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Ottawa, Canada, October 5, 1931

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Mr. Aldo Leopold
905 University Avenue
Madison
Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Leopold,-

In reply to your letter of 28th September I must say that I was by no means the first to start work on the cycle problem. Seton wrote a lot about it in 1911 in his "Arctic Prairies," and Hewitt discussed it further in his book "The Conservation of the Wild Life of Canada" in 1921. I first became really interested in the phenomenon of fluctuations in 1908, the first time I went down the Mackenzie, shortly after a big rabbit "crash," and I have been gathering data ever since on the subject. I never got beyond the stage of saying "Something ought to be done about it," until I made a wood buffalo hunt in 1927 with Dr. Seymour Hadwen, our leading Canadian authority on health of animals (formerly for about two years Chief Veterinarian and Pathologist of the Biological Survey, working on reindeer diseases in Alaska). Veterinary work had been out of my line, outside of handling sledge dogs, but after we had examined a number of species for external and internal parasites and made a lot of blood slides, I decided that what we needed was more cooperation along such lines if we were to get anywhere in a practical solution of the fluctuation problem, and passed on some of my ideas on the subject to the Dominion and Provincial game officials. Elton came along shortly after and we have been working together more or less ever since.

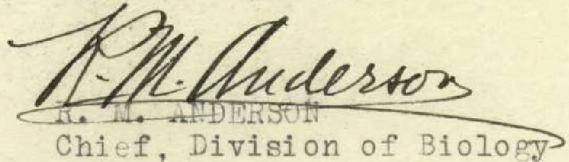
I think that "The Birds of Iowa" must have been out of print for some time. I do not think the edition was very large and the Davenport Academy of Sciences did not give me very many copies. I had to cut down the text about one-half to get it printed at all. Now and then I have seen a copy offered for sale by some second-hand book dealer, the last time being a presentation copy from Robert Ridgway's library offered by Walters. I have just been looking over some old books and find an odd copy which was in storage for several years when I was in the Arctic, and although it is a bit mouse-eaten at one corner, perhaps you can use it.

If you are going to make further studies on the Iowa birds you might be able to get a great deal more information about the history of some of the game birds by going over to Iowa City and looking at a manuscript thesis entitled "The Literature of Iowa Birds," by Paul Bartsch (University Library, 3 volumes, No.'s 57302-3-4. This contains most of the important published references to the birds of Iowa from 1804 to 1899. I looked up a good many of them which were of interest, in some of the ephemeral bird magazines, and particularly in old numbers of Forest and Stream. Bartsch's bibliography should have been published long ago. A few years ago I met Philip DuMont of Des Moines, who was at the time working in the American Museum of Natural History, and he was talking about working up the birds of Iowa and bringing the knowledge up to date, but he went off on a two or three years' expedition to Madagascar and I have not heard of him since.

There is a lot that could be done with Iowa birds, as it was a great state for birds in the early days. I was fortunate enough to see the last of some of the semi-primitive conditions in the "slough-grass counties" in the northern part of the State which were preempted and bought up by Eastern "speculators" in the sixties at \$1.25 per acre and left as "wild land" until late in the nineties. Settlement, county drainage schemes, and high prices of land changed everything years ago. I might have done something more with the subject, but my space was limited, and I put in as much original stuff as possible. Dr. J. A. Allen, reviewing the book in The Auk, Jan., 1908, was kind enough to say that the matter was all pertinent.

I hope that you are successful in making a more thorough game survey of the State. The field is not as promising for wild life as in Wisconsin or Minnesota, but perhaps you may be able to make two chickens grow where one grew before, and that will be worth while.

Yours sincerely,


R. M. ANDERSON
Chief, Division of Biology