

Route 4, Box 33
Santa Fe, N. M.

22 November 1964

Mr. Jack L. Cross, Director
The University of Arizona Press
1005 North Palm Road
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Mr Cross:

Thank you for your answer to my letter criticising the reproductions in THE BIRDS OF ARIZONA. And will you kindly thank Mr. Peck for his lengthy evaluation of the reproducibility of my transparencies.

Mr. Peck's defense for turning three pictures on their sides as a matter of the designer's prerogative is completely invalid and unacceptable. Factual representation in a scientific book is of first importance, and should disallow any distortion or departure from the truth. But aside from this consideration there should never be a misinterpretation of the author's intent. It behooves the designer to accommodate his design to these requirements.

I understand that registration can go off during a press run, but because this does happen inspection should be especially diligent to pick it up. I feel that perhaps your inspection wasn't diligent enough.

What Mr. Peck says about Eastman Kodak's recommendations for transparency density range applies to the average run of transparencies, and not to flash pictures unless one is careful to eliminate the black, unilluminated parts of them. I have found during years of dye-transfer printing that Eastman's recommendations are not the best for this process. I prefer a denser transparency than they advise. Furthermore, other engravers in the east and Europe have not had trouble with my transparencies.

Apparently corrections in color were made at the request of Phillips and Monson. They may have been justified but I was never informed as I should have been. After all I too have spent a lot of time looking at birds - live ones - and my opinion is valuable. The excuse given is that large number of people involved in the production of the book and their dispersion all over the world. I, however, have been living in New Mexico and could easily have been consulted. In fact I am the one who knows most about my photographs but was consulted the least. The attitude towards the photographer who contributes illustrations to a book, even when he is paid, is much to cavalier.

To prove my point about the reproducibility of my transparencies I am sending you for inspection dye-transfer prints of all the illustrations I considered unsatisfactory. There are two exceptions: the Olive and Red-faced Warbler prints were not made from the same transparencies you used but from ones of similar quality. Furthermore, if you will tell me which transparencies you found most difficult to reproduce I will have reproductions of

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two of them made by the Barnes Press in New York to show you what can be done. The Barnes Press also works in color lithography.

I am sending you 15 mounted dye-transfer prints. Please show them to any one who may be interested in this controversy but return them soon because I expect to use some of them in an exhibition in Michigan in January.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot Porter