

March 8, 1937

Dear Boycott,

Many thanks for your letter and enclosure. I think the answer to your point is that the variability measured is local variability, e.g., if a bird extends to Northern Asia, and its North Asiatic form is larger than the British, this might, of course, be environmental, but would not directly affect the variability observed in Britain. If, however, as I suspect, the difference between local races is also genetic I think by gene diffusion a wide spread species would be more variable locally.

What the orthonologists were aiming at in the abundance data was world population, obviously a matter of very great difficulty, in assessing which both range and density were doubtless quite carefully considered, though I should be foolish if I thought that each factor was always given its right quantitative weight.

Yours sincerely,