

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
MADISON, WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

424 University Farm Place  
September 13, 1941

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

Dear Paul:

Here is the revised manuscript on Prairie du Sac. I will follow through your comments, and my own changes, in sequence. Where your comments are adopted in toto, I will omit mention of them.

p. 1, Title. I am still not entirely satisfied. Would you prefer "Population Behaviors of the Prairie du Sac Wildlife Community, 1929-1940"?

p. 3. Historical Setting. I have tried several ways of avoiding "These bluffs have seen history", but all destroyed the literary quality of what follows. Then I asked several people to read the section and point out any obscure or debatable figures of speech. None did. So I retained the expression.

I threw out the homily at the end about the "land going to pieces on us".

p. 3, line 5. "Melt" is a geological term.

p. 5, footnote. Correction made on year of Audubon contribution. As to crediting U.S.B.S. and U. of W: the footnote now consistently includes those who contributed cash, but omits contributors of supervision. To include the latter would make the footnote very complex. "Contributors" implies cash rather than supervision, doesn't it?

I fail to understand what you mean by "and what about winter dates?"

p. 6, Figure 1. The photostat omits label for arrow to "carrying capacity level". This has been added to original drawing.

p. 6, Table 1. "Remarks" now omit all but outstanding events of weather, agriculture (fall plowing), and debrushing program.

p. 8-9. Derivation of Carrying Capacity. I have tried several ways to explain this, and several ways to make clear the differences between covey censuses and area censuses. I am free to confess that at last writing I was muddled myself. I am still undecided as to just how strong to make the part about the role of cover. Please read this

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critically. The task is to paint the picture without too many "ifs" and "ands", and without merely repeating your own writings.

pp. 10-12. Test of Carrying Capacity. Also Figure 2. Can we fairly test the first postulate which comes out beautifully, without also testing the second? I think not. The only alternative is to omit the second graph, but say in the text that it is omitted because the points fall at random, and why.

pp. 12-15. Comparison with other Areas and Species, Also Figure 3. I am not clear whether your objection to comparing with other areas applies to all areas, or only those, like the Arboretum, which are too small to be comparable because of summer movement.

I heartily agree to excluding all small areas. To exclude large areas because dissimilar seems to me to be bad logic. How else shall we detect similarities of behavior that exist despite area differences?

I think the Jasper County Curve, which Yeatter has generously offered, now gives us, on one page, all the long accurate gallinaceous censuses on large areas in this region.

p. 13. Cycles. The interim publication of your own views clears up many doubts. Your own expression on how to interpret the longer quail fluctuations coincides very exactly with my own views.

p. 15. Toothed and Toothless Curves. This results from your forcing me to really study Figure 3, and I thank you for the jolt, whether or no you find the result acceptable.

I quizzed Gastrow on the accuracy of the post-1933 ruffed grouse census. I'm not sure it's equally accurate throughout, but I doubt whether its inaccuracies are so great as to cause the radical and consistent lack of "teeth". Even if it were thrown out, there is considerable support for the major thesis in the other curves.

pp. 21-24. Weather and Wildlife. Also Figures 4 and 5. Figures have been brought up to date and rearranged to decrease space in reproduction.

Incidentally, I am calling Walter Scott's statistics unpublished because they are mimeographed. Is that usage O K with you? I'll explain it to him.

p. 24, paragraph 2. We must watch our step here. Such recent papers as MacLulich's have pretty well discredited the cycle-sunspot-weather theory. On the other hand, Grange has actually put out a sunspot formula for predicting grouse status, and Douglas of Arizona and Abbot of Carnegie seem sure of the sunspot-weather relation. (U. of Pa. Bi-centennial Conference, 1941, pp. 57-89).

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p. 24. Table 2. Simplified and brought up to date.

p. 27-28. Non-breeding Horned Owls and Redtails. Too much detail?  
Might use only the summary at bottom of page?

p. 33-34. Summary. There are many alternative ways of handling this.  
Would you prefer some other way?

p. 34. Epilogue. I'm not insistent on retaining this. If you'd  
prefer not to, I can use it elsewhere. I do like the idea of inter-  
larding some color into scientific papers. I think the deadly sobriety  
and matter-of-factness dictated by custom is a false front, and I  
enjoy tearing it off when opportunity offers.

p. 36. References. I still think there is some point in listing the  
Prairie du Sac publications separately. One can't tell from the title  
whether a publication refers to this area or not.

I have omitted your titles up to 1936, on the assumption that they are  
substantially summarized, or at all events listed, in Bulletin 201  
or the Horned Owl bulletin. I did this for brevity.

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I regret to tell you that pages 12-13, and page 15, of the longhand  
extension of your letter of January 6 are lost. I may, therefore,  
have overlooked some important point. Page 15 dealt with horned owl,  
for p. 14 and p. 16 both do. Since the horned owl section is now  
entirely revised, perhaps no harm is done. I can't infer the subject  
matter of pp. 12-13.

I haven't worried about where to put this manuscript. We can offer it  
to McAtee, but if he doesn't want to stretch his length-rules, we can  
put it in Midland Naturalist. I am "off" Wisconsin Transactions for  
they held my 1937 Hungarian paper, and Art Hawkins' History of Faville  
Grove, for four years before finally printing them.

Best regards,

Aldo

Aldo Leopold  
Professor of Wildlife Management