

17 October 1998

Catriona Glazebrook
2525 Wallingwood #301
Austin, Texas 78746-6922

Dear Catriona,

Now that I have had some time to review our meeting of last Wednesday at your Austin office, I believe that as far as a potential publication to accompany our traveling exhibition of bird paintings is concerned, we have three possible options. Publishing projects tend to develop a life of their own so it is best that we are in agreement as to exactly what we (the Texas State Audubon Society and Us) want to do. Our options are:

1) Printing a soft-cover catalogue of all 50 paintings from "Of Birds and Texas" as well as the 28 or so watercolor studies or remarques of Texas birds done for a select few original book owners. There would only be a bare minimum of text.

2) Doing a publication in hard-cover book form (with possibly a soft-cover edition as well) of all 50 paintings from "Of Birds and Texas" as well as the remarques. This edition would have a new introductory text which I have just drafted and perhaps a Foreword by a guest writer. John Graves' original essay "Recollections of a Texas Bird Glimpser" might also be included.

3) Producing a smaller, hard-cover version of "Of Birds and Texas" including the Graves essay and all the Gentling plate commentaries. To this would be added the 28 remarques that would give the re-issue an enhanced visual richness and a uniqueness all its own while still allowing the new book to enjoy the critical praise earned by the original "Of Birds and Texas."

There are advantages to each of these three approaches. A soft cover catalogue with a minimum of text could possibly be printed in time to be sold at all or most of the venues you are selecting for the upcoming Centennial tour of the Gentling bird paintings. This, of course, would be the least expensive way to proceed.

The second alternative would result in a new book with the addition of my essay (and perhaps John Graves' as well) and the additional remarques. This version might ultimately prove almost as expensive to produce as a copy of our original book itself, and we would probably have to use another title which would not allow us to capitalize as much on the critical reception given the original book.

Though our third alternative might prove to be the most expensive, it would be the one that would be most likely to attract the interest of book people who are not birders, and

it would be the heir of all the incredible critical acclaim earned by the original "Of Birds and Texas." I personally like this alternative, because it fulfills a promise I made to produce, if at all possible, a smaller version of our elephant folio, so that the general public (as well as the hundreds of original folio owners) could enjoy the pictures and the critically praised text at their convenience. This would also make the most important and lasting monument to the centennial of the Texas State Audubon Society by publishing at last for the people of Texas and also the rest of the country a smaller version of not only one of the great bird books produced in America in the twentieth century but one that had such a remarkable and intimate association with John James Audubon himself. This story in itself provides the book with a public relations bonanza, and I will make myself available, whenever possible, to help promote the publication and the painting tour across Texas and elsewhere.

Another advantage to doing the third alternative is that almost all the work has already been done. Remember too that the Texas State Audubon Society will be getting all this remarkable material from Scott and me for free and quite possibly free from John Graves as well. We would not ask to share in any revenues until all the costs of the book's production and promotion are paid for by book sales.

The disadvantages to producing a copy in book form are its high cost and the fact that the book will not be ready to sell for most of the state-wide tour in 1999. Shannon Davies has voiced skepticism that pre-subscribing the book would be very successful. I see absolutely no problem in selling subscriptions ahead of publication. I have learned a great deal about how to do this. We sold more than \$300,000 worth of subscriptions to "Of Birds and Texas," at \$2,500 per book, a year and a half before publication by having an inaugural exhibition of our birds in 1984 and by mailing out a beautiful brochure to potential collectors. We can do the same here. I can tell you it will be much easier to sell a \$60.00 book under the highly respected umbrella of the Audubon Society's Centennial and the excitement of a statewide traveling exhibition than it was for us back in 1984. And this is a book, mind you, that has already earned outstanding critical acclaim.

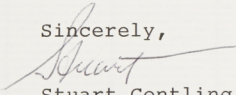
The production of a small catalogue was my original thinking when you first showed an interest in publishing something to accompany the traveling exhibit, and I was fairly certain that I could help secure the funding for such a modest project. The cost of doing a smaller version of "Of Birds and Texas" with the additional watercolor studies will be substantial. This and the lack of much time to secure funding would make it more practical for the Texas State Audubon Society, with its ready access to donors, to do this. I would not encourage you to consider undertaking this effort if I did not believe that this book would be successful if properly promoted. I would not be

surprised if this project would not only enhance the image of the Audubon Society in Texas but would make our Centennial one of the most noteworthy in the country. I believe that with effort and the economical use of a good public relations person we can gain access to significant national publicity. Afterall, we have a great story to tell!

So that you can thoroughly understand our story and the book we produced and how well it was received, I am sending you a copy of our "Of Birds and Texas" as well as a printer's copy of the folio's original text. I'm also sending a mockup of the second alternative book and copies of some of the reviews and magazine articles written about our project. These ought to be of assistance in securing potential donors.

I do hope this will help you to decide what you would like to do. I will do everything in my power to help you succeed with any decision you might make in this regard. As I have said, I really believe that our book would mesh perfectly with the Texas State Audubon Society's celebrations and its goals for the future, and that if it is brought before the people - and not just the people of Texas - with a vigorous, consistent and tasteful public offering, it will return with great interest the Texas Audubon Society's investment of time and money.

Sincerely,



Stuart Gentling

C.C. SHANNON DAVIES