

E. J. [unclear]

April 27, 1988

The Editor
St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch
345 Cedar Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105

Dear Sir:

I have a letter from Dave Hall on the subject of forming an action committee for the purpose of investigating and promoting the present laws governing the hunting of migratory waterfowl. Recent news developments indicate that important violations are habitual in the far south - especially in Louisiana.

Of course that type of lawlessness should be presently suppressed and should have been stopped long ago.

My opinion, based on Aldo's book Game Management, is recognition of his law of "Limiting Factors" as covered on Pages 38 and 39 of his book. If you are not thoroughly conversant with that philosophy, let me recommend that you re-study his text. He gives a fine clarification of how this law works and how it must be used in Wildlife Management!

The effort in recent years has been based on habitat improvement. Clearly that effort has been largely wasted and has produced negative results because habitat is not presently a limiting factor.

There is no doubt in my mind that the present Limiting Factor is a lack of living breeding birds in the presently existing breeding areas.

Leading the group that has been pushing the improvement of habitat as a solution to our dwindling waterfowl population is the big D.U. program of soliciting contributions to their fund for creating added duck numbers. The sales pitch D.U. uses is "Give us your money and we will create nesting areas so that when the next open season comes along you can bag a few extra ducks your money has produced." But really the plan does not produce more ducks because our existing good nesting areas are not populated with living ducks.

Despite the fact that much former nesting areas have been drained, the reduction in living ducks has been even greater reduced due to excessive hunting kill than the reduction in nesting areas. The conclusion is that there is no shortage of nesting areas, only a shortage of living ducks. So that the great concentration of ducks found on refuge areas when they head north in spring are only a thin nesting population when spread out over presently available good nesting territory. We don't need more nesting ground, but we do need live ducks to use the available present areas.

*You have great power - we
need you*

It follows logically that we must reduce and perhaps prohibit the kill of ducks by mankind. This is well within our ability under existing laws.

Game people will say we must reduce kill by predators. That is not a practical possibility.

It is high time we face this fact before it is too late to save our waterfowl. The wood duck recovery is a good example of what the closed season did to re-establish that species.

As ever,

Frederic Leopold
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