

405 N. Cleveland
Arlington, Virginia
November 3, 1940

Dear Walter:

Your letter was a treat and contained so much welcome news of your activities. Congratulations on the new grandfather honor. So glad that Walt is well located in work that he must be finding extremely interesting. I think his delight in plant materials gets a better chance for expression with the S.C.S. than probably any other group.

The controversy concerning the various races of Branta canadensis has engaged the attention of some of the leading taxonomists. Taverner, in his "Birds of Canada" presents perhaps the clearest picture of the two dark-breasted western birds (White-cheeked Goose, B. c. occidentalis, and Cackling Goose, B. c. minima) and the three light-breasted birds of the Mississippi River Valley (Common Canada Goose, B. c. canadensis, Lesser Canada Goose, B. c. leucopareia, and Hutchins's, or as he calls it Richardson's, Goose B. c. hutchinsi). Unfortunately Roberts, in his splendid "Birds of Minnesota" had the Lesser Canada and the Hutchins's Geese just reversed both in the text and in the key in Vol. 2. However, this was corrected in the reprinting.

Due to the variations given in the tables of measurements for the several races by different authors the information secured from the huge D. H. Talbot collection of birds, formerly contained in the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History, appeared to be particularly important as a means of appraising the birds from the Missouri River Valley. Fortunately, a complete record of these geese was preserved in a thesis written by Frank Russell at the University of Iowa in 1892. This dissertation, entitled "Variation of Birds in a State of Nature", contains measurements of 500 of the 593 specimens. Prof. Swenk and I prepared two papers on these measurements, treating of the 404 Nebraska specimens. The first of these was in the October, 1934 number of the "Nebraska Bird Review", and the second was published just a year later in the same journal.

Based upon the tables of measurements and weights contained in these papers I believe that your small goose was the Hutchins's Goose. The culmen measurement of 1.50 inches compares with 1.30 - 1.80 (ave. 1.50) for females and 1.40 - 1.60 (ave. 1.47) that we had for males of hutchinsi.

The wing length of your bird slightly exceeds the limits included for the wing of females, 12.50 - 15.00 (ave. 14.08) and males, 13.75 - 14.75 (ave. 14.42) but this is apt to vary somewhat depending whether the measurement is taken along the arc of the feather or along the chord. We have no way of knowing how Russell took his measurements.

The weight of your bird, 4 lbs., 12 oz., or 4.75 pounds falls in about the middle of our weight groups for hutchinsii. For eleven females we had a range of 3.00 - 6.00 (ave. 4.31) and for four males a range of 4.10 - 6.00 (ave. 4.65).

It might be worthwhile for you to present these tables for all three races when you prepare your note for Iowa Bird Life. I am sure you have copies of the Nebraska Bird Review from which you can secure them.

I looked up the address of Robert Moravetz and he lives out beyond us about three-quarters of a mile in the new Buckingham community. This is a very modern and pleasing housing project for over two thousand families. We have a number of friends living in it and some of these days we will probably meet Robert.

Mother is getting ready to spend the winter in San Antonio with my sister Ethel. Actually she is getting a house near by and her sister will share it with her. Jean and Dick Cooke have recently bought a home in Evanston and will have more room for their slightly more than two year old daughter. Our son Paul had his third birthday on November 1. He was 39 inches tall and weighed 39 pounds.

When you are at Gadsden you will not be so very far from the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge at Decatur. I don't know what there is to see there since I have not visited it but if the chance permits look it over. Chester Markley is the Refuge Manager, located at Decatur.

Sincerely,