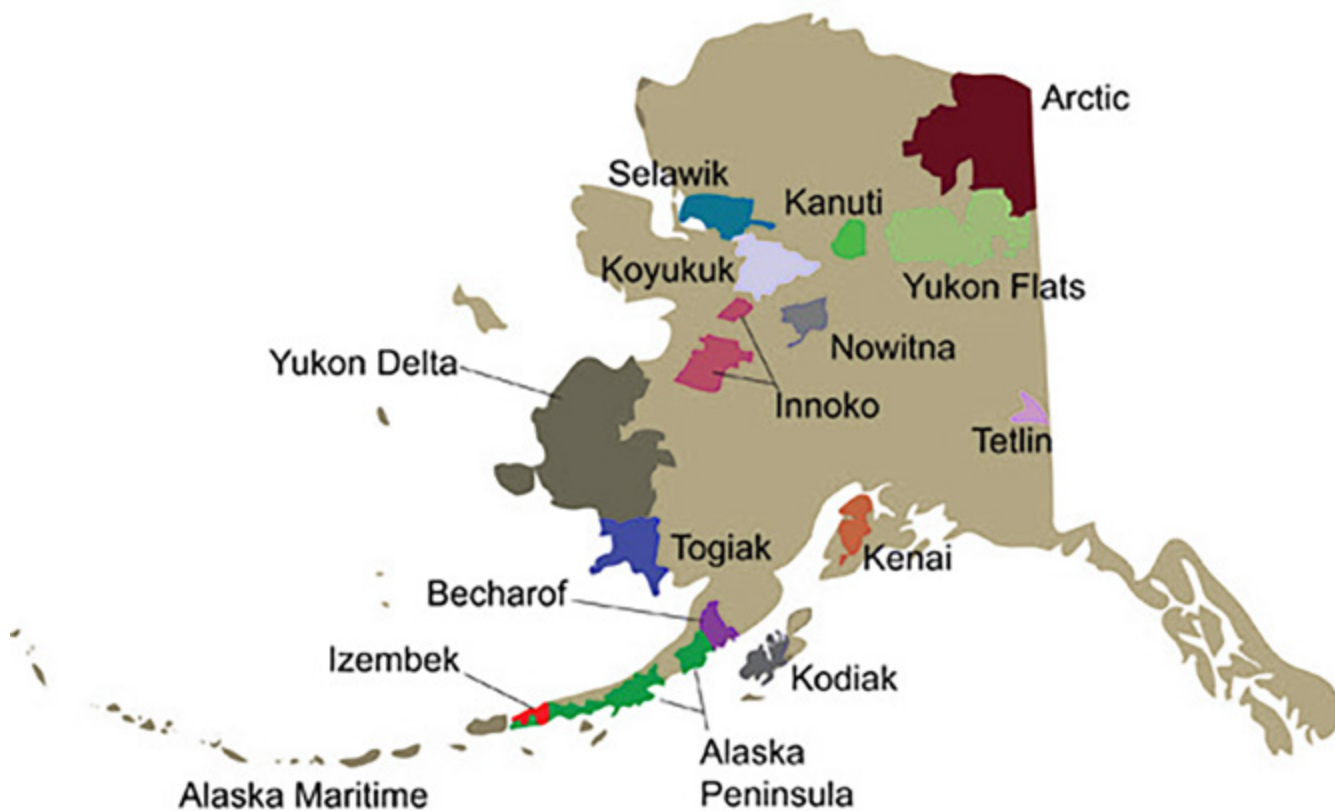


Clarence Joseph Rhode stands in snow with his gear, including snowshoes at his left.

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Credit: Ron Laubenstein/USFWS



A map of Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges.

Stanley Fredericksen (1924-1958)

Biography

Stanley Stewart Fredericksen was born on July 4, 1924, in West Yellowstone, Montana. He was the second of eight children, and he graduated from Idaho Falls High School in 1943 before entering the U.S. Army Air Corps and receiving training as a pilot and radio operator. After his discharge from the military in 1946, Fredericksen joined the Idaho Fish and Game Department and attended the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Fredericksen married Betty Ann Dowling on October 6, 1948, and they had two children: Rick and Teresa Ann. A few years later, Fredericksen was recalled for military service during the Korean War, interrupting his time at the Idaho Fish and Game Department. He served as a U.S. Air Force air-sea rescue pilot in Okinawa until the end of the Korean War, and afterwards, he returned to the Idaho Fish and Game Department for a brief time. In 1953, Fredericksen moved to Alaska and joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). He served as a game management agent for the Regional Office of Alaska, specifically overseeing the Fairbanks District in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Fredericksen also received commendations for his scenic photography.



A Dall's sheep (*Ovis dalli*) stands in a field. These alpine-adapted sheep are native to the northwestern U.S. and Canada. Dall's sheep are important for subsistence use, valued for sport hunting in permitted areas, and are among the most easily observed large mammals in northern Alaska.

Cause of Death

On August 21, 1958, Fredericksen was killed in the crash of a Grumman Goose, an amphibious flying boat, in the Philip Smith Mountains of the Eastern Brooks Range. He was part of a round-trip mission from Porcupine Lake to Fairbanks to look over the Arctic wildlife area, count Dall's sheep (*Ovis dalli*), and establish a gas cache. Fredericksen was accompanied by Clarence J. Rhode, Regional Director of the Service in Alaska, and Rhode's eldest son, Jack. The flight was ultimately reported overdue, and a search was initiated. Their disappearance resulted in one of the largest air and ground searches in Alaska history, extending from the time of the incident to December 1958. However, it was not until August 23, 1979, that their story reached closure. Two hikers found the wreckage in a steep, craggy area almost 6,000 feet in elevation. An investigation into the wreckage indicated that the Grumman Goose likely hit a rock wall due to poor visibility in the high, narrow mountain pass, and this impact resulted in the onboard fuel exploding. The death of all three members of the flight was likely instantaneous. Posthumously, Fredericksen received the U.S. Department of the Interior's Certificate of Honor for commendable service.

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Stanley Stewart Fredericksen instructs colleagues on identification of Dall's sheep (*Ovis dalli*). These ungulates rank among the most commonly seen large mammals in northern Alaska and play a key role in subsistence harvest.



Stanley Stewart Fredericksen (center) sits with colleagues.

Richard S. Bolt, Jr. (1930-1979)

Biography

Richard Simpson Bolt, Jr., was born on December 9, 1930. He began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a temporary bulldozer operator at Santee National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina. on June 1, 1964. Bolt remained a dedicated Service employee, next serving as a full-time federal employee at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge. Subsequently, Bolt served in a highly commendable manner at two stations in Florida: National Key Deer Refuge Nature Center and Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. His final station was Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia where he served as a biological technician from July 12, 1974, until his death.

Cause of Death

On February 15, 1979, there was a wildfire in Forest Compartment 8 of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, which is a location also known as the Pocket. While Bolt maneuvered his tractor to cut a fire break to control the blaze, winds intensified the flames. He unsuccessfully sought safety under his tractor, suffering burns on 70% of his body. In the aftermath, Bolt was taken to the Brook Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas for treatment, and he survived for 13 days before succumbing to his injuries on February 28, 1979. Bolt's brave actions saved many people who were in the local picnic area, and the U.S. Department of the Interior posthumously awarded him its Valor Award on October 10, 1979. Furthermore, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge retired his radio number, Unit 3, and named the Richard S. Bolt Visitor Center after him.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Richard Bolt in uniform while working at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia where the visitor center bears his name.

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Gary L. Lambert (1940-1979)

Biography

Gary Lavern Lambert was born on March 7, 1940, in Norton, Kansas. He married Janice Karen Olson, and they raised three children. During his over 6 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Lambert served as a district field assistant, or aerial gunner, under the Division of Damage Animal Control, helping protect cattle and sheep from predators. He worked in Texas and Nebraska before transferring to Roswell, New Mexico, where he dutifully served until his death.

Cause of Death

On August 15, 1979, Lambert and Robert E. Evans, another Service employee, flew together in a gunner plane as part of a routine aerial hunting project near Dunkin, New Mexico. Lambert served as the gunner, while Evans piloted the aircraft. In the early morning, they left Roswell alongside a ground crew and spotter plane in response to a rancher's complaint about coyotes (*Canis latrans*) killing his livestock. When the spotter plane located several coyotes, the gunner plane was notified of their location, and they made a turn to pass over the coyotes. However, while Lambert and Evans were flying at a low altitude, they encountered wake turbulence on the second turn. This resulted in a steep bank and a subsequent stall because they did not have sufficient altitude to recover. Both Lambert and Evans died in the crash.

The Animal Damage Control Act of 1931 granted federal authority to investigate, demonstrate, and manage control efforts targeting mammalian predators, rodents, and birds. In 1985, Public Law 99-198 transferred the act's administration from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Agriculture.



Credit: USFWS

The memorial plaque for Gary Lambert is mounted on a stone wall at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

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Robert E. Evans (1944-1979)

Biography

Robert Earl Evans was born on January 22, 1944, in Paris, Texas. His father served in the U.S. Army, and Evans grew up traveling. After graduating from Monterey High School, Evans joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, dutifully serving between 1964 and 1969. Before transitioning to civilian life, he was awarded with a Rifle Marksman Badge and a National Defense Service Medal. As a civilian, Evans worked as a professional pilot and co-owner of Slaton Flying Services, spraying crops for farmers. On February 12, 1972, he married Karen Dorsey, and they had a child. Around 1977, Evans began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a principal district assistant, or pilot, under the Division of Damage Animal Control. In this role, he helped protect cattle and sheep from predators in Texas for almost two years until his death.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

A young Robert Earl Evans in his U.S. Marine Corps uniform smiles for the camera.

Cause of Death

On August 15, 1979, Evans and Gary Lambert, another Service employee, flew together in a gunner plane as part of a routine aerial hunting project near Dunken, New Mexico. Evans piloted the aircraft, while Lambert served as the gunner. In the early morning, they left Roswell alongside a ground crew and spotter plane in response to a rancher's complaint about coyotes (*Canis latrans*) killing

his livestock. When the spotter plane located several coyotes, the gunner plane was notified of their location, and they made a turn to pass over the coyotes. However, while Evans and Lambert were flying at a low altitude, they encountered wake turbulence on the second turn. This resulted in a steep bank and a subsequent stall because they did not have sufficient altitude to recover. Both Evans and Lambert died in the crash.



Credit: Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

Light planes like this Piper PA-18 Super Cub enabled federal and state agencies to conduct aerial coyote control in open landscapes in the mid 70's. Robert Evans may have flown in aircraft such as this.

