

July 27, 1937

Mr. Wm. H. Schunke
109 Third St. North
Black River Falls, Wis.

Dear Bill:

I was much surprised to receive your letter of July 24 relative to the paper by Errington and Berry on the results of the tagging studies of foxes. I gather that you have not read the paper in question, of which I am inclosing a reprint for your reference.

You will note that the general background of this study is briefly presented in the introductory paragraph which I consider entirely accurate even though it does not go into details. Berry was given coauthorship for the reason that he did the work of digging the data out of the files of the Commission, and my name is on the paper because I happened to write the thing. Credit is given the Fish and Game Commission, which, of course, included you among perhaps a great many other people who had something to do with the work.

Had I known that you considered your part in this work more than routine official duty, I would have been glad to have made particular acknowledgment to you in the text, provided that you would have cared to have me. I don't know exactly what the status of data gathered by Commission employes and kept in the files of the Commission would be, but you cannot blame me for assuming that the Commission should be in a position to say what should be done with such material - especially since, so far as I know, no one had any inkling that anyone else had any desire to use it for publication. The manuscript of the paper in question was submitted to the Commission and approved before it was sent in for publication.

I am very sorry that you are so upset about this matter. If I have been at fault in any way I assure you that it was entirely unintentional, but I do feel that I took reasonable pains to satisfy the persons and institutions I considered mainly concerned. It is often only feasible to give credit to institutions rather than to individuals for data which are the product of a large number of workers; and if one were to split hairs in giving credit for institutional services there

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would be almost no limit to acknowledgments. For example, there is the possibility that some of the unnamed deputy wardens may have put in almost if not as much work on the tagging of foxes as you did.

You should know from examination of my published papers that I have given you credit personally for cooperation on several different occasions where it seemed the proper thing to give more than institutional credit. The Journal of Mammalogy, fox food habits paper (August, 1935), for instance, mentions you by name; the Ecology paper on feed habits (January, 1937), while it does not mention you by name, refers the reader to the first paper for information on the background of the investigation, etc.; the bob-white paper in the Iowa State College Journal of Science (1935) cites your report, and so on. Others simply acknowledge the help of the Commission in a broad way, the same as we thank the Biological Survey for stomach analyses (without thanking specifically the people who made the examinations).

You may do as you think best about giving this matter further publicity. I don't feel that I have anything to hide and could only say what I have said already.

Sincerely yours,

PLE:BB

Paul L. Errington,
Res. Asst. Professor