

20th October 1933.

W.B.Alexander, M.A.  
University Museum,  
Oxford.

Dear Alexander,

I am very much obliged indeed for the lists of British breeding birds, classified according to abundance, with notes on the breeding range. It is exactly what I wanted, namely an estimate independent of the data of variability, so that I can compare your different groups in respect of variability with the assurance that any correspondence which emerges shall be entirely objective. I realise that you must have given a tremendous amount of trouble to making the classification, and I do not know that there is anybody else with the necessary knowledge, who would have been good enough to undertake it.

With respect to size, my figures on variability have had for their own sakes, to be freed from any effects of absolute dimensions, so that my measures of variability, will on the average be the same for large birds as a whole, and for small birds as a whole. Consequently any indications of correspondence which I may find, will necessarily refer rather to "Abundance for its Size" than to the absolute number of breeding pairs. and after all I

do not see why one should want to equate a pair of geese with a pair of tits.

This complicates explanations by cutting down the number of direct comparisons, but does not, I think, appreciably diminish the probability of any real effects there may be showing themselves on the mass data.

I shall hope to get the comparisons made, at any rate sometime during the next six months, and I hope with luck, they may prove sufficiently interesting to justify you in the trouble you have taken.

When we see what there is in the results, I should very much like to discuss publication with you, and in any case I hope you will look in at my new laboratory, and if possible lunch with me when you are in town.

Yours sincerely,