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Credit: Sargent Alexx Pons/U.S. Air Force

The National Defense Medal.

Elmer H. Simpson (1920-1980)

Biography

Elmer Henry Simpson was born on January 14, 1920, in Salem, Oregon. During World War II, he served as a medical technician in the U.S. Army. After receiving an honorable discharge in 1945, Simpson started his own logging business while also maintaining a farming and cattle operation. In 1953, he began a civilian career with the federal government and became a first aid attendant for the Maritime Administration in Astoria, Oregon. After he left the Maritime Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hired Simpson in 1960 as a maintenance worker at Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada. During his 20 years of service, Simpson remained a dedicated and dependable Service employee. In addition to operating heavy equipment, he provided logistical support to biologists conducting early desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) research. He also assisted with every phase of desert bighorn sheep management, from conducting waterhole composition counts to erecting water catchments.

Cause of Death

On August 26, 1980, four Service members assisted Frontier Radio Inc. with the installation of a new tower and antenna at the Hayford Peak repeater station, an automated radio station that extends the range of communications. Silver State Helicopters, a private helicopter company, airlifted Simpson, along with Refuge Manager Bob Yoder, Wildlife Biologist Bruce Zeller, and Special Agent Earl Kisler, to Hayford Peak with the required materials. At approximately 1 p.m., Simpson and the other Service members boarded the helicopter for the flight back to where they had parked their trucks near a trail. However, the helicopter lost power during takeoff. It dropped, struck the southern slope of Hayford Peak, the highest point on Desert National Wildlife Refuge, rolled over, and skidded downhill almost 75 yards. Yoder, Zeller, and Kisler survived, but the impact threw Simpson from the aircraft. Despite the efforts of emergency medical technicians from Valley Hospital Medical Center, Simpson died from his injuries.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Museum and Archives files with content contributed by Special Agent Earl Kisler, friends, and colleagues in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Credit: Peter Pearsall/USFWS

Desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) pictured at Desert National Wildlife Refuge in southern Nevada. Bighorns, one of two wild sheep species in North America (Dall's sheep - *Ovis dalli* being the other), play a key ecological role as high-elevation herbivores by controlling vegetation, dispersing seeds, and serving as a food source for predators like wolves and mountain lions.



Credit: Joshua Contois/USFWS

A landscape image of Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada, created in 1936 to support bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) as a species that is crucial to the overall structure of its home ecosystem.

Credit: Joshua Contois/USFWS



Along the hidden forest trail at Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada, Hayford Peak can be seen.

Credit: Sharon Schafer/USFWS



A yucca forest in Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada. Multiple species of yucca can be found in the refuge where they provide sustenance and structure for desert wildlife including rabbits, rodents, reptiles and insects.

Scott Jay Maness (1948-1981)

Biography

Scott Jay Maness was born on September 14, 1948, in Chicago, Illinois. He graduated from New Trier High School in 1967. He later attended Orange Coast Community College and the University of Wyoming before graduating from Sonoma State University with a bachelor's degree. After serving for 3 years as a research zoologist for the Peace Corps, Maness returned to Sonoma State University and earned a master's degree in biology. In 1980, Maness began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a herpetologist and biological technician at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Reptilian and crocodilian biology particularly interested Maness, and he took an active role in expanding the Refuge's herpetological monitoring and inventory projects. Notably, several specimens collected by Maness were new finds for the Refuge. Maness also received a letter of commendation for his participation in the Service's International Affairs Program for conservation education and his work as an interpreter for several visiting Latin American conservationists.

Cause of Death

On June 7, 1981, lightning from a thunderstorm started several fires near Ransom Road between the Merritt National Wildlife Refuge and the Kennedy Space Center. By approximately noon on June 8, Service members identified three fires as threats and acted quickly to put out these fires. Maness and Beau W. Sauselein, another Service employee, worked together as a tractor crew with Maness as the observer and Sauselein as the tractor operator. While they plowed a fire line, the winds shifted direction and pushed the fire towards them. As they tried to escape, their tractor got stuck on a tree stump, forcing them to try to evacuate the area on foot. However, thick brush and palmetto fueled the fire and made it impossible to outrun. In a clearing, Maness and Sauselein shared a fire shelter built for one man and not designed for protection against direct flames. Another Service employee found both Maness and Sauselein badly burned after rain helped stop the fire, and they were rushed to Jess Parrish Memorial Hospital. Maness's



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

A green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) in the sand with the Kennedy Space Center in the background at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. These turtles live in coastal waters worldwide and nest in over 80 countries. Once heavily hunted for meat and eggs, the Service today helps protect them internationally through the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund.



Credit: NASA

An American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) rests along a canal at the Kennedy Space Center which adjoins Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Alligators are protected as a threatened species due to their resemblance to the endangered American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*).



Credit: Lindsey Green/USFWS

A kayak moves along mangroves at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida.

condition deteriorated rapidly, and he succumbed to his injuries on June 8, 1981. Sauselein died shortly afterwards from his own injuries on June 9, 1981. Their deaths led to important changes in the Service's approach to fire management, which has improved safety measures for all Service members. Furthermore, the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum lists them on their memorial to cape industrial fatalities, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge dedicated a memorial to them in 2017.



Credit: USFWS

A memorial for Maness and Sauselein near the visitor center at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida.

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Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

American white pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. The refuge protects a wide variety of important habitats: coastal dunes, saltwater estuaries and marshes, freshwater impoundments, scrub, pine flatwoods, and hardwood hammocks.

Beau W. Sauselein (1948-1981)

Biography

Beau William Sauselein was born on March 4, 1948, in Wilmington, Delaware. He graduated from Rising Sun High School and earned an associate's degree in animal and plant science from the University of Delaware. In 1969, Sauselein enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He was a skilled pilot, and after fulfilling his military obligation in 1973, he pursued several pilot certifications, earning the private pilot instrument, multi-engine, and instructor ratings. Sauselein also enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, especially fishing and sailing. As a result, he was very active in the Titusville Yacht Club and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. In 1974, he began his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), serving as a biological technician and law enforcement officer at the St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge, which is a part of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Sauselein significantly contributed to the dusky seaside sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus nigrescens*) management and helped implement recovery plans at St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. He also used his skills to assist the Service as a heavy equipment operator and boat handler. On several occasions, the Service recognized Sauselein's excellence and contributions to the wildlife resource.

Cause of Death

On June 7, 1981, lightning from a thunderstorm started several fires near Ransom Road between the Merritt National Wildlife Refuge and the Kennedy Space Center. By approximately noon on June 8, Service members identified three fires as threats and acted quickly to put out these fires. Sauselein and Scott Jay Maness, another Service employee, worked together as a tractor crew with Sauselein as the tractor operator and Maness as the observer. While they plowed a fire line, the winds shifted direction and pushed the fire towards them. As they tried to escape, their tractor got stuck on a tree stump, forcing them to try to evacuate the area on foot. However, thick brush and palmetto fueled the fire and made it impossible to outrun. In a clearing, Sauselein and Maness shared a fire shelter built for



Photograph of Beau W. Sauselin.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



A dusky seaside sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus nigrescens*) perches on a tree. Once common in Florida's Merritt Island marshes and along the St. Johns River, the sparrow declined rapidly after its nesting grounds were flooded to control mosquitoes near Kennedy Space Center. By 1979, only six males remained, the last female having been seen in 1975.

Credit: USFWS

one man and not designed for protection against direct flames. Another Service employee found both Sauselein and Maness badly burned after rain helped stop the fire, and they were rushed to Jess Parrish Memorial Hospital. Maness's condition deteriorated rapidly, and he succumbed to his injuries on June 8, 1981. Sauselein died shortly afterwards from his own injuries on June 9, 1981. Their deaths led to important changes in the Service's approach to fire management, which has improved safety measures for all Service members. Furthermore, the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum lists them on their memorial to cape industrial fatalities, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge dedicated a memorial to them in 2017.



Credit: Ryan Haggerty/USFWS

A field of big bluestem grass (*Andropogon gerardii*) after a restorative prescribed burn at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Bluestem provides cover for ground-nesting birds, erosion control, and supports native pollinators.



Credit: National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA)

Space shuttle Atlantis on the Florida landscape of the Kennedy Space Center adjacent to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.



Credit: Ryan Haggerty/USFWS

A banded Florida scrub jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) perches on a shrub at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Scrub jays are endemic - or only found in - Florida, live their entire lives within two miles of their natal territory and are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

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John T. Cantu (1949-1990)

Biography

John Terry Cantu was born on June 13, 1949, in Sinton, Texas, and he spent most of his life in Texas and California as a dedicated member of the U.S. Marine Corps. Cantu also enjoyed bowling, fishing, and hunting. After his retirement in early September of 1989, Cantu moved to Adak, Alaska, to be with his wife, Linda Carlson-Cantu. Shortly after joining his wife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hired Cantu as a maintenance worker, and he served as a member of the Aleutian Islands Unit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge until his death.

Cause of Death

On January 29, 1990, four Service members on the USS *Kittiwake* were returning to the Adak Naval Air Facility after establishing a fox control camp on Kagalaska Island when they were caught in a sudden and severe snowstorm in the Bering Sea. The USS *Kittiwake*'s navigational equipment was damaged, and the snowstorm further reduced their ability to navigate. Strong waves broke the windows on the boat, and the Service vessel ultimately capsized. The following morning, a Coast Guard and Navy search and rescue team located two of the Service members in time to take them to the hospital for treatment: Biological Technician Jim Fuller and Student Conservation Association (SCA) Volunteer Heather Vose. However, Cantu and Karen L. Norton, another SCA volunteer, both died from a combination of hypothermia and drowning before they could be saved. Cantu received a memorial service at Adak Chapel and was buried in Sinton, Texas.



A young John Cantu looks into the camera.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Linda Carlson-Cantu at left sits with John Cantu at right.

Credit: USFW Museum and Archives

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Credit: Lisa Hupp/USFWS



A waterfall on an Aleutian island within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The Aleutian Islands host exceptional biodiversity rarely seen at high latitudes, shaped by the convergence of oceans, storms, and volcanic activity.

Karen L. Norton (1965-1990)

Biography

Karen Lee Norton was born on April 15, 1965, and she was raised in Syracuse, New York. During high school, she participated in the marching band and Honor Society. She attended the University of New York and graduated with a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology. Norton was also an active member of her community. She volunteered at the local fire department and worked as a Wildland Firefighting Crew member during summers. Norton became involved in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) when she became a Student Conservation Association volunteer (SCA). She served at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge as a member of the Aleutian Islands Unit until her death.

