

New Soils Building
December 6, 1934

Mr. Ovid Butler, Editor
American Forests
1713 K Street Northwest
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ovid:

I am a week late in submitting the
editorial requested in your letter of November 14.
If too late, throw it in the waste basket.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Aldo Leopold
In Charge, Game Research

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Encl.

Gun and Glass Hunters

The idea called conservation has two or three fundamental cleavages which prevent unity of action among its proponents.

One of these cleavages is between those who hunt with a glass and those who hunt with a gun. Very rarely have they agreed on a common program. Iowa is the only state recently exhibiting signs of actual cooperation between these two groups.

One of their most frequent points of difference is whether those non-game animals called predators or "vermin" may be sacrificed in order to secure a greater abundance of the game animals on which they prey.

Both sides have assumed that the sacrifice of predators would actually increase game to some extent. They differ only on the worthwhileness of it.

Now comes Paul L. Errington, the scientific mouthpiece of the Iowa Conservation Plan, and asserts that within ordinary limits of population density this assumption is not true in at least one game species--bobwhite--in one region, the Lake States.

He supports his assumption by a new kind of evidence--actual counts of winter survival of wild coveys. The previous arguments have been based on stomach analyses and isolated observations of behavior.

Errington's assertion carries two corollaries: (1) Better food and cover is the only effective way to increase quail; (2) shooting in dense quail populations has the same effect on future density as predation, namely none.

Here, it seems, is a new basis for solidarity between sportsmen and protectionists, assuming that both have the intelligence to comprehend the new evidence and assuming that Errington's principle will prove true of other game in other regions.

(more)

For the present, both factions should at least unite in the vigorously pushing the further researches necessary to verify Errington's findings, and in mapping out the animals and regions to which they apply. If research can show a logical basis for common cause between these now warring elements, then it will have advanced conservation farther at one jump than all the millions spent in the last decade for game restoration.

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