

Route 1, Box 33
Santa Fe, New Mexico

January 8, 1960

Mr. James F. Mathias
Associate Secretary
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation
551 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

In accordance with your suggestions of September 11, I am applying herewith for further assistance from the Foundation for the purpose of photographing in color the Wood Warblers (Parulidae) of the United States. Since I held a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1946 for photographing birds in color I have been especially interested in this family of birds and have photographed 29 of the 53 species that breed in the United States, and Canada. It is my aim to photograph as many as possible of the remaining 24 species within the next ten years. My reason for undertaking this project is my belief that birds in their breeding habitats can be portrayed more accurately, in more detail and more informatively by photography than by painting; and that even with all the photography both in color and in black-and-white that has been done in the last two decades the warblers have not been well photographed.

The accompanying album contains examples of all the warblers I have photographed. They are arranged in the order of the A. O. U. Check-List of North American Birds and are listed below:

Mniotilta varia: Black-and-white Warbler NH June 1958
Protonotaria citrea: Prothonotary Warbler NH June 1947
Vermivora pinus: Blue-winged Warbler NH June 1955
Vermivora celata orestera: Orange-crowned Warbler NM July 1959
Vermivora ruficapilla ruficapilla: Nashville Warbler NH June 1955
Vermivora virginiae: Virginia's Warbler Ariz June 1958
Vermivora luciae: Lucy's Warbler Ariz May 1958
Parula americana: Parula Warbler Me June 1945
Peucedramus taeniatus arizonae: Olive Warbler Ariz June 1959
Dendroica petechia aestiva: Yellow Warbler NH June 1947, Me July 1949, Me July 1950
Dendroica magnolia: Magnolia Warbler Me July 1945; NH June 1953, NH June 1955
Dendroica coronata coronata: Myrtle Warbler Me, June 1945
Dendroica auduboni auduboni: Audubon's Warbler NH July 1954
Dendroica nigrescens: Black-throated Gray Warbler NH June 1954
Dendroica virens virens: Black-throated Green Warbler Me June 1945
Dendroica fusca: Blackburnian Warbler NH June 1953
Dendroica graciae graciae: Grace's Warbler Ariz June 1959
Dendroica pensylvanica: Chestnut-sided Warbler NH June 1953, Me June 1955
Dendroica kirtlandii: Kirtland's Warbler NH July 1947
Dendroica discolor discolor: Prairie Warbler NH June 1946, Me July 1947
Dendroica palmarum palmarum: Palm Warbler NH June 1955
Selurus aurocapillus aurocapillus: Ovenbird NH June 1953
Oporornis tolmiei monticola: MacGillivray's Warbler NM June 1951
Geothlypis trichas brachidactylus: Yellowthroat Me June 1949
Icteria virens virens: Yellow-breasted Chat) Me June 1952
Icteria virens auricollis: (Long-tailed) Chat) NH July 1953
Cardellina rubrifrons: Red-faced Warbler Ariz June 1959, Me July 1948
Wilsonia canadensis: Canada Warbler NH June 1953
Setophaga ruticilla ruticilla: American Redstart Me July 1945, Me July 1949
Setophaga picta picta: Painted Redstart Ariz May 1959

The warblers I have not yet photographed are listed below,
 also in the A. O. U. check-list order:

Limnethlypis swainsonii: Swainson's Warbler
Helmitheros vermivorus: Worm-eating Warbler
Vermivora chrysoptera: Golden-winged Warbler
Vermivora bachmanii: Bachman's Warbler
Vermivora peregrina: Tennessee Warbler
Vermivora crissalis: Colima Warbler
Parula pitiayumi: Olive-backed Warbler
Dendroica tigrina: Cape May Warbler
Dendroica caerulescens: Black-throated Blue Warbler
Dendroica townsendi: Townsend's Warbler
Dendroica chrysoparia: Golden-cheeked Warbler
Dendroica occidentalis: Hermit Warbler

Dendroica cerulea: Cerulean Warbler
Dendroica dominica: Yellow-throated Warbler
Dendroica castanea: Bay-breasted Warbler
Dendroica striata: Blackpoll Warbler
Dendroica pinus: Pine Warbler
Seiurus noveboracensis: Northern Waterthrush
Seiurus motacilla: Louisiana Waterthrush
Oporornis formosus: Kentucky Warbler
Oporornis agilis: Connecticut Warbler
Oporornis philadelphia: Mourning Warbler
Wilsonia citrina: Hooded Warbler
Wilsonia pusilla: Wilson's Warbler

To continue this project I plan to spend two months this year from May 15 to July 15 in Michigan, where I have worked several times before and where I have many ornithologist friends. In the Lower Peninsula the breeding warblers that I have not photographed are the Golden-winged, Cerulean, Pine, and Northern Waterthrush. I should be able to find some of these during the first weeks of June. The breeding warblers in the Upper Peninsula are the Tennessee, Black-throated Blue, Connecticut and Morning. It should be possible to photograph some of these during the latter part of June and early part of July. The Connecticut Warbler, which is quite rare, offers the greatest challenge, but the situation is not as hopeless as it might otherwise seem since last summer some of my friends were able to locate a small breeding colony of these birds. They did not find any nests but hope for better luck next summer when more of us will be working together.