Cause of Death

On January 29, 1990, four Service members on the *USS Kittiwake* were returning to the Adak Naval Air Facility after establishing a fox control camp on Kagalaska Island when they were caught in a sudden and severe snowstorm in the Bering Sea. The *USS Kittiwake's* navigational equipment was damaged, and the snowstorm further reduced their ability to navigate. Strong waves broke the windows on the boat, and the Service vessel ultimately capsized. The following morning, a Coast Guard and Navy search and rescue team located two of the Service members in time to take them to the hospital for treatment: Biological Technician Jim Fuller and SCA Volunteer Heather Vose. However, Norton and John T. Cantu, a Service employee, both died from a combination of hypothermia and drowning before they could be saved. Norton received a memorial service at Adak Chapel and was buried in Syracuse, New York. Furthermore, the SCA maintains the Karen Norton Memorial Fund as an endowed fund to support volunteers and programs in her memory.



A portrait of Karen Lee Norton as a young adult.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Map of Adak Island, Alaska showing location of the national wildlife refuge, Aleut Corporation lands, and an area of unexploded ordnance marked off-limits to the public.

Credit: USFWS

Credit: Sabrina Farmer/USFWS



The town of Adak with Great Sitkin Island in the background within the Aleutian Island chain in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge provides vital habitat for marine mammals and over 40 million seabirds across more than 30 species.

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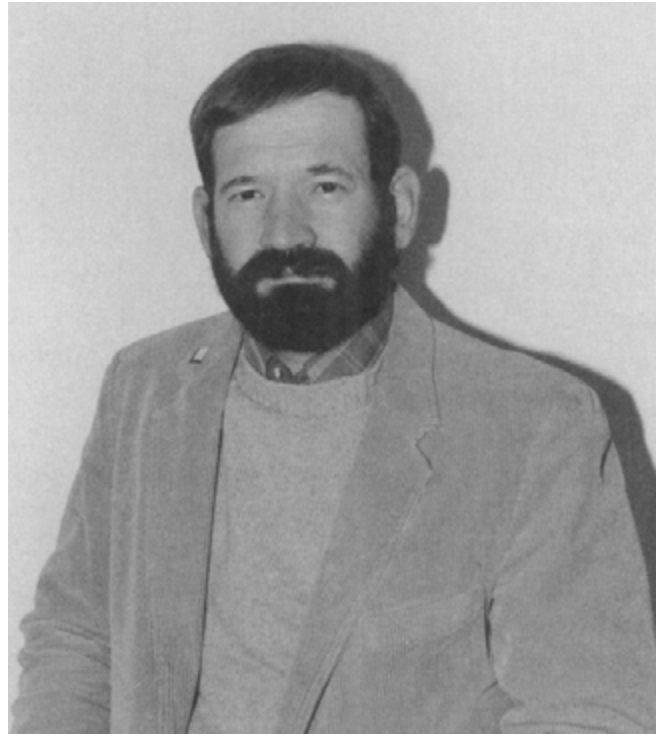


Adak Chapel on Adak Island, Alaska. The island is the ancestral home of the Unanga̋ (Aleut) people, reflecting centuries of cultural heritage.

Stephen J. Young (1950-1992)

Biography

Stephen James Young was born on September 10, 1950, in Saint Albans, Vermont, and he was raised on a rural dairy farm. After graduating from high school in 1969, Young enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served as an intelligence clerk during the Vietnam War. For his service, he received the Navy Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with Three Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal, two Navy Unit Commendations, two Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citations, and the Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal. After returning from Vietnam, he earned a bachelor's degree in wildlife management. With his wife, Kimberly, Young raised his two children: Lisa and Aaron. He was particularly passionate about the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl, and he belonged to several conservation organizations, including The Wildlife Society and the Fairbanks chapter of Ducks Unlimited. He also enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, including golfing, fishing, and hunting upland game birds. In January of 1977, he began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a fish and wildlife biologist at the North Dakota Ecological Services Field Office in Bismarck, North Dakota. A year later, Young moved to South Dakota and became the assistant refuge manager at Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, where he also received a refuge officer law enforcement commission, a status that he maintained until his death. During his time with the Service, Young became interested in seeing and experiencing Alaska, and in 1990, he became the primary assistant refuge manager at Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska where he advocated for environmental education efforts. In June of 1992, he became the assistant refuge manager at Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, where he served until his death.



Stephen J. Young looking at the camera.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Kanuti Lake at Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Kanuti protects boreal forest and breeding habitat for more than 130 bird species which are increasingly at risk due to habitat loss.

Credit: Steve Hillebrand/USFWS

Cause of Death

On November 12, 1992, Young and a civilian pilot were participating in an extensive moose census of the Yukon Flats in a Piper PA-18 Super Cub, a two-seat, single engine airplane. During the last section of the aerial survey, the airplane inadvertently stalled at an altitude that was insufficient for recovery, and the airplane crashed in the White Mountains. Both Young and the civilian pilot died in the crash.

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Credit: Steve Hillebrand/USFWS



Aerial view of the lakes and wetlands that make up Kanuti Flats, on Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Known as "Kk'toonootne" by the Athabascan people, the refuge name means "well-traveled river." Kanuti spans the Arctic Circle in an area roughly the size of Delaware and protects Alaska's boreal forest ecosystem.

Valerie A. Chabot

(1962-1994)

Biography

Valerie Adelaide Chabot was born on December 17, 1962, in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. She studied at Mount-Westonka High School in Mound, Minnesota. During this time, she was an honor student and an officer for her senior class. After high school, she earned a bachelor's degree in education from Northwestern University, and she continued her education at the University of Washington, completing 2 years of postgraduate work. For several years, Chabot taught sixth grade students near Seattle, Washington, before moving to Anchorage, Alaska, in 1993 to work as a substitute teacher for the Mat-su and Anchorage school system. Chabot was particularly passionate about teaching children about the natural world, and she assisted the Alaska Natural Resource and Outdoor Education Association with devising a curriculum focused on the value of the environment. Besides education, she also enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, and she spent one summer exploring uncharted territory in Alaska. In 1994 while she was working as a teacher in Alaska, she also began serving as a volunteer for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, assisting with a joint project to track the three subspecies of peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) populations in Alaska and study their nesting habits. During her 2 weeks of service with the Endangered Species Division, she visited nest sites near the Tanana River, banded nesting falcons, and incorporated her field observations into her lessons.



Drawings of Adelaide Chabot in portrait style and with a group of her friends.

Credit: USWS Museum and Archives

Cause of Death

On July 12, 1994, Chabot and Service Biologist Pete Bente were studying peregrine falcon nesting sites on a cliff near the Tanana River in Alaska. Bente rappelled down the cliff to a nest site, and Chabot remained above him on the top of the cliff. While recording data relayed by him, she lost her footing and fell 75 feet. Upon reaching her, rescue workers performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and a military helicopter flew her to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. Despite the efforts of the rescue workers, doctors pronounced Chabot dead when she arrived. In her honor, the Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game banded two peregrine falcons with colored bands engraved with "VAL."

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Credit: Roy W. Lowe/USFWS

A peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) perches on a tree located in the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Oregon. The peregrine is found on every continent except Antarctica and includes 19 recognized subspecies. Once heavily impacted by DDT and other pesticides, peregrine falcons were listed under the Endangered Species Act in the 1970's. Following pesticide bans and conservation efforts, populations gradually recovered, leading to the delisting of Arctic and American peregrines in 1994 and 1999.

Joshua B. Nove (1973-1997)

Biography

Joshua “Josh” Nove was born on August 8, 1973, in Ipswich, Massachusetts. From the early age of three, Nove took particular interest in birds and became a lifelong birder. He regularly participated in his hometown’s annual Christmas bird count and studied migratory shore birds at Crane’s Beach as a volunteer. Starting in 1991, Nove worked as an intern every summer for the nonprofit organization Quebec Labrador Foundation, where he helped preserve the wildlife and the integrity of the local culture in Eastern Quebec. In 1995, he graduated magna cum laude from Amherst College with a bachelor’s degree in biology and earned membership into Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society. Afterwards, Nove worked as a research assistant on a number of ornithological projects in Belize, Alabama, Louisiana, New Mexico, Mississippi, and Alaska before beginning to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Nove served as a volunteer intern at the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge, starting in April 1997. In this role, he assisted with migratory bird banding and migration studies at Mother Goose Lake.



Joshua B. Nove at work.



View of Ugashik Lake in Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge from fixed wing plane.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives.

Credit: USFWS

Cause of Death

On July 3, 1997, Nove disappeared in Mother Goose Lake in the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge. In the evening, Nove had been working with a group of Service members and volunteers to band birds when he spotted two mew gull (*Larus canus*) chicks swimming in shallow water in a marshy delta on the east side of the lake. He entered the ankle-deep water in pursuit of the chicks. However, Nove did not notice the sudden drop-off into deeper water. He was unable to stay above water, and water filled his partially rolled-down hip waders, causing him to quickly disappear from view. Service members immediately attempted rescue him by boat as well as on foot, but they were unable to find him. Alaska State Troopers and a Service dive team also participated in rescue efforts. However, glacial silt laden waters with zero visibility greatly hampered search efforts, and they were unable to find Nove's body.

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Credit: Peter Davis/USFWS

Glaucous-winged seagulls (*Larus glaucescens*) on Protection Island National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Protection Island is home to one of the largest colonies of glaucous gulls in the Salish Sea.

Murphy Peterson (1939-2001)

Biography

Murphy G. Peterson, Sr., was born on February 15, 1939. Peterson worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) at the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina along the Atlantic Coast where he served as a heavy equipment operator until his death.

Cause of Death

On April 27, 2001, Peterson was driving a truck with a lowboy trailer westbound on Highway 64, approximately one mile west of the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge's office. Peterson saw that passenger cars had stopped in his travel lane to allow another vehicle to turn onto a side street, so he conducted an emergency stop to avoid a collision. However, during this emergency stop procedure, the chains and ratchet tie-downs securing one of the lowboy trailer's load items came undone. This loose load item struck the upright portion of the trailer, and it propelled a piece of equipment onto the roof of the truck cab, pushing the roof downward onto the dashboard and steering wheel. The crushed roof pinned down both Peterson and the Service intern, Tony Beurskeus, who accompanied him. Emergency responders removed them from the wreckage after heavy extrication efforts, and although Beurskeus did not suffer notable trauma, Peterson was dead. In his honor, the Alligator River Wildlife Refuge named the Murphy Peterson Wildlife Drive after him.

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Credit: Steve Hillebrand/USFWS

Pond pine pocosin habitat at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. Pocosin is a unique wetland habitat that is crucial for many species, including the threatened red cockaded woodpecker (*Dryobates borealis*). Alligator River protects other significant habitats including bogs, marshes, hardwood swamps, and Atlantic white cypress swamps.



