(Frank) Alexander Wetmore Encyclopedia Article

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1886-1978

American ornithologist who was a biologist with the United States Bureau of Biological Survey from 1910 to 1924 and later became Superintendent of the National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C. (1924-1925), assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (1925-1944), and its Secretary from 1945 to 1952. An authority on the living and fossil birds of North and South America, he also proposed and published several editions of *Systematic Classification for the Birds of the World* between 1934 and 1960. His major work was *Birds of the Republic of Panama* (3 volumes, 1965-1972), with a fourth and final volume completed by colleagues in 1984. He described 189 previously unknown species and subspecies of birds and was active in many national and international scientific organizations. Wetmore's published output of over 700 books and monographs has been described as "staggering."