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General Delivery,  
Spencer, Iowa.  
January 30, 1934.

Dr. T. C. Stephens,  
Morningside College,  
Sioux City, Iowa.

Dear Dr. Stephens:

I meant to write you long ago, after your letter of November 19th arrived, but about that time I was quite busy lining up the job I am on at present. For the past couple of months I have been doing some special work for Mr. Darling, checking over lands that might be utilized for game preserves and breeding areas. So far the work has been confined to the four or five counties up here around the lake region. At present I have no idea how the Federal plan will turn out in regard to purchasing land, but if it goes through it will be a big boost for conservation in Iowa. Until it is decided definitely I have made no public announcement of the exact nature of my work.

Logan Bennett told me that he had visited with you recently so no doubt he told you a little of the work. Bennett has done a fine job up here in studying the requirements for the nesting of ducks. In some ways if the program goes through it will constitute an application of his findings. I am continually impressed by the worthwhileness of the program that they are developing in the Wild Life Research at Ames.

I am interested in reviewing some of your comments in the November letter in regard to the revised Iowa list. I appreciated tremendously your compliments on the type of job I had done. You must know of course that I value your opinion very highly. Pierce, in reviewing it in Iowa Bird Life, commented on the brief bibliography. I do wish it could have been longer. One thing though, is that about 115 additional titles were quoted in full in the text under the species to which they related. These were not re-listed with the county-lists in the bibliography. Don't you think that at the next meeting of the I.O.U. it would be worthwhile to recommend that that group consider the publication of a complete Iowa bibliography? It would have to be subscribed to by individuals interested.

I believe that you are correct about the lack of a Sioux City specimen of Holboell's Grebe. I asked Dr. Rich if he had ever seen a specimen and he told me that he had not. Besides the specimen listed in the paper in the University Museum there is one at Ames from Little Wall Lake.

I expect I should have had a note with the record of Mrs. Bailey's observation of the Cory's Least Bittern referring to its final disposition in the Appendix. I took the attitude that it should be accounted for someplace since it had been reported as an Iowa record. The same as I did with Pangburn's Ground Dove.

What few specimens of Mourning Doves that I have seen from Iowa seem to check with the western race. Certainly more study is needed of specimens from all parts taken at the same season of the year. But who will do the collecting?



Of the 32 Iowa species for which I could find no specimens the record of Say's Phoebe seems to be the least soundly established. One thing in its favor is the fact that it actually nests so near to our western state-line.

Bennett sent me a lengthy description of his observation and the record of his impression of the song of a Rock Wren there at Sioux City. Yet it was only a field observation of a dull-colored bird. What became of the nest and eggs he told me had been deposited in the Sioux City Academy collection?

I did overlook your Dickinson County record of the breeding of the Prothonotary Warbler. If, and when, the paper is reprinted and revised this record will be included.

In my statement of the Louisiana Water-Thrush I did not want to sound too critical of your Sioux City observations, but the status as recorded for it there didn't fit into the picture as a whole. Therefore I felt it might be an indication of facts that needed checking, perhaps with positive results.

All in all I have been quite pleased with the reception of this Iowa list. I wanted primarily to produce something to be used to check against. And to stimulate study along certain lines that do sadly need study. I like the ideal that Swenk holds up for the final work on birds in any state. Sometime maybe we will have one in Iowa.

Of course I was a little surprised at Wing's review. After the first shock it didn't bother me so much, especially after the splendid way that you "came to my rescue". I certainly respect Wing's ideal. It is held by many but followed by practically no one. I had talked to Chapman, Grinnell, Linsdale, Roberts, you, Swenk, and Bennett (Rudolf) all on that point. I think all will side with us that Anderson's record of a Hudsonian Curlew or the Lewis's Woodpecker record against the doubtful conclusions on some of the subspecies such as horned larks, savanna sparrows, or water-thrushes. As an example I have some savanna sparrows that Oberholser, Grinnell, and Peters all have identified as a different race from that selected by the other.

I have at home a complete list of the Iowa specimens for which I had found no specimens. As I check it up now there were 34 species. Wing's list of 27 was correct, but not complete. If you want to complete your personal record the following should be added: Little Blue Heron, Burrowing Owl, Red-shafted Flicker, Sprague's Pipit, Sycamore Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Greater Redpoll.

Since the list was issued specimens of the Burrowing Owl and Red-shafted Flicker have been collected or found. There was a report of a specimen of Red-throated Loon being donated to the University Museum. Dill identified it but I have not seen it. Swenk wrote me that there are specimens (or a specimen) of the Louisiana Parakeet in the U.S. National Museum that were (or was) taken on an Island in the Missouri between Nebraska and Iowa. So you see that even this list is being gradually being cut down. I don't believe, however, that it can all be checked "before another season passes". That "burned me up".



As I mentioned above there is a possibility that the list may be reprinted. Only a thousand copies were printed and about 125 copies remain. I was in communication with the publication office at Iowa City recently and we finally decided that at the rate copies were moving now the supply should last several months. They suggested, as long as all of the type had been taken down that it now would be better to wait and revise it when (and if- this is my aside) it is reprinted. With that as a possibility I think it would be worthwhile to advise all of the Iowa workers to start in and tear it apart in every way they can as far as checking records, facts, nesting, and bibliography. Somehow I think it would be much easier to swing the revision of this list than to sell them on another type of publication, say a popular style. It might include a range of migration dates. If you have any ideas on the subject I would enjoy having them.

While driving around up here I have had opportunities to secure some worthwhile birds. For instance I have a series of 18 horned larks taken mostly in December and January. It certainly should throw some light on what our wintering larks are. We also have taken a number of redpolls. And have a fair number of chickadees. The longspurs have all been Laplands. Collected a dozen Snow Buntings one day. Also some Red-wings, Tree sparrows, and a hairy woodpecker. And three screech owls.

At present Peters is looking over a series of savanna and grasshopper sparrows for me. He found all but two of the grasshopper sparrows to be the eastern race.

It is possible that I will be able to get down to Sioux City for some of these week-ends if work slows up a little. Will let you know if such a plan materializes.

With best wishes to you and Mrs. Stephens, I am,

Very truly yours,