Credit: Sarah Toner/USFWS

Point Peter March at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina.

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Credit: Gary Tucker/USFWS



An American black bear (*Ursus americanus*) and cubs at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Black bears, the smallest bear species in North America, are found across the continent. Although their range has diminished over time due to habitat loss, they remain widespread and common throughout the United States.

Credit: USFWS



A red wolf (*Canis rufus*), at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina.

Richard Guadagno (1962-2001)

Biography

Richard J. Guadagno was born in Trenton, New Jersey, on September 26, 1962, and he grew up in Ewing, New Jersey. Guadagno graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor's degree in land management and biology in 1984. He spent his free time nursing injured animals back to health, teaching himself taxidermy, and managing a garden of lettuce, tomatoes, and beans. He also raised a German shepherd puppy named Raven. Guadagno began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a temporary biologist at Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey, and his first permanent assignment was as a wildlife inspector in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During his 17 years working for the Service, Guadagno graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and served at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware, Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey, and Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge and Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. In 2000, Guadagno became the Refuge Manager for Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge in California, where he dutifully served until his death.



Photo provided courtesy of USFWS

Richard J. Guadagno stands in front of a river while enjoying some time outdoors.

Cause of Death

On September 11, 2001, Guadagno was on board United Airlines 93 with 39 other passengers and crew members when it crashed in Stony Creek Township, Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m. Guadagno was returning from a visit to celebrate his grandmother's 100th birthday. The plane was traveling from Newark, New Jersey, to San Francisco, California, when passengers learned that hijackers intended to crash the plane into an unknown location in Washington, D.C. Investigators discovered Guadagno's Service



Credit: USFWS

A memorial plaque honoring Richard J. Guadagno on an observation platform at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon where Guadagno served as a refuge law enforcement officer for many years.

law enforcement credentials in the remains of the cockpit, meaning Guadagno likely took an active role in confronting the hijackers at the expense of his own life. Guadagno was the only federal law enforcement officer aboard any of the four hijacked flights, and his heroic actions along with the actions of other members of the flight prevented further tragedy during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The U.S. Department of the Interior posthumously awarded him its Valor Award. Furthermore, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to name the visitor center at Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge the “Richard J. Guadagno Visitor Center and Headquarters” in his honor. Other refuges where Guadagno previously worked honored his sacrifice as well. Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge dedicated an observation platform to him, and Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge established a pavilion with a plaque in his name. Furthermore, Guadagno’s family helped create the Richard Guadagno Fellowship to provide two students from the Student Conservation Association an opportunity to pursue their passion for the environment.

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Credit: Heidi Brunkal Newsome

Richard hiking in the Mount Jefferson Wilderness Area in Oregon, circa 1998.

Elaine Avis Barnett

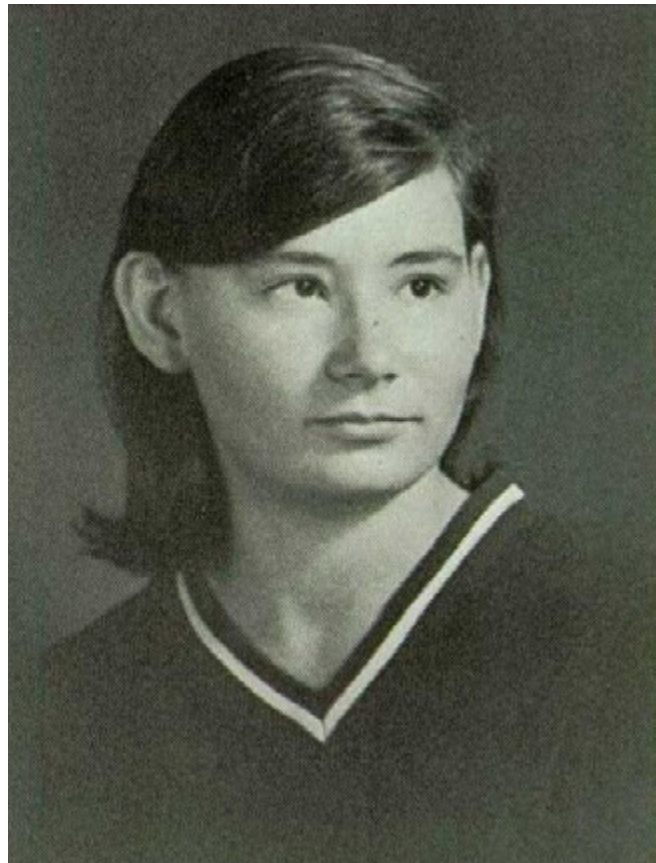
(1953-2005)

Biography

Elaine Avis (Moody) Barnett was born on June 7, 1953, in Rumford, Maine. During her time at Rangeley Lakes Regional High School, she served as a typist for her school newspaper. After she graduated high school in 1971, she worked for the U.S. Postal Service as the postmaster in Wilson's Mills, Maine. Barnett also worked for the Department of Resources and Economic Development for the state of New Hampshire. Later, she married Edward Barnett and had two children: Molly and Timothy. She then worked both for the Wilhelm Reich Museum in Rangeley and as a homemaker for her family. Barnett enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, especially hiking in the Maine mountains, kayaking, making maple syrup, boating, photography, and fly fishing. She also took great joy in being a grandmother to her grandson. In 1998, Barnett began her U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a maintenance worker at Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge in Errol, New Hampshire, becoming the Refuge's first maintenance worker. Notably, Barnett became one of only two women to hold a similar position in the Northeast region as of 2003.

Cause of Death

On the evening of December 6, 2005, a Service member discovered Barnett pinned by her pickup truck to the Refuge access gate on a sloped access road off Mountain Pond Road in Errol, New Hampshire. Barnett had been trying to open the Refuge access gate, but her pickup truck slid on the snow and ice after she had exited the vehicle to open the gate. Barnett received treatment at Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook, New Hampshire, but doctors declared she had passed away at 10:35 p.m.



Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives

Elaine Avis Barnett looks at the camera for a portrait.



Credit: USFWS

Close up of Elaine Avis Barnette's commemorative plaque on the Service Fallen Comrades Memorial Wall at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

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The common loon (*Gavia immer*) is one of 229 bird species that can be found at the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge in Maine and New Hampshire. The refuge hosts a diversity of species due to its location at the intersection of boreal and deciduous forests.



Credit: Ian Drew/USFWS

The Magalloway River flowing through the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge in New Hampshire and Maine. The refuge is home to the 7,000-acre Lake Umbagog, as well as wetland and upland habitats that straddle the transition zone between southern deciduous forest and northern boreal forest.

David S. Pitkin (1960-2010)

Biography

David “Dave” Sherwood Pitkin was born on June 1, 1960, in Los Angeles, California, and later, he shared a home with his partner, Morgan McKenzie, in Bandon, Oregon. Pitkin loved the outdoors, and he enjoyed a variety of creative activities, including photography, woodworking, and building. In 1992, Pitkin became a volunteer for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). As a volunteer, he lived in the Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge near Pacific City, Oregon, and he worked primarily with Semidi Island Aleutian cackling geese (*Branta hutchinsii leucopareia*), brant geese (*Branta bernicla*), and peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*). Notably, he remained particularly passionate about the Semidi Island Aleutian cackling geese throughout his life. In 1999, the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex hired him as a fish and wildlife biologist, and Pitkin dutifully served in this role until 2007. Afterwards, he left the Service to work on a large ranch, which had been one of his favorite field sites. Although Pitkin no longer served as a fish and wildlife biologist, he remained actively involved in the conservation of coastal ecosystems, and he continued to volunteer and do contract work with the Service, participating in projects such as the mentorship of aspiring biologists and the reintroduction of the threatened Nelson’s checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*). Pitkin also received praise for being an accomplished nature photographer, contributing photographs to a wide range of wildlife and conservation projects and journals. In January 2010, the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex contracted Pitkin to serve as an observer to assist in conducting waterfowl counts.

Cause of Death

On January 17, 2010, Pitkin and V. Ray Bentley, another Service employee, flew together in a Cessna 182 Skylane as part of the Service’s annual mid-winter waterfowl survey. Pitkin served as the observer, while Bentley piloted the aircraft. After a day spent flying over estuaries along the Oregon coast and counting ducks, swans, and geese, Pitkin and Bentley prepared



David Pitkin in the field.

Credit: USFWS

to return to Corvallis from Newport. The flight was ultimately reported overdue, and a search was initiated. Approximately 50 people, a mix of search and rescue volunteers as well as law enforcement personnel, participated throughout the night in this search effort. While flying the route indicated in Bentley’s flight plan, a helicopter located a signal from the plane’s emergency beacon, narrowing the search to an area west of Philomath. Around 8:30 a.m. on January 18, the search and rescue team found the wreckage of the plane along a logging road off of Woods Creek Road and to the west of an unlighted radio tower. Both Pitkin and Bentley died in the crash. In his honor, the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge dedicated a plaque to him at Coquille Point.



Juvenile Aleutian cackling goose (*Branta hutchinsii leucopareia*) on Buldir Island in the Aleutian Islands at Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Cackling geese are smaller bodied and billed than the Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) they resemble. They are ecologically important as grazers and foragers that cycle nutrients.

Credit: Ronan Dugan/USFWS

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Credit: Peter Pearsall/USFWS

Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) with the rocky coastline of the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex in the background. This refuge complex protects some of the most important seabird nesting colonies in the United States.

V. Ray Bentley (1957-2010)

Biography

Vernon Raymond Bentley, also known as Ray, was born on June 14, 1957, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. His parents were aircraft owners and pilots, which fostered an early love for aviation. After graduating from college, he obtained both private pilot and commercial pilot licenses. Bentley also pursued several pilot certifications, earning the float and multi-engine ratings. Later, he shared a home with his life partner, Marci Rider, in Corvallis, Oregon. In his free time, Bentley enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, especially traveling, hunting, fishing, birding, scuba diving, skydiving, and tending his apple orchard. Throughout his life, he also remained particularly passionate about wildlife biology and aviation. In 1999, after several years of working as a biologist with state agencies and the U.S. Geological Survey, Bentley joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) as the primary pilot-biologist for the Pacific Flyway, which is a region which approximately spans the entire west coast of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. In this position, Bentley used his passion for wildlife biology and aviation to capture accurate snapshots of wildlife numbers and habitat use, supporting wildlife conservation and management throughout the Pacific Flyway. At the time of his employment, there were only 16 pilot-biologists who worked with the Service, and notably, Bentley received praise for being a talented aviator with an uncanny ability to spot what no one else could.

