

1977 Sheridan Rd.  
Hubbard Woods, Ill.

January 18, 1942

Mr. Paul Brooks  
Houghton Mifflin Co.  
2 Park Street  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Brooks:

It was through the kindness and interest of Mr. Moseley that some of my work was sent to you for inspection with possible publication in book form in view.

The question of text and title was left very much in the air. I thought, however, that a picture book might be considered. The last time I showed you some of my pictures you said, I think, that a book of bird photographs would not sell unless they were in color. Now it seems that color is not enough. You speak of the need for a sales handle. If these photographs are as good as you say I should think they would speak for themselves. Unless they are used as illustrations for a reference book on birds, and there are not enough of them for that purpose yet, almost any text would be a make shift.

However, I would welcome a truly complementary text - one which will make a real contribution to the work as a whole, if such can be found - but I very much object to anything less. I am antipathetic to the idea that printed matter gives pictures an authenticity, which they lack alone, or that it acts as a sort of magic, irresistible bait.

For me publicity and money are not primary considerations, therefore, I do not regard Life Magazine, the purposes and standards of which are not even parallel with mine, a proper medium for publication. If these photographs are to be reproduced at all the highest standards of ~~workmanship~~ should be maintained, otherwise the results will be of little value and a contribution neither to ornithology nor to Photography.

Perhaps you understand my point of view.

Yours sincerely

Eliot Porter