

Aldo Leopold

CONSULTING FORESTER

Madison, Wisconsin

Soils Building  
April 17, 1933

Paul L. Errington  
Iowa State College  
Ames Iowa

Dear Paul:

Since I was the one who originally urged you to collect figures on crippling losses, I have tried to give all possible weight to Ray Holland's reasons for not wishing to publish the results. I agree with him that the figures would probably be used, not only by sentimentalists in behalf of restrictive measures, but also by sportsmen who wish to intelligently compare the destructiveness of various types of shooting in various types of marshland, and by game managers and administrators who need to know how much to add to the known bag in order to arrive at the actual kill. In my new book I give a great deal of emphasis to the "Lincoln Index" as a new and dependable method of finding the up or down trend of waterfowl. The Lincoln Index cannot be fully interpreted without figures on crippling loss. The more I think about it the more I am convinced that crippling-loss figures must be had as a basis for intelligent game management of any kind.

While I certainly concede that the sentimentalists will use and probably misuse figures of this sort and thus do some possible harm to sport, I do not think such harm would be a drop in the bucket compared with the harm which would result from a policy of unwillingness to face facts as they are. The question reminds me a little of the California booster policy on earthquakes. My respect for the business leaders of California has suffered permanent injury, and I fancy many other disinterested people must feel the same way. If I should ever have to vote on any question pertaining to that state, I would automatically discount their statement of the facts as biased.

Ray Holland and I are both members of the Game Policy Committee and besides he is a good friend of mine, so I am sending him a copy of this letter. I of course accept his decision as final, but it is only fair for me to tell him my opinion since I instigated the whole works.

I would urge you to send the paper to American Game, not Outdoor Life, simply on the general principle that these figures should be published by the "pros" not the "antis". I would appreciate your keeping me posted as to where they are to come out.

Yours sincerely

*Aldo Leopold*  
Aldo Leopold