

April 25, 1966

Mr. Donald Joffray
The Loomis School
Windsor, Connecticut 06095

Dear Mr. Joffray:

I have your interesting letter of April 20th. I have made some duplicate copies of my presentation to the Wildlife Management Institute at Lansing, Michigan last autumn. I am enclosing one. Hope you find something of interest.

Regarding screech owls, I feel a good deal the way you do about these little fellows and I have never discouraged their using my duck boxes. I felt that unless the screech owls were actually nesting that the ducks usually took over if they wanted the facilities.

One thing to look for in reference to the effectiveness of the oval holes against racoons is when you make your inspections next fall see how many entrances have been gnawed by racoons or other predators to gain entrance which they could have easily obtained had the full $4\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter hole been in use.

I do not understand why you stay away from your nesting sites during the summer. I am constantly making nesting inspection and checks during the nesting season with no adverse affect on the birds and with a tremendous increase in understanding of what's going on. Perhaps, you're just not in proximity to your boxes in the nesting season, but if you can look at your boxes, by all means do so.

You might be interested to know that my 22 boxes are all in an area of a little less than one square block and 7 of them are in an area having a radius of about 30 feet. There seems to be no conflict since most of these 7 boxes are used simultaneously. This, of course, makes inspection much simpler.

Your interpretation of what constitutes a successful hatch looks correct to me. You don't mention the fact that not only do you find the small chips of egg shells where the hatch has been successful but you also find the egg sacks generally split in two, approximately equal halves, in contrast to the condition that would have been obtained where a predator has devoured the eggs. Of course, when snakes have swallowed the eggs they leave no trace unless perhaps incubation has in process in which case the down would be left in the box.

Mr. Donald Joffray

- 2 -

April 25, 1966

Hope you are having a good season and I would be glad to hear from you if you have any further questions.

Yours very truly,

Frederic Leopold

FL:MB