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Jane Claire Dirks's Correspondence with Stanley G. Jewett

Jane Claire Dirks-Edmunds
Stanley G. Jewett

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April 2, 1942

Mr. Stanley G. Jewett, Research Biologist
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
American Bank Building
Portland, Oregon

Dear Mr. Jewett:

For some time I have been wanting to consult you regarding some matters which have arisen in connection with the research which Professor Macnab and I conducted in the Salmon River area of the Coast Range. Four years ago I left Oregon for Illinois where I attended the Graduate School of the University. There I made an ecological study in an oak woods and terminated the study last June by submitting a thesis comparing the Illinois oak woods with the Douglas fir-hemlock community studied here in Oregon. I am now in the process of revising that thesis for publication. Suffice this for an historical review.

You have always been most helpful when Professor Macnab and I have taken problems to you before, and so I venture to bring this one to you. I feel that my knowledge of the mammals of the Coast Range is far from complete, and I should like to have your opinion before publishing my statements regarding them.

The area on which our research was concentrated was situated on an old sea terrace at an elevation of about 1400 feet. The forest was unbroken for some distance on all sides and was late sublimax Douglas fir and hemlock. The nearest water was a small stream—which was reduced to a mere trickle in the summer time—on one side of the ridge and the larger Salmon River which cascaded down the mountain somewhat farther away on the eastern side of the "research station".

I am certain that deer, bears, cougars, bobcats, spotted skunks, snowshoe hares, chipmunks, deer mice, creeping mice, red-backed mice, bats (the species named), moles, and shrews were present in that area because we trapped them or saw them. Bushy-tailed wood rats we know were present along Salmon River, but is it your opinion that they are confined to the vicinity of streams or do they typically occur farther back on the drier ridges in such locations as the "research station"? We encountered no evidence of them there. Weasels have been seen at a lower elevation on the mountain near the river, but I have the impression that they, as well as fishers, are largely confined to the neighborhood of streams. In your experience is that correct? Although we have never seen martens in the vicinity of the "research station", from what I have been able to learn about them they might well be expected to occur in such a situation. Is that not so? I believe tree mice should also occur there. Pine squirrels have been heard lower on the mountain but only in the vicinity of open areas. Are they not rather generally confined to such locations? Would you expect to find flying squirrels in the area we studied? We have never observed evidence of them or pine squirrels. Are there any other mammals which you would expect to find in such an area as the one we studied; if there are, would any be at all common?
I am enclosing a table which I included in my thesis. If you have the time, I should like to have you look it over and give me your comments regarding it. I should like to have you return the table to me.

I hope I am not imposing too greatly upon your time and good nature by troubling you with this problem of mine and assure you that I shall value greatly any assistance that you may give me. My field experience has been of such limited duration that I do not feel qualified to speak authoritatively on some of these matters and I do want the information I publish to be as reliable as possible. I might add that this research has been a real stimulus to me, and I am continuing to study small mammal populations in the Coast Range and anywhere else I can. Perhaps you knew that the area we studied was logged in the summer of 1940; however, I selected areas there which I trapped that summer and last summer and hope to continue the problem if the war permits.

Sincerely yours,

(Miss) J. Claire Dirks

Inclosure-1
April 17, 1942

Miss J. Claire Dirks
Linfield College
McMinnville, Oregon

Dear Miss Dirks:

I have gone over your letter of April 2 carefully. This long delay in replying is the result of my being out of the city.

A few remarks may be of some interest to you. Bushy-tailed wood rats do not necessarily appear only along streams, as they regularly go farther back, even to the summit of the highest ridges. The same is true of weasels. You mention 'fishers'. If there are any of these animals left anywhere in the Coast Mountains of Oregon we would be very much interested in securing the facts. None have come to our attention for a great many years, and we believe them on the verge of extinction everywhere in Oregon. The same is partially true of the martens. Without doubt they did occur at your research station some time in the past. Whether or not there are any left is problematical.

I would not, under any circumstances, record the dusky tree mouse, Phenacomys silvicola without actually having a specimen, as there are probably not over 8 or 10 of these animals preserved in collections in the world today.

Pine squirrels should occur at all elevations, but of course are not common in the denser forest areas. Flying squirrels should without doubt be found in that general territory. Try trapping around the edges of the forest on downed logs, free of bark.

One other mammal which should occur regularly throughout that region is the Pacific mink. You do not mention it in your list.

Very truly yours,

Stanley G. Jewett
Biologist