



HERB MELCHIOR PASSES

Herb Melchior worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks for 21 years. Among other positions, Herb served as the statewide furbearer coordinator for several years. In this capacity, he served ATA by writing a monthly column for our magazine for several years. In addition, he played a major role in completion of our Trappers Manual. Herb also served on the ATA Board of Directors from 1983 – 1986, including one year as Secretary.

Herb was born and raised in Ridgewood, New Jersey. He received a bachelor's degree in biology from Middlebury College in Vermont and a master's degree in plant ecology from the University of New Hampshire. Herb met his future wife Hilda while working as a camp counselor in Maine.

Herb first came to Alaska in the late 1950s to work on a botany project affiliated with Project Chariot, which was a proposal to detonate an atomic bomb in NW Alaska. He also worked as a naturalist at Mt. McKinley Park.

Herb then pursued a doctoral degree in animal ecology and behavior from the University of Wisconsin. In 1967, he took a faculty position at San Diego State University. Herb returned to Alaska in 1972, as a research ecologist with the Tundra Biome Center in Barrow. He subsequently worked in several positions at UAF, until 1977 when he took a job with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game where he remained until retiring in 1998.

ATA member Dick Bishop was the Regional Supervisor at ADF&G during most of Herb's tenure, "Herb was a man of boundless curiosity about Alaska's wildlife and Alaska's people. He promoted public appreciation of Alaska's trapping legacy and its compatibility with sound scientific wildlife management."

Past ATA President Pete Buist shares his recollections, "Herb was a GREAT furbearer biologist! His belief in science and the scientific method, coupled with his dedication to wildlife and wildlife users made him the perfect person for that job. Herb was very good at balancing the job with his personal interests. He realized that biologists, with their college degrees and their "book learning" were but one piece of the Big Picture. He knew that trappers, with their amateur, but more intimate knowledge of their traplines, knew details that the scientists were not aware of. Herb always strived to blend those sources of information and was able to determine what was best for the resources and the resource users. He served both ADFG and ATA very well in this regard."

In his free time, Herb enjoyed skiing, hiking, hunting, canoeing, dog mushing, gill net fishing and photography.

Herb passed away on June 5, at age 88. He leaves his wife Hilda and sons Thor and Soren.