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DU PONT BUILDING  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19898

May 22, 1981

Dr. Eliot Porter  
Route 4, Box 33  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Dr. Porter:

Bob Peck sent down to me your very kind article on my bird photography. I appreciate so much your interest and your willingness to write on the subject. I'm reminded also how much water has run over the dam since our early discussions on technique. I have found, for example, that the simplest way to photograph a great many species is to take along a mist netting team and to photograph what they catch in a specially designed cage. We had a most successful trip to Ecuador last year, and in a period of six weeks in various parts of the country we photographed something over 200 species and came back with a total of 4,000 transparencies. All the pictures, by the way, were stereo pairs which, at least for scholarly purposes, give a far better idea of what the bird is really like than two-dimensional pictures.

Project Vireo at the Academy seems to be doing very well. They have persuaded John Dunning, Roger Peterson and Eric Hosking to make their photographs available. We've concluded that the originals should be kept in cold storage to insure maximum longevity and are now struggling with ways and means by which this can be done. The working collection will consist of copies reduced or enlarged, as the case may be, to a standard 24x36mm format. I am now struggling with the copying procedure. It's a tedious job, but with enough care and attention excellent copies can be made which gives the Academy another option should the photographer be unhappy about parting with his originals.

Beyond that there is a technique called "Discovision" in which up to 54,000 individual pictures can be placed on one side of a video disc. There is available a search and retrieval procedure which permits one to see any of these 50,000 odd on a television screen in about two and a half seconds. As matters stand now, the video disc procedure is limited to the resolution available on a television monitor, and while this is not nearly as good as the original transparency, it is quite good enough for let's say 90% or more of the examinations that scholars will wish to make and, of course, the working collection and even the originals are available as supplements.

GILBERT

- 2 -

I'm really delighted that my photographs will have that kind of an ultimate resting place. I managed to do over these twenty or thirty years something over 1,200 species of birds from all over the world. I'm glad that that much work, and it was a great deal and most time consuming, will be preserved.

It's been far too long since we've seen each other. Let me know if you are ever in the east and perhaps we can get together and talk over old times.

Sincerely,

*Quinn Newswall*