

# MEMBER LIBRARY

## ARTHUR BRYAN WILLIAMS — Hunter, Explorer, Conservation Official



Theodore J. Holsten  
EMERITUS MEMBER  
Boone and Crockett Club

**Arthur Bryan Williams was born in County Clare, Ireland, in 1867. He came to British Columbia from London in 1888. He wrote:**

*When I first came to this country my plans were not to stay here permanently. But the glories of this wonderland and the magnificent sport that can be obtained here appealed to me and have held me ever since. As a boy my studies were often sadly interrupted by thoughts of hounds and hunting, fishing and shooting—an overpowering call of the “Red Gods.” It is not to be wondered at that, when there seemed but little chance of my being able to indulge in my hobbies at home, I left for a land where it would be possible for me to do so.*

In 1905, Williams, then the manager of a hydraulic mining company in the far northern gold mining town of Atlin, was requested to return to Vancouver, where

he was appointed provincial game and forest warden heading up the newly formed Department for the Protection of Game and Forests. In this role he formulated British Columbia’s first game-preservation and hunting laws, including one copied worldwide that protected a trapper’s personal trap line from encroachment.

Due to a reorganization in 1918, the position Williams held was eliminated. However, in 1929 a new Game Department was formed, once again headed by Williams as game commissioner. As before, he provided a high standard of ethics and leadership. He wrote:

*The work done by the game wardens has been highly commendable... the Game Department has a remarkably fine lot of men whose physique and devotion to duty regardless of danger, exposure to rain, frost, and snow, and often long hours of night work, has been a great credit to the Department.*

Commissioner Williams finally retired in 1934 at the age of 68. His success at leading game and sport-fishing programs

was undoubtedly enhanced by his reputation as an expert guide and recognition of him as “dean of British Columbia hunters.” The books he wrote not only describe the wonderland of British Columbia wildlife but are exciting reading because he tells of his own often perilous experiences as a hunter and explorer.

When Arthur Bryan Williams became head of the British Columbia Game Department, poaching and indiscriminate slaughter were widespread, and there were few laws relating to game conservation. His high standards and organizational leadership helped make British Columbia the sporting paradise it is today. Undoubtedly, that reputation led to his membership in the Boone and Crockett Club. Williams died in 1946. ■

### Books by Arthur Bryan Williams

*Rod & Creel in British Columbia* (1919)

*Game Trails in British Columbia* (1925)

*Fish and Game in British Columbia* (1935)

*“Photo of the author with a couple of huge billies killed out on ground over which it was quite easy to ride.” From GAME TRAILS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.*



A 1929 Game Warden’s brass badge. The badges were usually worn either on the collar, epaulet, or cap.



*“The author preparing to skin out a head.” From GAME TRAILS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.*