

November 9, 1943

Professor Carl J. Drake
 Department of Zoology and Entomology
 Iowa State College
 Ames, Iowa

Dear Dr. Drake:

Don Farner has written you recently inquiring as to your possible interest in taking him on at some future time.

I told him that I would transmit to you my ideas as to his qualifications, and his field of research.

There is no doubt in my mind that his intellectual powers are entirely exceptional, and that his training and interest in avian physiology would be a valuable addition to any campus such as Iowa and Wisconsin, heretofore mainly active in the ecological field.

Before he left here, I tried to interest our Zoology Department in him, but the time was not opportune. Because of my inability to help place him here, I volunteered to help place his qualifications before you.

Farner's most notable accomplishment to date is his series of reviews of foreign literature in ecological ornithology. He has now taken over the review section of Bird-Banding, formerly run by Margaret Nice, and there seems to be unanimous agreement that his reviews are maintaining the Nicean standard. In case you have not followed this yourself, I am sure Errington will agree with me that this standard is the highest yet achieved.

These reviews are the product of Farner's almost prodigious command of foreign languages, plus his critical understanding of ecology, and especially physiology. He seems to read German, French, Spanish, and Dutch, and can make out with Italian, Portuguese, and Russian.

His present military assignment is to read the medical literature on diseases found at the scene of proposed military operations. I understand he may shortly be sent abroad, so if you should want to look at him, it might be a good idea to call him over soon.

I cannot offer you any direct evidence on Farner's ability to carry out research of his own, for I was not in touch with his thesis work, and it would have been over my head anyhow. I have no reason to doubt that it is good.

(over)

As to his human relations, his last year here was somewhat clouded by his falling out with a few faculty members. I am not in a position to say whose fault this was. It may have arisen from his own aggressive qualities, or it may have been entirely the fault of the faculty members concerned. In the former event, I would lay the thing to youth rather than to any permanent attribute. It of course goes without saying that any extremely active and aggressive individual will seldom score 100 per cent from the human relations angle.

Should you be unable to consider Farner for a post on your campus, do you have any ideas as to who might want him? My object in taking up his case is to give some campus the benefit of his rather extraordinary qualifications.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Aldo Leopold
Professor of Wildlife Management

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cc Errington

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