



January 23, 1930

King, Errington & Yeatter

This letter is premised on the assumption that you have been experiencing killing weather the same as has prevailed here.

I have been strongly impressed that many things can be learned by collecting large numbers of killed birds at this time, which could not be learned by many months of work at any other period, accordingly I wired each of you this morning urging you to take advantage of this opportunity. I would have sent this through Standard except that I do not know where he is.

I hope you have already organized ^{here}. Take full advantage of this opportunity for getting material. If so disregard this letter and my telegram.

METHODS OF GETTING MATERIAL

At the present time it is possible to get almost any number of dead quail ^{here} by asking sportsmen, wardens, and farmers to send them in, offering a nominal payment for sending such material would doubtless produce an even greater quantity. Such payments, of course, should not be offered without consulting your local wardens. As far as the Institute is concerned however, you need not hesitate to use your expense money for such purposes or for postage or telegrams necessary to get co-operation.

KINDS OF MATERIAL

In addition to the carcasses of birds, which have starved, I am impressed by the chance to study food habits of hawks and owls during this emergency weather. You might want to get a considerable number of all species shot and sent you examination. The hawks here are departing entirely from their normal habits, at this time.



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*weighed*EXAMINATION OF DEAD BIRDS

I weighed a pair of starved quail this morning and the two of them eight ounces, which is what one healthy quail ought to weigh. It occurs to me that the weights of starved birds might be very valuable. Especially when examined in conjunction with crop and gizzard contents. A sex tally might also show that one sex dies quicker than the other. The main object of getting birds, however, is of course to examine the food they contain. Quail are starving here with their crops of sumac seed. This certainly is evidence of low value of this food. We might get new light on the value of many foods by examining many stomachs. You might also attempt to examine the birds for grit. Of course all this entails a lot of work, but if you have cold storage facilities available you could take your time about the job.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stoddard and hope you will consult with him on all technical questions, concerning which you may be doubt.

I hope to hear from you that this letter was entirely unnecessary and that you already arranged to take advantage of this chance to get all the material necessary for the study of birds under emergency conditions.

Yours sincerely,

Aldo Leopold