

## Years of knowledge and experience go out the door

by Rick Ernst

Though often a quiet scholar, supervisory biologist Ted Bailey has had a profound impact on the wildlife and people of the Kenai Peninsula. He will be retiring after almost 24 years of service to Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. His career has spanned the globe with its greatest accomplishments here in Alaska.

Ted was born in a rural area of southeast Ohio. He went to school in a one-room schoolhouse and after high school, enlisted in the Air Force. The military provided the opportunity to “see the world” and for almost four years he traveled to Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Ted began his college education through extension courses while in the military before enrolling at Ohio State University. He received his bachelor’s degree in Zoology in 1965. His first job with the Fish and Wildlife Service was as a fish biologist in northwestern Nebraska, where he happened to meet his wife, Mary. Mary was a schoolteacher in a one-room country school, who brought her class to the fish hatchery for a field trip. After a year of hatchery work Ted decided to return to graduate school at Ohio State University where he received his Master of Science degree in 1968.

Ted then wrote to many universities including the Wildlife Coop Unit at the University of Alaska Fairbanks interested in doing some research on wolverine. Unfortunately, that didn’t work out. But fortunately he went to work instead under Dr. Maurice Hornocker, the Wildlife Coop Unit leader at the University of Idaho, studying bobcats. Ted liked the atmosphere at the University of Idaho because it was a much smaller school than Ohio State University, and “professors actually talked to their students”. Ted earned his Ph.D. on bobcat ecology in 1973 and also worked on a wolverine feasibility study during the 1972-73 winter near Hungry Horse, Montana. An opportunity to study leopards in Africa came later in 1973, so Ted, Mary, and their three children: Becky, Kim, and Brian headed for the “Dark Continent.” Ted worked at Kruger National Park in the Republic of South Africa for two years studying leopards but had opportunities to assist in other studies such as capturing white rhinos. He still carries a scar from getting hit in the face while on a capture team driving after a

rhino at 30mph through the thorny brush. Mary also helped with leopard work as well as caring for and teaching their children.

In 1975 the family returned to Idaho where Ted worked as a research associate for the University of Idaho summarizing the data from his African study. He eventually wrote a book entitled “The African Leopard” which is still considered a classic on the ecology of leopards. In April 1976 the family moved north to Alaska as Ted was hired by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to work at the Moose Research Center (north of Sterling). In September 1977 Jim Frates, then refuge manager, hired Ted as a wildlife biologist at the Kenai National Moose Range. In 1980 with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the name and purpose of the Moose Range was legally changed to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, the major purpose of the refuge was for the conservation of not just moose but was expanded to a variety of fish and wildlife populations and habitats.

Ted was excited and proud to work on a diverse program: studying brown bears with Chuck Schwartz from Alaska Department of Fish and Game, which led to the formation of the Interagency Brown Bear Study Team (included ADF&G, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service); wolves (continued studies initiated by Rolf Peterson, Michigan Technological University); and trumpeter swan surveys (initiated by former refuge manager Will Troyer). Other species that were monitored and researched included lynx, hares, marten, caribou, passerine birds, loons, beavers and wood frogs.

Ted was instrumental in helping people realize that the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is important to a lot of critters, in addition to moose. Ted helped initiate the 1985-86 caribou reintroduction (in cooperation with Alaska Department of Fish and Game) which has been a big success. Ted lead the refuge’s 18-year lynx/hare monitoring and research program. He plans to complete a final report on the work after retirement.

As the supervisor of the biology staff, Ted truly put “wildlife first” and his dedication to the natural resources of this refuge is an example for the rest of us to follow. Ted and Mary plan on remaining on the Ke-

nai Peninsula. While Ted plans on traveling, writing and generally relaxing, Mary wants to continue working for a few more years as a teacher. Ted has enjoyed working with people dedicated to wildlife conservation, and we as a staff will greatly miss his years of knowledge and experience gained at this refuge. We

congratulate him on reaching this milestone in life, and we wish him good health so he can enjoy his retirement to the fullest! Good luck and best wishes Ted!

*For more information about the Refuge, visit the headquarters on Ski Hill Road in Soldotna, call 262-7021 or see the website at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/>.*