

REVIEW

DAVID J. SCHMIDLY. 2018. **Vernon Bailey: Writings of a Field Naturalist on the Frontier.** (ISBN-13: 978-1-62349-679-1, hbk with dj). Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis St., 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.tamupress.com). \$45.00 US, 472 pp., numerous b&w photos, notes to pages, bibliography, index, 6" × 9".

From the Publisher: For the first time, this volume presents Vernon Bailey's correspondences and field notes spanning the majority of his life and career, collected and annotated by David J. Schmidly. Born in 1864 and raised on a Minnesota farm, Vernon Bailey became the first person to conduct extensive biological surveys of Texas, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Oregon. He was one of the founding members of the American Society of Mammalogists and pioneered the humane treatment of animals during fieldwork, developing and patenting traps designed to limit injuries or unnecessary stress.

From an early age, Bailey developed an affinity for animals, observing their behaviors and eventually collecting specimens for closer study. He developed his own traps for catching mammals, birds, and reptiles and taught himself taxidermy from a book. When he was twenty-one, Bailey began sending samples of the animals he preserved to C. H. Merriam, the chief of the newly created Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy of the USDA, later renamed the Bureau of Biological Survey and now the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Merriam was so impressed with Bailey's work that he hired him, appointed him special field agent, and promptly sent him to the "inner frontiers" of the western and southwestern United States, despite the fact that Bailey had no formal training in biology.

During his long career, Bailey kept detailed field notes, chronicling his travels and wildlife observations. These writings provide fascinating insight into not only people's relationships with and efforts to understand wildlife but also the ways the country was rapidly growing and changing at the beginning of the twentieth century.

DAVID J. SCHMIDLY is a prominent mammalogist and the author of nine books on the natural history of mammals, including *Bats of Texas*. He was formerly the president of the University of New Mexico, Oklahoma State University, and Texas Tech University. He lives in Albuquerque.

I like books about naturalists and David Schmidly's book, *Vernon Bailey: Writings of a Field Naturalist on the Frontier*, is no exception. Bailey's life and career (1864–1942) spanned nearly 80 years and Schmidly covers every detail of his life. His career as a naturalist started at the early age of twenty-one. He was hooked on natural history and like a rushing wind Bailey left the farm life to become a highly respected and professional field naturalist. He conducted/lead several biological surveys in the western U.S.A. In 1900, he headed for the American Southwest to explore and collect for the Texas Biological Survey. In 1905, the *Biological Survey of Texas (North American Fauna No. 25)* was published. Bailey was listed as the author, Chief Field Naturalist, and the report was prepared under the direction of C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Biological Survey and the father of mammalogy. The Appendix, *Biographic Profiles of Naturalists Associated with Vernon Bailey*, is 13 pages of often hard to find biographical information about naturalists. It's nice to have this information at your fingertips as you peruse this wonderful volume and see names of naturalists you don't recognize. What a treasure trove of information about some well-known and lesser known naturalists. No book about a naturalist would be complete without pictures and this book is filled with a treasure trove of b&w photos that supplement this thrilling and captivating story. Schmidly's book will delight your curiosity and sense of wonder about the dedicated and devoted naturalist, Vernon Bailey. You will not be disappointed in this book.

—Barney Lipscomb, *Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*