Cause of Death

On January 17, 2010, Bentley and David S. Pitkin, another Service employee, flew together in a Cessna 182 Skylane as part of the Service's annual mid-winter waterfowl survey. Bentley piloted the aircraft, while Pitkin served as the observer. After a day spent flying over estuaries along the Oregon coast and counting ducks, swans, and geese, Bentley and Pitkin prepared to return to Corvallis from Newport. The flight was ultimately reported overdue, and a search was initiated. Approximately 50 people, a mix of search and rescue volunteers as well as law enforcement personnel, participated throughout the night in this search effort.



V. Ray Bentley with aircraft in the background. Taken from Oregon Birds, Volume 36 No. 1 (2010), which was adapted from an original work created by USFWS.

While flying the route indicated in Bentley's flight plan, a helicopter located a signal from the plane's emergency beacon, narrowing the search to an area west of Philomath. Around 8:30 a.m. on January 18, the search and rescue team found the wreckage of the plane along a logging road off of Woods Creek Road and to the west of an unlighted radio tower. Both Bentley and Pitkin died in the crash. In his honor, the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge named the Ray Bentley Overlook after him.

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Map created by: USFWS

A map of the Pacific Flyway which is frequently flown by Service biologists to research habitat use, survey populations and inform wildlife management.

Joshua Griffin (1986-2011)

Biography

Joshua “Josh” Lamarr Griffin was born on August 24, 1986. After graduating from Central High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Griffin pursued a bachelor’s degree in agricultural science with a focus on animal science. Although he still had four more credits to complete his bachelor’s degree, he was already applying to graduate school at Oklahoma State University. His dream was to be an animal science researcher, and he was particularly looking forward to doing research and development in fisheries and biology. Griffin was an active member of the Langston University community—performing volunteer work for the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and participating in the marching band, the Langston University Ambassador Program, the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) club, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. While finishing his bachelor’s degree, Griffin became a volunteer for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). In that role, he frequently worked with both the Oklahoma Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office and Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office, and he assisted with the Arkansas River shiner (*Notropis girardi*) research project.



An Arkansas river shiner (*Notropis girardi*) swims through clear water above a pebble substrate. The river shiner evolved to survive in some of the most extreme freshwater environments in North America, with summer temperatures reaching 100°F and variable flows that range from flooding to near-dry conditions. In 1998, the species was federally listed as threatened due to widespread habitat loss due to channelization, dam construction, stream dewatering, water diversions, groundwater extraction, and declining water quality.



Joshua Griffin in professional attire.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives.

Cause of Death

On June 15, 2011, Griffin drowned in the Cimarron River near Guthrie in Oklahoma. Griffin was working for the Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office with a group of six Service volunteers and biologists to collect and count the Arkansas River shiner (*Notropis girardi*) to survey the population and evaluate efforts to recover the fish species. In the process of seining, a fishing method that uses a large net, Griffin walked in about two feet of water on top of a sandbar. The sand gave way, and he fell into a hole in the Cimarron River. Griffin slipped into deeper water, and Service members' attempts to save him were unsuccessful. Service members later recovered his body. He was 25 years old.

Credit: Daniel Fenner/USFWS

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Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office. Joshua Griffin's Final Station. 28 Aug. 2023. Telephone Interview.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Joshua Griffin looks at the camera.

Thomas E. Lewis (1960-2011)

Biography

Thomas “Thom” Eugene Lewis was born on October 15, 1960, in Maryland. He studied biology and graduated from the University of Maryland and Texas A&M University. Lewis was enthusiastic about the outdoors, particularly enjoying backpacking. He married JoAnne Whittington, who shared his passion for wildlife and conservation. Together, they became strong supporters of the Florida Wild Mammal Association, and they would foster rescued and orphaned wildlife in their home. In the early 1980s, Lewis became a crane caretaker at Patuxent Research Refuge in Maryland and worked on a whooping crane (*Grus americana*) disturbance study at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. In 1992, he began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a biologist at St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. During his 16 years at the Refuge, he also served as the coordinator of the red wolf (*Canis rufus*) breeding program and coauthored protocol for rearing wolves in island refuges. More than 20 red wolf cubs returned to the wild from the pack he helped care for, and Lewis’s work contributed to red wolves becoming the first species in the United States to be successfully reintroduced into the wild after extinction. In 2008, Lewis decided to pursue his life-long dream to become a pilot-biologist, and he became a pilot-biologist intern for the Migratory Bird Surveys at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Maryland, where he dutifully served until his death.

Cause of Death

On June 23, 2011, Lewis was practicing touch-and-go landing maneuvers at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida in a Beechcraft C24R Sierra, a small airplane. David A. Miles, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel who served as Lewis’s flight instructor, accompanied Lewis during this early morning practice. At 4:30 a.m., the small airplane crashed next to a runway after being in the air for approximately a half hour. Both Lewis and Miles died in the crash.



Thomas Eugene Lewis in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Uniform.

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Six week old red wolf pups (*Canis rufus*) in an acclimation pen on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina prior to their release into the wild with their parents, 2409F and 2371M.

Credit: USFWS

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Credit: Steve Hillebrand/USFWS

A captive red wolf (*Canis rufus*) at the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center on the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in Awendaw, South Carolina. Conservation efforts, including captive breeding and reintroduction programs based on the work of Thomas Lewis, have aimed to restore wild populations.

Maegan Spindler (1988-2013)

Credit: USFWS



Maegan Spindler holds a paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*), a species native to the Missouri River, that has faced challenges from habitat changes and overfishing. While not federally protected, some states within its range have implemented active management and public engagement strategies.

Biography

Maegan Elizabeth Spindler was born on March 1, 1988. She grew up in Cazenovia, New York, and graduated from Cazenovia High School in 2006. She earned a bachelor's degree in wildlife science from the College of Environment Science and Forestry at State University of New York (SUNY) in 2010, and she continued her education at Vancouver Island University, earning a post-degree diploma in fisheries and aquaculture in 2011. She loved the environment, and she enjoyed a wide variety of outdoor activities, including hunting, fishing, gardening, hiking, camping, backpacking, and traveling. She also liked print making, painting, and photography. After two years of working for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hired Spindler as a biological technician, and she assisted with the recovery of endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) in the Missouri River. Spindler's passion for rivers and fish grew while serving at the Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in South Dakota, and as a result, she planned to start graduate school in 2014 to study how to better conserve native fish species.

Cause of Death

On July 8, 2013, Spindler and another Service employee, Dr. Robert Allan Klumb, were talking in a parking lot outside of a hotel in Pickstown, South Dakota. A drunk driver ran through a stop sign at an intersection and blew through the parking lot, crashing into the two of them as well as two parked cars. They both died shortly afterwards from their injuries. In 2015, the court convicted the drunk driver on two counts of vehicular homicide and drug charges.

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Robert Klumb (1967-2013)

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Robert Klumb stands aboard a watercraft in his Service uniform.

Biography

Dr. Robert Allan Klumb was born on May 27, 1967, in West Allis, Wisconsin. Klumb graduated with a doctoral degree from Cornell University. He was particularly passionate about the environment and enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, especially fishing and gardening. In the winter, Klumb ice fished on the Missouri River, and in the summer, he tended to his trees, flowers, vegetables, and nearly a hundred houseplants. Additionally, he had a deep knowledge of music and a passion for football. In his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Klumb served as the lead research biologist at the Service's Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in South Dakota. He used his deep knowledge of river ecology and fish biology to work on the recovery of the endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) in the Missouri River, and he was well-respected by prominent scientists throughout the country.

Cause of Death

On July 8, 2013, Klumb and another Service employee, Maegan Spindler, were talking in a parking lot outside of a hotel in Pickstown, South Dakota. A drunk driver ran through a stop sign at an intersection and blew through the parking lot, crashing into the two of them as well as two parked cars. They both died shortly afterwards from their injuries. In 2015, the court convicted the drunk driver on two counts of vehicular homicide and drug charges.

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Darrell Peterson (1965-2016)

Credit: USFWS Museum and Archives



Darrell Peterson stands in the sun wearing his Service uniform.

Biography

Darrell Lance Peterson was born on February 9, 1965, in Crockett, Texas. For 10 years, Peterson worked as a correction officer for the Texas Department of Corrections. Peterson also served as a member of the Grapeland Volunteer Fire Department for many years. At the age of 25, he married, and later, he had three children: Kari Nicole, William David, and Cody Lance. In his free time, Peterson was an active member of Texas Xtreme Off Road Racing, often mentoring young riders, including his sons. Peterson began his service with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) as a maintenance worker at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Eagle Lake, Texas. During his 15 years at the Refuge, he also served as a heavy equipment operator and instructor. He was always quick to share his knowledge with others, and he took an active role in the recovery of the Attwater's greater prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*).

Cause of Death

On April 29, 2016, Peterson died in an accident while working at Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge. On May 7, Peterson's family held a funeral for him, and notable members of the Service attended to honor him. Service Director Daniel Ashe and Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System Cynthia Martinez presented his family with American flags, and the Service's National Honor Guard served as pallbearers.



Credit: Mandy Bellamy/USFWS

A male Attwater's greater prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*) strutting at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. This subspecies is one of three and is federally listed as critically endangered under the Endangered Species Act due to extreme loss of native prairie and oak savanna habitat.

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Credit: Meredith Stroud/USFWS



Native little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) grass seeds are harvested at Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge to restore other areas of the refuge.

Credit: John Magera/USFWS



A white-tailed fawn (*Odocoileus virginianus texanus*) runs through a field of native prairie at Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

Brian Wolgamott (1982-2024)



Credit: USFWS

Brian Wolgamott working as a fire fighter.

Biography

Brian Robert Wolgamott was born on September 29, 1982, in Wichita, Kansas. After he graduated from Maize High School in 2001, he pursued a variety of jobs related to his love for adventure and the outdoors. Wolgamott worked as a mechanic in Murdo, South Dakota, and later, as an employee at Chalet Sports in Bozeman, Montana. When he moved to Big Sky, Montana, in 2011, Moonlight Basin hired him as a rental and repair supervisor. After 2 years working at Moonlight Basin, Wolgamott moved to Seattle, Washington, where the ski and bicycle shop Alpine Hut employed him as a shop manager. In 2012¹, he began his wildland fire career as a seasonal forestry technician with the U.S. Forest Service, and in 2017, he accepted a full-time position, relocating to Klamath Falls, Oregon. During the early years of his wildland fire career,

he met his wife Marie, whom he married on February 17, 2018. With Marie, he raised three children: Maddox, Bryton, and Elsie. In particular, Wolgamott took great joy in sharing his love for skiing and sports with his children, and he was always passionate about helping others. In May 2022, Wolgamott began his U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) career as a fire engine operator and fire planner at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in California.

