

Edward Alexander Preble

Edward Alexander Preble was a naturalist and conservationist who conducted major field explorations of the birds and mammals of the northwest regions of Canada and the United States. Preble was born in Somerville, Massachusetts, and developed a strong interest in natural history during his youth in Wilmington, Massachusetts, and summers in Ossipee, New Hampshire. Early natural history contacts included Frank Blake Webster and Frank Harris Hitchcock. Through his acquaintance with Hitchcock, Preble was appointed a field naturalist with the Bureau of Biological Survey in 1892 under C. Hart Merriam.



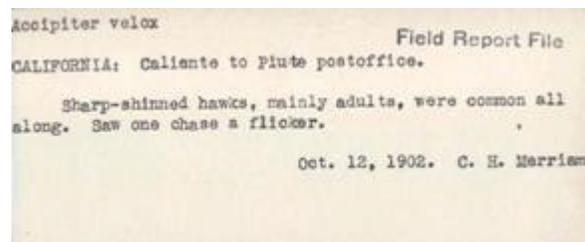
Preble began his field work with Vernon Bailey in Texas, and worked in Georgia, Maryland, Oregon, Washington, and Utah, conducting life zone samplings. In 1900 Preble began his major field explorations for the bureau with a trip to the Hudson Bay region of Canada with his brother, Alfred Emerson Preble. In 1901 the Preble brothers traveled and collected in the Athabasca-Mackenzie (Canada) regions. Edward Preble remained in the Mackenzie River region alone through the winter of 1903-1904. The results of these explorations were published in *A Biological Investigation of the Athabasca-Mackenzie Region*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, *North American Fauna* 27, 1908.

In 1914 Preble, Wilfred H. Osgood, and George H. Parker served on a federal commission to study and report on the fur seals of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska. In addition to the report, published in 1915, Preble also compiled *A Biological Investigation of the Pribilof Islands*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, *North American Fauna* 46, 1923. Preble's last major field exploration was an investigation of the status of water birds of the Athabasca and Peace River deltas with Luther J. Goldman in 1934.

Preble kept detailed field diaries and notebooks with observations on his physical surroundings, weather, and people he encountered. Preble's research for the Bureau of Biological Survey resulted in faunal surveys and conservation/wildlife management reports, with few systematic or taxonomic studies.

In addition to field explorations, Preble always recorded observations of the local flora, fauna and physical surroundings in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and the Washington, D.C., area. With Waldo McAtee and Alexander Wetmore, he conducted local bird counts for the National Audubon Society that were published in *Bird-Lore*.

In his later years with the Bureau of Biological Survey as senior biologist, Preble became very interested in wildlife management and conservation. In 1925 Preble was appointed consulting naturalist for *Nature Magazine*, and in 1935 he retired from government service to become associate editor. Until his death in 1957, he edited, reviewed, and wrote articles for *Nature Magazine*, the publication of the American Nature Association.



Thank you Bob Hartman for contributing this observer biography to our newsletter!