

March 4, 1944

Professor Aldo Leopold
424 University Farm Place
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Aldo:

Thank you for the copy of Kabat's progress report on the P. du S. studies. It is very interesting indeed, but there are some questions that trouble me.

Reference is made to a "low population of ... rabbits", then to a "flushing rate ... (which) has been the same as a year ago. This does not sustain the general impression that rabbits are scarcer this winter than a year ago." The statement that rabbits are low would then be consistent if the rabbits were low last winter, but the information I have before me is that, in 1942-43, the rabbits, while not reaching the very high levels of the two previous winters, were still very abundant.

The red fox population looks remarkable, but I wonder if it can really be said that there "were 45 red foxes on the area at the beginning of the winter", on the basis of 28 having been killed and 17 remaining? It would seem to me that this would to a large extent reflect movement phenomena associated with a severe local drain, as we often get in intensive dead-trapping operations with many animals.

Other questions, which I have put down as I worked on the MS and which might as well be asked at this time, here follow:

Were there open seasons on bobwhites at P. du S. in 1943 or 1944?

Was any banding of bobwhites done at P. du S. before Kabat started his program there in 1942 - 43?

Has anyone (such as Rossbach at Poynette) examined any good series of horned owl pellets from P. du S. in recent years? The last lot I examined was for 1938 - 39. In this connection, a good series of pellets for winter would be valuable, in case it isn't clear what the bobwhite losses are due to; if the situation is one of general vulnerability, such should be reflected by a high incidence of remains in the horned owl pellets.

In the interest of the war effort, we are using both sides of the letterhead.

Also, I don't have any information on horned owl and red tail nests for 1943, but this can wait until the 1944 data are available.

I am still hammering at the M.S., which is being rewritten almost in entirety, with the worthy if unattainable objective in mind of showing the derivation of figures and conclusions as treatment progresses. It is going to be longer than ever, though more strictly centered on population mechanics of the bobwhite as demonstrated by the evidence at hand.

Yours sincerely,

Sincerely yours,

Paul L. Errington
Research Associate Professor

P.L.E. I trust that you noted that the 233% gain from the 1943 spring population of 70 falls very close to the "ideal" curve.

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Best regards

Yours sincerely,
Paul L. Errington
Research Associate Professor

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