Shortly after beginning his Service career, doctors diagnosed Wolgamott with adenocarcinoma rectal cancer, which the U.S. Department of Labor identifies as a high-risk cancer related to wildland firefighting, stemming from environmental exposures on the fire line. Wolgamott continued to serve at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge as he received bi-weekly treatments at Fred Hutch Cancer Center in Seattle, Washington. He maintained a positive attitude and sense of humor as he drove back and forth close to 1,000 miles to make the round trip for treatment. In early 2023, Wolgamott underwent a surgical procedure, which removed the cancer, but a few months later, doctors identified recurrent cancer. He resumed treatment at Fred Hutch Cancer Center before eventually transferring his care to Klamath Falls, Oregon. When Wolgamott could no longer staff a fire engine, he continued to serve at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge as a fire planner. In this role, he assisted in tasks such as water quality monitoring, reprogramming radios, maintaining the local wildland fire supply cache, and serving as the station's safety officer. He remained dedicated to the wildland fire community, serving dutifully until his death.

Cause of Death

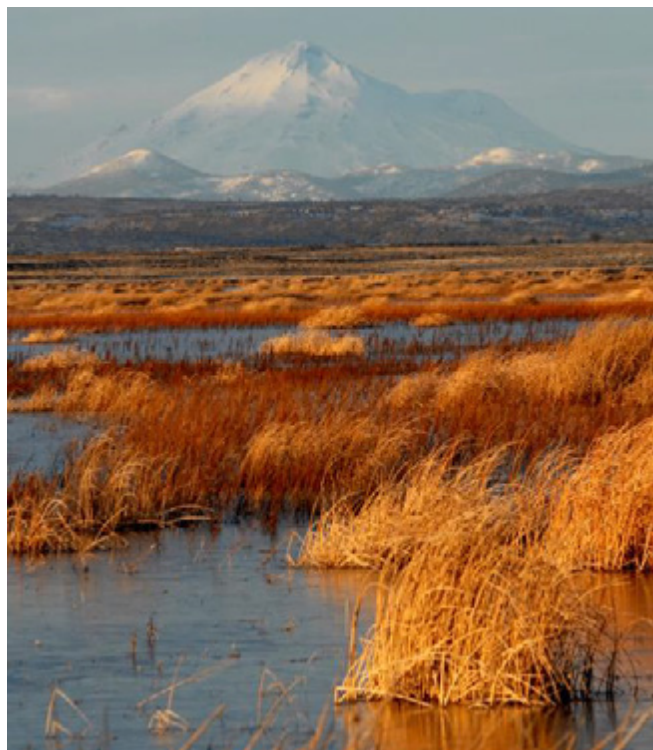
On November 21, 2024, Wolgamott was admitted to Sky Lakes Medical Center in Klamath Falls, Oregon, due to complications of the adenocarcinoma rectal cancer spreading beyond treatable levels. On the evening of November 28, Wolgamott passed away after over 2 years of battling with cancer. His passing was deemed a line of duty death. In honor of his service, a dignified transport and Honor Watch brought Wolgamott home to his final resting place. Service wildland fire leadership and an interagency Honor Guard supported the Wolgamott family in honoring Wolgamott's life, holding a memorial service and burial with full honors and laying Wolgamott to rest in his service uniform.

Footnotes

¹ While this date is inconsistent with his personal LinkedIn page, which states he began his wildland fire career in June of 2014, the year 2012 aligns with “In Honor of Service and Strength: Remembering Brian Wolgamott” and his obituary “Brian Wolgamott” on Downing & Lahey.

Special Note: Brian Wolgamott died due to cancer that was a direct result of his work, shaping aspects of his life as discussed in his biography. His wishes are to spread cancer risk awareness, especially to his brothers and sisters in wildland fire. He advocated for pursuing cancer screenings early and often.

The [National Firefighter Registry for Cancer \(NFR\)](#), administered by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, is open all U.S. firefighters, with or without cancer and no matter their length of service. By joining NFR, firefighters can help researchers develop a greater understanding of the links between firefighting and cancer as well as pave the way for new safety measures to reduce the risk of cancer among U.S. firefighters.



Credit: Dave Menke/USFWS

Tule Lake lower marsh with Mount Ranier in the Background at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in California. The refuge protects a remaining portion of what was once a vast shallow lake, providing vital habitat along the Pacific Flyway for cranes, geese, swans, pelicans, and raptors.



Credit: USFWS

Marie Wolgamott, spouse of Brian Wolgamott, receives the American flag from the Service Honor Guard during a memorial ceremony.

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Oral History Program

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Historian Mark Madison interviewed Ray Bentley (Pilot and Biologist, Pacific Flyway, Corvallis, Oregon) and Philip Thorpe (Pilot and Biologist, Central Flyway, Denver, Colorado) on September 27, 2005. In 2010, Ray Bentley died in a plane crash along with another Service employee, David S. Pitkin. The full written transcript for this interview is available in the [USFWS Oral History Collection](#).

The Service's Oral History Subcommittee, through interviews, captures the stories of employees and partners who shaped the Service's legacy across the years. By sharing these stories, our goal is to inform and inspire current and future employees, and most importantly, help all learn from our history. History builds the future. For additional information on this program, you can contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Oral History Project Manager, Alexandra_Henry@fws.gov or view the full collection at www.fws.gov.

MARK: Ray, why don't we start with you. When did you come to work with Fish and Wildlife?

RAY: I started with the Fish and Wildlife Service in early 1999.

MARK: What had you done prior?

RAY: I worked for four years prior with USGS Biological Resource Division. My position there was a biologist, and then I did some incidental flying for them also.

MARK: And Philip, what about you?

PHILIP: With this job in 1997, in April of 1997. I had just completed my master's degree at Montana State in Bozeman and several other wildlife jobs prior to that with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and State Agencies.

MARK: All right, and Ray, let's start with you. What exactly is your job?

RAY: Well, I work as a pilot biologist based on Pacific Flyway. Probably a crucial or important thing that I do is the annual waterfowl population surveys conducted in May, July, and again in the first week of January. I also fly for the Fish and Wildlife Service in the capacity as pilot biologist in various other mission profiles. I just completed a four-day survey of brown pelicans on the Oregon/Washington coast. I also do an annual marine mammal survey/census. I also do some work with raptors in the spring, shorebirds in the spring and late fall. Anything. The aircraft is basically on call after the waterfowl work is done for any, in support of any natural resource or research program. Then, we are also involved in a pre-season waterfowl banding program. My particular station is in south-central Alberta. That is conducted throughout the month of August.

PHILIP: Pretty much similar duties. I am based out of Denver/Lakewood, CO. I am a central flyway biologist or pilot biologist, and, starting in the summer, I fly in May and July in southern Saskatchewan, band in Saskatchewan in August. In September, I typically fly a Rocky Mountain population of Sandhill Cranes that are in the Montana, Idaho, Wyoming area, Utah, and that part of the west. I do light goose productivity surveys, which is part of the western central flyway light goose population, and we speciate and age birds. One of the more important things of the survey is getting the Ross' Geese out of the snow geese, so we get a handle on the species composition of Ross' geese in the central flyway. We do mid-winter surveys in Texas.



Sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis*) in a field on Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada.

Credit: Jenner Harsha/USFWS



A greater yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*), which is a shorebird in the sandpiper family, is silhouetted as the sun goes down on a remnant of native coastal prairie at Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

Every three years, I go down to Mexico for the interior highlands and lower west coast survey of waterfowl survey. We survey pretty much whatever we see though. The main objective is duck, but if we see egrets, herons, storks, and other concentrations of shore birds and things like that we take note of that too. That is every three years. I have gone all of the way down to the Guatemalan border, and I take part in the Central Flyway Windy Harvest Survey that is done every year. That is the main thing and little things in between.

MARK: What type of airplane?

PHILIP: I fly a Cessna 206 on wheels.

RAY: Cessna 102-182, both on wheels.

MARK: Have you modified the aircraft in any particular way?

RAY: The actual aircraft itself is not particularly modified. There is some lift-enhancing devices that are installed. They are actually factory add-on's to the aircraft. The principal modifications come in the data acquisition systems that I have on board. Currently, they are simply a laptop computers which we can record data and view our records and information onto the laptops in flight and then at night, or in our hotel rooms, or in our office setting, we essentially analyze and synthesize that data into tables, graphs and report-ready products.

MARK: Do you usually fly alone or do you take someone with you?

RAY: It depends on the mission profile. Most bird surveys or waterfowl surveys consist of a right seat observer, pilot observer, and left front seat. Frequently, in my case, I frequently have for my winter surveys a trainee or someone in the back seat in some capacity of observing, although it is difficult to observe much from the back seat. Telemetry surveys, I typically fly alone. There really is not always a need to have someone there, although because they are quite long and tedious, it is nice to have company on occasion. I would say in my case it is usually a crew of two.

PHILIP: Similar. Yeah. Mostly a crew of two. Occasionally, I have had people sitting in the backseat doing telemetry or as a third observer.

MARK: Is it hard to observe and pilot sometimes?

PHILIP: I do not find it to be that difficult. I guess it takes getting used to, but it's a perfect example of a need for multitasking. I always look at it as the primary objective first and foremost is safety and operation of the aircraft, and the crew, and the safety of the crew and that sort of thing.

There is sort of a prioritization of duties. The flying part of the position really calls for elemental multitasking because we are dealing with the physical flying of the aircraft, the navigation, dealing with air traffic control in certain situations, navigating in and around controlled air space in certain places.

Then comes the navigating on the survey transects or if you are not on transects, then navigating the aircraft or maneuvering the aircraft into a habitat region in appropriate configurations to put on a cruise survey to put most of your targets onto the observer side of the aircraft.

Then next in priority, I would say, would be probably the identification and classification of the social groupings of the resource that you are looking at, whether it is waterfowl or whether you are looking at mammals or raptors or whatever. We identify to species age and sex cohorts and then also go down to, in most cases, some sort of a social grouping, all of that being done

simultaneously by the left-seat pilot. Not to say that it is difficult, I don't think of it as difficult, but certain tasks do drop off as the work load comes up, so sometimes I will drop off on the identification briefly to devote more time to, again going back to the primary objective, which is aircraft operation, safety of the crew.

