

# Last Month's Program: *Alfred M. Bailey*

Tim Johnson

November's DFO meeting on November 23 featured a modest departure from its usual format. Kris Haglund and Liz Clancy, archivists emeritae from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, jointly presented "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?"

They celebrated the career of Alfred Marshall Bailey, DMNS's second director from 1936 to 1969. Bailey was responsible for much of the Museum's development and direction. He was the force behind the Museum's dioramas, and the Museum's study collections increased greatly during his oversight.

Kris has been associated with DMNS since 1975, and managed the museum's noncurrent archives (including DFO) from 1984 to 2013. Liz, an expert on DMNS and City Park history, was image archivist at the museum and curated some 800,000 images during her tenure.

The Bailey archives occupy about 80 boxes of photographs, films, and articles, much of which is now digitized. A prolific note-taker, photographer, and lecturer, Bailey was a major early pioneer in the use of cinematography (and photography in general) in ornithology.

Further details and dates of Bailey's career can be found in the December *Lark Bunting* excellent summary, and also in the obituary published in the 1981 *Auk* 98:173-175, available at the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive (SORA) <https://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/auk/v098no1/p0173-p0175>.

Bailey's credo was that fieldwork is the lifeblood of a natural history museum, and he was an avid field explorer. The bulk of Kris's and Liz's lively presentation was a documentary of Bailey's field expeditions.

They started with the first in 1912 when he voyaged to Laysan Island with the U.S. Biological Survey to help exterminate rabbits that were threatening the island's endemic birds, half of which later became extinct.

His last major field trip was to Botswana, just before his retirement from DMNS in 1969.

Best of all, Kris and Liz illustrated the extensive catalog of field trips with images from the Bailey archives. These demonstrated Bailey's adventurous nature. They read selections from Bailey's notes on the expeditions.

Notable among the field expeditions was a 16-month sojourn in the Arctic in 1921-1922. There he amassed an extensive photo collection of indigenous peoples and in addition trained them, and non-indigenous hunters as well, in the preparation of museum specimens. This training resulted in a wealth of data from remote Arctic territories over many years.

In 1926, Bailey embarked on a 2,000 mile expedition in Ethiopia by mule, led by William Osgood of the Field Museum in Chicago where Bailey then worked. Collecting some 4,000 bird and animal specimens along the way, including the first ibex, the trip took seven months and included a meeting with Haile Selassie, then Ethiopia's regent.

Bailey is remembered by ornithologists for the two-volume *Birds of Colorado* (1965, with Robert Niedrach) and *Birds of Arctic Alaska* (1948), among many other (200+) publications. Kris and Liz indicated that a biography of Bailey is in the works. We're looking forward to it.

## Field Trips

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### Red Rocks Park

**Sunday, January 24**

**8:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

George Mayfield & Karen Drozda (Email: [georgemayfield@gmail.com](mailto:georgemayfield@gmail.com) Phone: 720-289-9395)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

**Directions:** Meet at the Trading Post parking lot at Red Rocks Park. Call for directions if this location is unfamiliar to you.

We will be viewing the Trading Post feeders before the park gets busy and hope for views of Golden-crowned Sparrow and possibly rosy-finches if it is snowy.

We will walk around Red Rocks Park looking for typical foothills species.

Bring binoculars, snacks, and water. Up to 2 miles of walking on well-maintained trails.

We may also check out some spots along Bear Creek just upstream from Morrison. **Register online or contact leader.**

### Prospect Park

**(Wheat Ridge Greenbelt)**

**Saturday, January 30**

**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

Kathanne Lynch (Email: [kathannelynch@gmail.com](mailto:kathannelynch@gmail.com) Phone: 303-968-4750)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

**Directions:** From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue. Go one mile west.

Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south). Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This trip is around several small lakes and along Clear Creek. Bring snacks and water. Dress for the weather.

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