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17 November 1969

Mr. Frank J. Sulloway II
3 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Dear Mr. Sulloway:

I have recently returned from a three weeks trip east to find your letter of October 29. I am sorry not to have been able to answer it sooner, but if had answered it immediately I would, as you will see, have had to change my reply.

While I was in New York I was offered a contract to collaborate with Peter Matthiessen on certain aspects of the natural history of East Africa. This puts a new complexion on my plans to go to East Africa which have been germinating for several years, and also speeds things up a great deal. The publisher wants us to begin as soon as possible, which means me more than Matthiessen who has already spend some time in Africa. As matters stand we shall go to Africa in February for a preliminary trip into Tanzania of perhaps a month's duration. Then when the rainy season begins I will go to Greece and Turkey, returning to the United States in May to reorganize for a summer safari in June, July, and August. I tell you all this so that you will understand my election to forgo the South American expedition with you. Even under the original plans I was stretching my time rather too tightly in contemplating South America and the Galapagos Islands. Now, if I chose Africa, South America has to be given up. Both places are equally attractive, but Africa has the edge as it is an entirely new place for me and will lead to a quite different book.

To a considerable degree this letter is an apology, as much as an explanation, for leading you on perhaps false expectations because of a nostalgia for the Galapagos Islands. I have put you to considerable trouble already, and I sincerely hope that my vacillation has not inconvenienced you in subtle ways not apparent to me.

I am returning the script herewith, which I have no right to hold longer, and wish you the greatest of success with your fascinating venture.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot Porter