Much of the time devoted to bird photography is spent hunting for their nests. This is especially true in the case

of the warblers whose nests are small and usually well concealed. If I am granted further assistance I shall try to engage a young, enthusiastic ornithology student as an assistant. His help in finding nests will be invaluable not only because more nests will be found and more opportunities for photography made available, but also because he will free me to some extent for the actual task of making the photographs. He could help me greatly too with the setting up of my equipment, which is bulky and heavy, and with the building of scaffoldings and blinds and other such jobs. With the help of an assistant the number of years required to photograph the remaining warblers should be greatly shortened.

Aside from the new species I hope to find and photograph next spring in Michigan, I hope also to have time to re-photograph several I have done but not to my satisfaction. Included among these latter kinds are the Prothonotary, Yellow, Kirtland's, Palm, Ovenbird and Yellowthroat.

To photograph the remaining warblers on the list it will be necessary to visit other parts of the country on subsequent years. Thus, for the Tennessee, Cap May, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll and Wilson's, northern New England and southern New Brunswick and Ontario are probably the most favorable localities. For Swainson's, Worm-eating, Yellow-throated, and Hooded warblers the southeastern states will have to be visited; while in Pennsylvania, southern Ohio and Southern Indiana, Hooded, Kentucky,

and Louisiana Waterthrushes should be found. For the Townsend's and Hermit warblers a western trip will be necessary. Southern Texas, the Edwards Plateau and the Chisos Mountains in the Big Bend are the respective localities for the Olive-backed, the Golden-cheeked and the Colima warblers. The only warbler so far not mentioned is Bachman's. Should the time come when all the others have been photographed, a special expedition to the last known residence of this extremely rare bird, the swamps of South Carolina, could probably be organized for study and photography.

During the fourteen years since I was a Guggenheim Fellow my work in photography has increasingly been in the field of color. Not only have I continued to photograph birds using the most advanced equipment as it became available, but I have also done a considerable amount of work in more general nature photography and have been working on a photographic book of Thoreau's nature writing. For photographing birds I have used for a good many years electronic flash equipment of high light output and short flash duration which stops the almost inevitable motion encountered with birds. I have also developed for flight pictures of the smaller species of birds a photoelectric tripping device by means of which pictures can be obtained whenever the subject passes through a predetermined space. I was not the original user or inventor of any of this equipment.

January 8, 1960

Where I may, however, have made a contribution to photography, in this case to bird photography, is in the realm of aesthetics wherein formulation is not possible. My interest in nature photography has always been ^{as much} more aesthetic than ~~or~~ scientific and so in bird photography I have tried to make pictorially satisfying pictures as well as merely to obtain recognizable pictures of birds. In recent years my work has been published in several books on birds and wildlife, as follows:

LAND BIRDS OF AMERICA by Murphy and Amadon

AMERICAN WATER AND GAME BIRDS by Rand

LIVING MAMMALS OF THE WORLD by Sanderson

LIVING BIRDS OF THE WORLD by Gilliard

LES PLUS BEAUX OISEAUX by Belvianes

LIVING INSECTS OF THE WORLD by Klots

I have had exhibitions since 1946 of color photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Limelight, New York; The American Museum of Natural History, New York; George Eastman House, Rochester; The Baltimore Museum of Art; The Art Institute, Chicago; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center; Smithsonian Institution, Washington. In 1950 I was awarded a silver plaque for color photographs of birds submitted to the Country Life International Exhibition of Wild Life Photography in London. In 1953-54 the Smithsonian Institution circulated to galleries and libraries throughout the United States a collection of 50 of my photographs entitled "Birds in Color".

Mr. James F. Mathias

-7-

January 8, 1960

I have been married to Aline Kilham since 1936. We have three sons: Jonathan, 21, who is married and in his last year at Harvard University; Stephen, 18, who is a freshman at Colorado College; and Patrick, 13, who is attending Junior High School in Santa Fe. They are all dependents.

Ever since I gave up medical science for photography in 1939, I have been a self-employed independent photographer. For me photography has always been a creative activity in which I have never made very much money. Since I had an independent income it has always seemed not justified to me to compromise what creative ability I may have for the sake of money. In recent years my income has been considerably reduced to about ^{9,000}~~\$12,000~~ a year, which is insufficient for the support and education of my children as well as other activities and living expenses. As a result I have been using my capital and savings for educational expenses.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot F. Porter

P. S. I am not at present considering applying to any other Foundation for assistance.