My mentor had said, "They are just ducks." So if you have a power line or something coming up, you forget the duck and worry about the power line. That has become another thing that you have to deal with. Not only do you have to fly the plane and navigate and worry about your duck identification, but we have all become computer support people in the plane, so we are constantly checking to make sure the computers are both running, that the observer is recording properly and that his is working, because in most of the planes, he can't see it. You get some older people that are not real computer literate and so you are having to teach them how to use computers, recording, making sure it is recording and getting the famous "blue window of death" occasionally when the computers lock up or something like that happens, so the computers have been a nice addition to the planes, but they have also become a big headache. They are a mixed blessing.

Also, as Ray had said, you have to worry about your observer, too. If you have one that you have flown with for a while, it makes life a lot easier because he knows the routine, or she knows the routine, and you don't have to worry about if they are getting sick, or if they are not doing something. If you get a new observer, you have to worry about if they are identifying species correctly, if they are not feeling well, all kinds of things that you have to constantly be monitoring there, but really, once you have done it for a few years, it all blends together and becomes routine.

RAY: There is a learning curve when you bring new people on, especially new observers. They can quickly become overwhelmed, especially in survey situations where there are large numbers and multispecies and during training flights, it will take several passes, lots of circling, lots of pointing things out. Then there is an error bar associated with that early data with the trainee that hopefully will tighten up as they gain more experience. It isn't something that you can just come in off the street and pick up. There is quite a bit of experience, and you just have

to get in the air and learn to quickly and accurately as possible enumerate and classify species.

MARK: Are your observers usually primarily NSA or Fish and Wildlife Service?

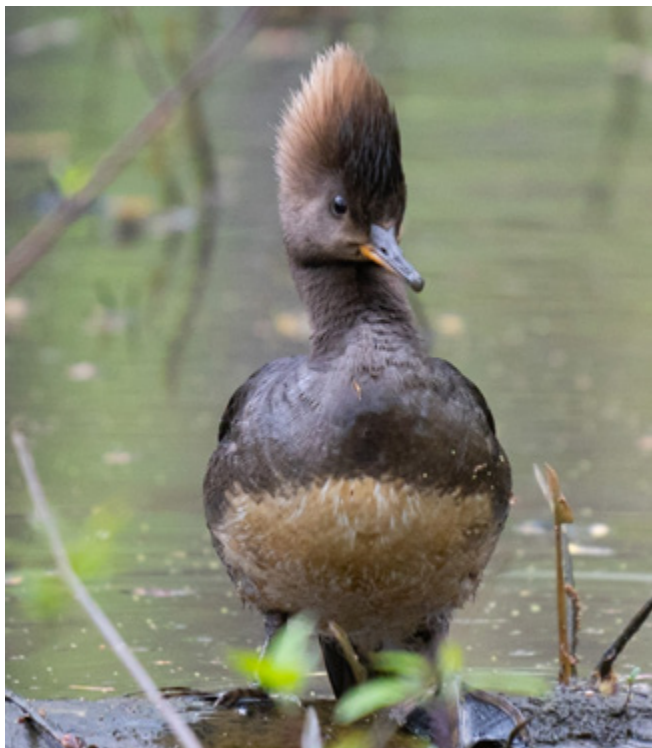
RAY: Mine are mostly Fish and Wildlife or USGS. I would say that most of them have some experience in waterfowl identification and biology, at least from the ground level when they start. Usually that is the case and that certainly helps. Any experience, any background experience, even if it is from a harvesting standpoint, duck hunters typically you can bring along quite quickly as an observer as that is what they have been doing recreationally.

PHILIP: Yeah, I fly with Federal and State.

MARK: In talking about observation, the only major complaint is that you guys have to observe from the top down (laughter) to do the opposite all the rest of the time. (Indiscernible). What is the challenge with that type of observation?

PHILIP: It is certainly different. I know when I got the job, I had been working with ducks for a number of years professionally and doing ground based surveys and when I got in the plane and looking down on them, there were some species that I just did not recognize and couldn't believe that I could not recognize these species. So there are different characteristics that you learn that you don't see on the ground that you only see in the air. It certainly took me a while to learn those new characteristics.

RAY: Yeah, it's different, for sure. There are field marks that you observe from the air that you wouldn't consider field marks, and you won't see those in any field guide or any bird book, or anything like that because most people, like you say, are not looking at a 60° or so angle down. Also, another challenge, if you call it that, and it is an issue, is that we are counting these targets at a relatively low altitude, so you have the resource itself can become a hazard in certain situations in case of waterfowl when they are coming off of the wetlands in large numbers and you are actually flying through these flocks trying to count and miss birds at the same time.



A female hooded-merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) is one of many types of ducks found in the Central Flyway.

MARK: Are you counting individuals or are you counting groups and then extrapolating from there?

PHILIP: Yes, as best I can depending on how many there are. In the May survey when the birds are spaced out and smaller numbers on the breeding ground, you really do just say one pair and might have groups of 40 or 50 in some cases. But most of the time, you are actually counting birds and speciating. On winter surveys, you have larger flocks and everyone probably does it a little differently, but I try to still count up to about a hundred. You know, I count up to 10 and count up to 100, and then you take that and say, well if that is 100, then there is 100, 200, 300, up to a thousand and then after a thousand, there is 1000, 2000, like that. I try not to get much bigger than 1000. The smaller, I think, your estimating unit, the more accurate you are, but we have been shown in some of Texas estimates to be within a couple hundred birds of some pretty big flocks.

RAY: We have some rather crude software programs that we can use for training purposes to teach observers what a hundred birds looks like, what 500 targets look like, but I use that every year prior to the mid-

winter surveys where there are large numbers just as a refresher, just so I can go back up and go, "Okay, this is what 200 targets looks like." Another technique that I use on my mid-winters is if I come to a refuge system or a large concentration of waterfowl, we will keep the aircraft high so that the research stays down on the water, and doesn't flush them up, and we will get an assessment of what the total number is and we kind of almost do this by consensus. We will come up with a number and we will say, "Well, I come up with 22,000 birds." So then we have this 22,000 number in our head and then we will go down and do a couple of low level passes and try and pick out percentages, because what the problem is, if you did a single low level pass, you would have 22,000 targets of mixed species going this way and that way. So then we will transcribe onto our recording system, ducks 22,000, 50% mallard, 30% widgeon, 10% green wing and hopefully that all adds up to 100 when we are done.

PHILIP: And that's exactly how we do it in Mexico, too, when we get lots of big flocks, we will do the same thing. We will fly over and both get a number and fine tune it and we will say there are 20,000 birds and then go down and do several passes through them, and then say, "Well I got a whole bunch of widgeon and that and that and that," and then break it down into percentages. I think that is actually more accurate then, like Ray was saying, buzzing through because you don't get an accurate count.

RAY: You just get overwhelmed. Even if you are experienced, you are just overwhelmed by a huge concentration. Some of the records systems out on the West Coast will easily have 50,000 birds in December.

PHILIP: We also, when there are mixed species of geese, I will have my observer count light geese or dark geese and I will count the other ones, "You get the light geese and I'll get the dark geese." It kind of breaks the workload up that way too.

MARK: When you guys are in Mexico, (inaudible), or flying in Canada, have you noticed any differences with other governments? We are some of the few Service officials that really work in an international setting (Becomes indiscernible). I'm just curious if you've noticed any difference.

RAY: You do more in Mexico, so ...

PHILIP: Mexico has some problems just because when a president is reelected or elected, the whole government changes. So, it would be like all of us being in the job for four years and then gone and a new government comes in, so there is not as much institutional knowledge in the Federal government. Now Ducks Unlimited and some other non-profit and NGO types have good institutional knowledge, and we deal with some of the universities and Ducks Unlimited down in Mexico as people have been around for a while. We tend to deal with them more than the Federal government. We deal with the Federal government more because we are supposed to. We try to keep them in the loop, but we would sponsor a change on their part. Canada is just like the U.S. in terms of management, I think.

RAY: Yeah, from what I have seen. I worked with DU on the banding program and in my particular place where I do my pre-season waterfowl banding is on Ducks Unlimited managed wetlands, so I work closely with those folks. It's just a name change really.

PHILIP: I deal with the Canadian Wildlife Service now with banding and that is a fully cooperative effort. I have been dealing with Dan Neiman, who I think now is the ranking member of our whole survey group in terms of having the most years in, who has over 30 years of dealing with waterfowl survey in banding and things like that, so it's nice working with somebody with that background.

MARK: Earlier Ray had mentioned doing some mammal surveys. How is that different?

RAY: It is really not different and I get the question, you know, "Which do you like?" and to be perfectly honest, they are all targets in different habitats and so, bigger or smaller, but they are still just targets. What changes are the flying conditions as far as the habitats you are flying in and the weather conditions. Actually, the marine mammals that I do are just tag-on in conjunction with our annual brown pelican surveys and since we are surveying in-shore reef systems for pelicans, the elephant seals and sea lions and things are on those same rock

outcroppings and so it really isn't any different at all. It is one of my favorite surveys though, but that is simply because the weather is usually good. It kind of represents the end of one season prior to going into the winter waterfowl season, and so it's good weather, real beautiful scenery on the Oregon/ Washington coastline and they are very visible.

MARK: What is the hardest survey?

RAY: I think the May survey is tough, not because of the difficulty in counting, but a lot is riding on this and there is a lot of weight put on the data that we submit and so the necessity for accuracy, is to me higher. I really try to do the best on all of them, but on that one, I really try and tighten the error bars and follow our standard operating procedures. Also in May in the prairies, the weather can be an issue and it isn't the counting of the birds, but it is all the extraneous things that you have. The schedule you are trying to keep, the weather and you have lots of things you are trying to coordinate. And it is long too.

PHILIP: Yeah, it can be three or four weeks dealing with that, every day.

RAY: So I think that the May survey is more intense, probably the one we put a lot of effort and money and time into, perfecting and tweaking.

MARK: When you guys came into the pilot biologists, who mentored you?

PHILIP: Doug Benning was my mentor out of Denver.

RAY: It was administratively mentored by Elizabeth Huggins for about six months and then I actually flew with a former pilot bio from the service named Skip Lacey for a little while. In this, there is a mentoring process of approximately a year and a half or two years or something. It is nonspecified how long, it is kind of like how you progress in our unit and you usually are farmed out to several people because they would like you to experience how different people do things. So in actuality, I spent one season with Phil in Saskatchewan...

PHILIP: Mentoring each other.



Wildlife Biologist and Pilot Phil Thorpe and former Pilot Biologist, Dr. Fred Glover, standing with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cessna in Saskatchewan in 2007. Pilot biologists are some of the most uniquely trained Service employees, using aircraft to conduct aerial monitoring wildlife and habitats across North America while also supporting wildlife relocation, fire management, law enforcement and disaster response.

