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1928 RMNP Supt. Roger Toll Requests Colorado Mountain Club Select State Bird

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Superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park

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ROOM 413 P. O. BUILDING
DENVER, COLORADO

*Min
Not Photo*

Jan. 9, 1928

Mr. L. R. Kendrick,
President, Colorado Mountain Club,
Care Kendrick & Bellamy Stationery Co.,
Denver, Colorado.

Dear Jack:

Inclosed herewith are clippings from the Stockton Record of December 17, December 24, and December 31, with reference to the selection of a state bird for California.

Colorado already has a state flower, and a state tree, both, I believe, selected by the school children of the state, and later confirmed by an Act of Legislature.

It would seem desirable that a state bird should also be agreed upon, and I would suggest that the Colorado Mountain Club initiate such a movement and carry it to completion. It might be handled by the Conservation Committee.

It is certainly a desirable thing to have the columbine as an official state flower. As you know, it is widely used in advertising Colorado. This same advantage would probably result from the selection of a state bird. The selection of the bird would involve a weighing of the merits of a number of different birds for this purpose, and the campaign in itself would be highly educational to the school children, and should prove of interest to the general public. It seems that this is a type of publicity that would be favorable to the Colorado Mountain Club, since it is in line with its aims, which include education and conservation.

I would suggest that several prominent bird authorities be consulted as to their preference for a state bird, that similar inquiries be made of the zoological departments of the universities of the State, the State Museum of Natural History, and any other authorities that suggest themselves. When their suggestions are received, together with their reasons reasons for nominating any particular bird, this information could be put together in a condensed form and submitted to the public school authorities. I have no doubt that they would cooperate in having a vote taken.

Mr. P. A. Smoll has at different times advocated making the water ouzel the official bird of Colorado. This, by the way, is one of the birds that California is considering adopting as their choice. This perhaps emphasizes the disadvantage of unnecessary delay in the matter. I have spoken to Bob Rockwell about it, and his suggestion is the ptarmigan, for the reason that Colorado has a greater number of 14,000 foot peaks than any other state and has a higher average elevation than any other state, a together with large areas above timber line. Probably it has more ptarmigan than any other state. Some type of eagle is perhaps another possibility.

At any rate, this seems like an opportunity to bring before the public in an interesting manner the bird life of the state, and to call their attention to certain outstanding species of our native birds.

I do not know how many states have adopted official symbols of flowers, trees, or birds, but information on this point could probably be obtained without much difficulty.

Sincerely yours,

Roger W. Toll,
Superintendent.