

New Soils Building
December 3, 1934

Dr. W. L. McAtee
Bureau of Biological Survey
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.

Dear McAtee:

Your paper "for internal consumption" will, I hope, also reach the outside world, because there is needed at this time a resume of the participation of your division in the major game developments to date.

Your facts are admirable, but there is between the lines a "defensive" note which I think is not justified by the facts. Your role has been quietly to aid and abet outside effort, and should so continue. Superficial critics have overlooked the magnitude and nature of this contribution, and it is proper to remind them of it. It would be still better if Jay Darling would remind them of it, or if he should prefer, I will do it.

In my opinion the statement "The Biological Survey doesn't know anything about upland game bird management" is unjust. It contains, I think, only the following fractions of truth:

- (1) The Survey has not aggressively pointed out, to Congress or to others, the gaps in the national program, nor the inconsistencies in its own financial structure.
- (2) It has led the world in the analysis of ecological factors, but it has not been aggressive in the synthesis or application of its findings to test areas. It has, however, always cooperated with outsiders trying to synthesize techniques.
- (3) It has not aggressively promoted research in agricultural colleges, but it has always cooperated with those needing help.

These three points are also my suggestions for present changes needed.

What I mean by gaps is the lack in the national program of any but fractional work on weighing the mortality factors in waterfowl, big game, turkey, or shorebirds, etc.

What I mean by inconsistencies is the obviously greater importance of such work as compared with predator control, rodent control, and other projects for which the Survey has sought and accepted funds. It has let Congress build its priorities, and Congress obviously doesn't know how.

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What I mean by "aggressive promotion" is the failure to point out to Congress, or to private donors, the opportunities for starting work in the colleges, and the obviously greater value of such work as compared with predator or rodent control.

There are other specific items which could be criticized, but they do not touch your Division, if I understand the past set-up. What, for instance, has ever been done with the McSweeney-McNary funds? Nothing to my knowledge has ever reached the stage of print, even of plans, much less results. Perhaps this is due to my having overlooked something--if so, I'd like to be corrected.

I do not imply that this is a complete and wholly just appraisal. It is simply my own interpretation of what I see.

This letter would be incomplete if I failed to point out that none of the work with which I am connected would have been possible without the cooperation of the Survey in stomach analysis and banding.

Yours sincerely,

Aldo Leopold
In Charge, Game Research

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P.S. On the minor matter of definitions, I entirely disagree that the improvement of a refuge is not "management", because no "harvest" is taken on the refuge. "Recreational use" covers more than broiled quail.

A.L.