

## THE SEASONS

Photography became my preoccupation at the age of eleven, and it started with birds. In my twelfth year began a long series of summers ~~spent~~ on an island off the coast of Maine. ~~Here,~~ In an environment of the sea and ~~a~~ brisk northern climate, of a formidable rocky shore, and black-green spruce forests, and of white, gravel beaches rising out of the cold, dark blue waters of the Atlantic, birds first became an integral, inescapable part of my life.

On mornings when the tide was out I was awakened early by the calling of gulls from the seaweed-covered rocks below my bedroom window. Often, too, I would <sup>hear</sup> ~~see~~ the piercing whistle of <sup>a</sup> osprey <sup>in</sup> (circling above the shallow waters where he searched for fish to feed his young waiting in the huge, stick nest) on a promontory half a mile away. This sound would always get me out of bed like a fire whistle; and I would ~~go to~~ <sup>look out of</sup> the window to see the ~~final~~ <sup>hunts</sup> swift plunge ~~of the hawk~~ as he dove with partly folded wings on his prey. There was always a tingling thrill in that <sup>arrow</sup> ~~dart-like~~ <sup>reaching ahead, ed above his head, in a sort of</sup> dive, with spread talons, extending before the bird's head, and then in the <sup>in the</sup> few seconds suspense, <sup>that followed</sup> that lasted for minutes, before <sup>bird emerged,</sup> he emerged <sup>above to rise for</sup> dripping. Usually he struck true, rising steeply ~~with his quarry~~ holding perhaps a flounder edgewise, flapping heavily to gain altitude and finally before flying back to his nest, pausing in midair to shake the water from his feathers.

<sup>I visited</sup> There were colonies of nesting terns and gulls on ~~rocky~~ barren, neighboring islets. Visiting these colonies was as exciting to me <sup>as always</sup> ~~then~~ as a trip back to some primordial time would be today.

There were an <sup>which were</sup> exciting places to <sup>on</sup> ~~visit~~ and it would be too, to go back to a primal time.

Here I took photographs <sup>of</sup> eggs and young birds with my first cameras, and later, after I had acquired more sophisticated equipment, photographed the adult birds from blinds. As the years went by other birds <sup>interested in the lost birds</sup> attracted my attention and I began to photograph the sparrows and warblers that nested on the island where I lived. Still more years later, after I had built up a collection of black and white pictures of many of the song birds of Maine, I took my work to a publisher. He said he could not publish them because they were not in color and the species could not be identified. This was a challenge <sup>feeling immortality of youth</sup> to my youth when time stretched endlessly ahead was no concern. I took it up and with the newly developed Kodachrome set about photographing birds in color.

From this first beginning with color photography based on a near horizon of living things it is perhaps not surprising that an interest in other realms of nature should have developed. My horizon remained primarily a close and intimate one and an appreciation of the intrinsic color of the world spread from birds ~~to all~~ and other forms of life ~~and~~ to the whole natural world.

These photographs are <sup>present</sup> (gathered together) in an attempt to show, better than any reproductions are able to do, this development of a point of view towards the use of color <sup>to interpret</sup> photography in a vision <sup>other</sup> of the total natural scene. It will remain to those who view them to judge whether I have succeeded in revealing - even begun to reveal - <sup>of aspects</sup> a new dimension in perception of nature.

Eliot Porter



# TITLES

- 1. Maple Blossoms in a Woodland Pool 17 May 1961, New Hampshire
- 2. Rhodora 21 May 1953, New Hampshire
- 3. Aspens in Early Spring 1 June 1957, New Mexico
- 4. Eroded Rock 20 July 1953, New Mexico
- 5. Foxtail Grass 15 August 1957, Colorado
- 6. Weeds in Rock Cracks 23 August 1955, Maine
- 7. Ponderosa Pine 28 August 1960, New Mexico
- 8. Spruce Trees and River 17 September 1959, Colorado
- 9. Yellow Aspens 30 September 1951, Colorado
- 10. Cypress Swamp 21 February 1954, Florida
- 11. Snow and Grass 30 September 1959, Colorado
- 12. Snow on Sand Dunes 30 September 1959, Colorado

Dedicated to Aline

## Notes

The original photographs were made on 4x5 Daylight Ektachrome Film. Doubly masked separation negatives, made from these by contact printing, were enlarged onto Matrix Film for printing by the dye-transfer process. The prints were dry-mounted on Strathmore Illustration Board. Caution: Although the dyes in these prints are reasonably stable, they may fade if exposed to direct sunlight or other sources rich in ultra-violet wavelengths.

The edition is limited to 105 copies of which 100 are for sale.

This is copy Number

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I wish to express my gratitude to Jorge Pick for his untiring, invaluable assistance in ~~preparation~~ the preparation of the prints, and to The Sierra Club for making it possible for me to produce the portfolio.