

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
MADISON

Soils Building
December 26, 1933

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Mr. Paul L. Errington
Iowa State College
Ames, Iowa

Dear Paul:

I have read the manuscript on Iowa Duck Studies and have only a few specific suggestions.

On page 7 I would either omit the paragraph on duck foods or else develop it more thoroughly. The seasonal use of various foods is, for instance, not mentioned. I do not think you can afford to question the food planting idea without making a thorough analysis to substantiate your point. It is only the paragraph beginning "It may be in order" that I suggest omitting.

In your discussion of crows I think you neglect to safeguard yourself by localizing your opinion. It is possible, for instance, that ducks nest earlier in relation to vegetation in the prairie provinces than they do in Iowa.

I do not agree with you that the loss of early nests is not serious. The survival of young must occur between the first nesting and the cessation of nesting attempts, and whatever lessens the number of possible attempts during this period, lessens the probability of a good crop. Moreover, bird for bird, the earlier attempts yield superior productivity. Again we have the probability of decreasing clutch. To me the survival of early nests is desirable as a general principle both in ducks and other species.

You also omit consideration of your own principle that nest density probably determines percent of depredation. Nest density in the prairie provinces is necessarily higher: the percent of predation is therefore probably higher. If we add to this the probably ^{higher} density of crows, it is conceivable that the loss may actually be very serious.

I agree with you, of course, that in view of the probable variation as between localities, and the fact that migration routes of crows are unknown, the supposition that shooting crows on the winter range is beneficial is a very tenuous one. Why not suggest some crow banding to find out where the egg-eating crows really winter?

I have one general criticism of the paper. It takes the tone of a discussion for the benefit of those already familiar with your evidence rather than the tone of a presentation of that evidence to those who have not yet heard it. Consequently, the full force of the evidence is

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will not register with the lay reader. You were writing this paper to yourself rather than to the lay audience.

I would like to have the privilege of presenting this evidence at the conference but it will be impossible for me to be there. I would not worry ~~too much~~ ^{at all} about the crow haters, ~~until~~ ^{until} you get this section on crows into the right shape.

I wish I had thought sooner of the possibility of using CWA for Gastrow. I will make an attempt to round up some funds but I understand the matter is now entirely closed. If I find anything I will let you know.

The paper is returned herewith.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Aldo Leopold

ALDO LEOPOLD
Game Manager

AL:GM
Enc.