

George Meléndez Wright (Biologist/National Park Pioneer)

George Meléndez Wright was an American biologist who conducted the first scientific survey of fauna for the National Park Service between 1929 and 1933. He was a pioneer in many ways – especially for his holistic approach to wildlife management issues in the national parks. George and his colleagues spent years in the field researching wildlife issues and advocating for an ecosystem-wide approach to managing different species



within, and bordering, the parks. Of Salvadoran heritage on his mother's side, George grew up visiting national parks with his family, later becoming a guide for the Sierra Club, and sharing his passion and knowledge with others. In his early park research, he noted that numerous killings of predators in the U.S. National Parks (often by Park officials) had a significant impact on wildlife populations overall. His work eventually led him to be named the first-ever Chief of the Wildlife Division of the National Park Service. Years later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him to the National Resources Board.

At the impressively young age of 31, George Meléndez Wright was responsible for critical institutional reforms of the National Park Service that emphasized wildlife conservation and responsible resource management. Today, multiple mountains are named after him in national parks throughout the United States.

