

Biology Building
October 9, 1931

Professor Rudolph Bennitt
Department of Zoology
University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri

Dear Professor Bennitt:

Your letter relative to a graduate thesis problem in ornithology has been referred to me. Since you have suggested that Mr. Blakey do his A.M. work upon a game bird, probably the quail, I might add that the study of quail winter mortality from various causes would perhaps lend itself to his purposes.

This is work that needs very much to be done and seems well within the power of an intelligent conscientious student to carry on in good shape. For this particular problem the field research as such can probably be completed by early spring, thus leaving the student a certain amount of time in which to prepare his thesis and review for his exams. I might recommend, if you and Mr. Blakey decide upon this research topic, that special attention be paid to the role of physical condition in the bobwhite's escaping the various dangers, such as freezing and predators, which beset it. Attention should also be paid to the role of food in relation to escape from various types of predators, also to the sustenance value of the foods eaten by bobwhites under normal conditions and under conditions of stress.

There is now running in American Game a series of articles by myself on the northern bobwhite's winter food and cover. The first came out in the July-August issue, the second should come out in the September-October issue, and the third is due in the November-December issue. As yet I have not received the reprints of these articles, so perhaps it would be best to refer you to American Game direct.

Another research topic which would seem much in order on account of anti-hawk and owl agitation and legislation which I understand exists in your state, might have to do with some sort of definite program of raptor food habits study. I am now working on a series of articles on raptor research technique and food habits of birds of prey for the Condor, but since these will probably not be out before winter, they will be of little utility

to your man before he gets started on his own problem.

Please give Mr. Blakey to understand that he is welcome to call upon me any time for what limited help I can give him when specific situations arise. Of course it is plain that every research man must do his own thinking, but he can profit at least by some of the mistakes made by others.

Yours sincerely,

Paul L. Errington
In Charge, Quail Investigation