RAY: You sort of mentored more. It was my airplane, but his survey and that kind of thing. Phil also mentored me on my first banding program, so I learned a lot of valuable stuff there that I use in my banding programs now. We were just comparing notes earlier that a lot of things that I took from the first year with Phil, I now, when I am mentoring prospective band station leaders, I say this is the best way to do it.

MARK: Was there some good advice you guys got from mentors?

RAY: One thing I picked up from Mr. Lacey was regarding low level flying operations. We were in the aircraft one day, and he said, "Ray, you know there really isn't anything different between low level flying and 'high level or regular' flying, just don't run into anything." That was basically it in a nutshell. The airplane flies the exact same whether you are low or high. It is just there are more things to run into, so don't run into those and you are good to go.

PHILIP: Yeah, I think that is probably the most valuable lesson that I got was how to survive at low level. I knew how to fly, it was a matter of how you are below a lot of things at that elevation, power lines and towers and all kinds of stuff that normally you don't have to watch out for or think about. So that

was the most valuable thing from Doug was how to survive at 150 feet.

MARK: Have you had any dangerous incidents?

PHILIP: You are gonna need to turn that camera off (laughter).

MARK: Anything you would like to share with the camera?

PHILIP: So far, in terms of hazards and things, no. I have been fortunate enough to either see them or have other people see them and I think we all, when we get into the plane, the more people in the plane, the more people we brief on, "Listen, we are all in the plane together and if we hit a power line, you're going down too." So it's an incentive for you to look out as much as for me.

RAY: We spent a lot of time in training and then, kind of like, you talk to people and say, "Have you ever had a hair-raising this or that?" and if the answer is no, then actually we are doing our job correctly, so the answer hopefully is no. Very seldom do things happen. We had an engine issue in 2006, but ... If it is uneventful, then it is very successful. Our unit has a pretty good record. I'm sure some people can talk about some issues (laughter).

MARK: You guys haven't been in service that long have you witnessed any changes (Becomes indiscernible) in your job, your equipment?

RAY: We keep getting cut back with funding issues and so my flying, I'm having to truncate my surveys a little bit, trying to save money here or there, shortened surveys, fewer surveys, all with the caveat that they are going to be reinstated at some point, but I haven't identified when that point exactly happens. **PHILIP:** I do mostly core migratory bird stuff and so far, nothing has been reduced too much, except for our July survey which had been cut. In terms of technology, when I first got the job, we did not have the computers, we just used recorders and so we have gone up from using recorders to the computers and the computers actually knowing, for our May survey, where we are and so we don't necessarily have to break down

the survey by segments and things like that. When I first got the job, Doug had me fly the whole survey without using the GPS or anything, just using the maps the way he used to do it, and so now, a lot of times those maps are just between the seats, just in case, and I have a lot more stuff that tells me where I am, what is going on, in terms of fuel and time and everything and it is just going up from there, I think. It's getting easier.

MARK: Any other changes?

RAY: There are some proposed changes on the horizon regarding our aircraft, but if they actually come to fruition will be probably quite beneficial for our safety. We are in somewhat of a transition stage from the aircraft themselves, not the data acquisition systems, but the aircraft themselves are somewhat dated technology and there are some more advanced stuff coming along that I kind of look forward to.

MARK: (Too quiet to hear, but sounds like the question has to do with what kind of advice they would give to new trainees).

RAY: Well, I have observers that.... I fly with a lot of different people. Frequently people who are on the ground and have never done this kind of work and they are just sure that they would love it get up there and after a long, tiring day of maneuvering, they start to have a little different idea. There are some physical demands. It's quite a long day. On the other hand, I have some other folks who really begin the observer routine and are kind of very reluctant and then after they flown a while, they start liking it more and more. I don't know about advice, but just I try to convince all of my observers and stress that the safety of the crew and the aircraft are paramount and I am not going to put anyone in jeopardy over a duck or an eagle or a seal and with that in mind, it is a fantastic way to make a living. It is one of those things that there are times when I am surprised that I actually get paid to do this. I have to pinch myself, but it's a good gig and some of my observers are of the same mind.

PHILIP: And those are the best observers.



Credit: Clayton Ferrell/USFWS

A male wood duck (*Aix sponsa*) feeding in shallow water at Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge. Also known as puddle ducks, wood ducks primarily feed in shallow water on seeds, insects and acorns.

RAY: Yes.

PHILIP: If you like flying and wildlife, then it is great. You see a lot of habitat and the nice thing about our job is not only seeing one little area, but you are seeing the whole flyaway from Canada down to Mexico. We went down to Nicaragua three years ago, so it is great being able to see the whole expanse of where these birds go and how similar and different their habitats are. Some parts of Mexico look like their breeding grounds in Canada, so there are a lot of similarities and differences. For observers, we look for people that like waterfowl or whatever the survey is, their passion about that and if they can fly, then that's great. Not everyone can put up with the turning and twisting.

MARK: That brings up an interesting point about you guys, (Becomes indiscernible). **PHILIP:** My undergraduate degree is in natural resource management, my master's is in wildlife, so I consider myself a biologist, but I also have been flying since I was 18 and I taught flying. I actually went a couple of years, I got an associate's degree in aviation management, so both of those are intertwined. It is great to be able to do both because I like them. It's nice to be able to do both.

RAY: I had a very similar, kind of a parallel evolution between aviation and biology. I had worked for several years out of college for state and federal agencies as a biologist technician and a field biologist and that sort of thing in several capacities in pretty diverse background as far as species, with carnivores and raptors and some waterfowl and small mammals, and all the time I was doing that, I also had a passion for flying and I have been flying since I was quite young. My parents were aircraft owners and pilots and so as soon as I got out of college, I also picked up a private pilot ticket and owned a few airplanes and things like that.

At some point, I eventually held a commercial license and float ratings and multi-engine ratings and all of these things and I looked at that I had two passions, one was biology and wildlife, even recreational and wildlife work, and the other was flying and I was very fortunate at some point to actually have those two lines of passion converge into a good deal. I consider myself quite fortunate to have that happen because when I was a pilot, I used to think that this would be great if I could combine these two things. I did it for a few years on an incidental basis with another federal agency and eventually came to Fish and Wildlife.

MARK: Is there anything either of you want to say about your work while you have a chance here?

PHILIP: I think he just said it. Having a good deal. Hopefully they will think that it is still important when we do this again in 25 years.

MARK: That's another good question, why is it important? (Becomes indiscernible)

RAY: Putting a qualified and trained observer in the air shortened the temporal variation or the time variation when you are trying to get an index or census or some sort of a handle on resource use and number. There are cases where ground observers can get the same data, but they are limited as far as their access and how much area they can physically cover. In a light aircraft, we can cover huge amounts of area in short periods of time, so we get the snapshot and it's very important, especially when you standardize the time that you take your snapshot and the methodology that you

use and then you can compare that year in and year out to get trend analysis. I think that to this point, there really isn't a better... until there is maybe some satellite system or something. Right now a light aircraft with a trained observer is the way to get those snapshots and short temporal scales over a wide geographic area.

PHILIP: The access in some of the remote areas in northern Canada and Alaska, you just can't do it any other way. There are still remote areas all through the country, and even trespassing access and things like that on the East Coast, where you might not be able to access bays because of property that you just can't access any other way but the air. And even if you were to access it, you wouldn't be able to see the whole water body. By the time you get to a different part of the water body, things have moved around. So it is really an ideal way to get that snapshot and cover hundreds of miles in a day.

The Service Honor Guard: Reverence Made Visible

Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, Headquarters, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) faced the sudden loss of Director Sam Hamilton. In the absence of a formal ceremonial unit, the Service turned to partners for support in laying Director Hamilton to rest with the dignity he deserved. From that experience came a lasting commitment: the establishment of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Honor Guard (SHG) as the agency's official ceremonial unit.

What began as a small team of dedicated Federal Wildlife Officers has grown into a highly trained, disciplined unit that represents the Service with pride and reverence.

From its earliest days, the Service Honor Guard has carried profound meaning. Its first official duty was to participate in the dedication of Pennsylvania State Game Lands Number 93 in honor of those who perished aboard Flight 93 on September 11, 2001. Included among the passengers was Refuge Manager Rich Guadagno, who spent his final moments fighting for control of the airplane. The ceremony established the SHG's enduring charge to ensure those who served are never forgotten and their sacrifices are honored with the utmost respect.

The SHG is composed of volunteer Federal Wildlife Officers from across the Service and began including FWS firefighters in 2018. Members commit to rigorous training and must be ready to deploy at a moment's notice. They uphold the highest standards of professionalism, knowing that every movement, every gesture reflects on both the individual and the entire Service. Their distinct uniform signals both honor and responsibility as a visible reminder of the solemn duties they carry on behalf of us all.

The SHG holds a responsibility to honor fallen comrades and support their families. Drawing from time-honored traditions of military, law enforcement, and firefighter honors, the Service Honor Guard performs ceremonies



Credit: Stacey Hayden/USFWS

The Service Honor Guard stands in front of flags during a memorial ceremony.



Credit: Ryan Hagerty/USFWS

The Service Honor Guard carries national and agency flags during a memorial ceremony at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

that are rich in symbolism and meaning. The careful draping and folding of the American flag, the deliberate and measured salutes and the quiet precision of each movement all serve to recognize a life of service. These acts are not merely ceremonial; they are expressions of gratitude, respect and remembrance. They affirm that a life dedicated to public service will always be honored within the Service community.

Members of the SHG often speak of their role as one of the most meaningful opportunities to give back. It is a profound privilege to stand for those who can no longer stand, to carry forward their legacy and to provide comfort to families in their most difficult moments. Their presence offers a visible reminder that no one who serves in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does so alone

While memorial services remain central to the SHG's responsibility, members of the guard also represent the Service at joyous events such as dedications, commemorative ceremonies and even in parades. In each setting, the guard embodies the values of duty, honor, and service - strengthening the connection among employees and reinforcing the legacy of those who came before us.

"The Service Honor Guard fills several roles. It was created to honor our fallen and their families first and foremost with tradition and reverence. Another role is to represent the US Fish and Wildlife Service in ceremonies and special events, to invoke a sense unity and reverence in our FWS employees. Finally, but importantly, the SHG serves as a visual reminder of the broader community the Service represents; it evokes a felt sense of honor for the personal bonds we have to each other and to our lost loved ones."

—Samantha Fleming,
Chief of the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Anytime I am in the presence of the SHG I am overcome with a strong sense of pride and I put my shoulders back and stand a little taller. I think you will do the same.



Credit: USFWS

The Service Honor Guard in informal dress salutes an American flag draped coffin during training.



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Specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

