U.S.D.A. Rules on Pet Bird Transportation

A number of changes have been instituted by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture regarding the importation of personally owned pet birds. Commercially imported birds in large numbers come under an entirely different set of U.S.D.A. regulations. The most recent pet bird importation regulations were effective as of Jan. 15, 1980, and apply to all countries except Canada. In some ways they are more strict than previous regulations, and in other ways more lenient. The overall objectives are to eliminate the importation of birds infected with Exotic Newcastle's Disease (V.V.N.D.), and to control the spread of Psitticosis. Newcastle's Disease is becoming more of a worldwide problem. It is estimated that if this disease was to become a problem in the United States, it could cost the taxpayers in excess of $230 million a year to attempt to control it.

Psitticosis, or Parrot Fever, is contagious to humans, and without proper treatment is usually fatal to both man and bird. This disease is treatable with Chlorotetracycline (C.T.C.), and all birds under the minimum quarantine period of 30 days are appropriately treated with this antibiotic. However, we know that it takes at least forty-five to ninety days of treatment with C.T.C. to be assured that birds are "clean." Therefore, it is advisable to isolate and treat newly acquired birds with C.T.C. for two to four weeks.

Requirements:

A pet bird brought into the U.S. must be quarantined for at least 30 days in a U.S.D.A. operated facility. A maximum of two psittacine birds per family per year are allowed. There is no limit on other species (within reason). During the quarantine period, the birds are isolated and treated in individually controlled and ventilated cages to prevent any cross contamination. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (A.P.H.I.S.) conducts appropriate tests on the birds to insure that they are free from any disease communicable to our poultry population. If any birds are found to be infected, they will be refused entry, and must be either returned to the country of origin at the owner's expense, or humanely euthanized. All imported birds will have numerically registered leg bands attached.

Procedure:

If one is planning a trip to a foreign country, and anticipates the purchase of birds, quarantine space at one of the listed U.S.D.A. facilities must be reserved and paid for in advance. A deposit of $40 per cage is required, and a cage will accommodate two parrot type birds, or a variable number of soft-bills, as long as they are compatible. Total cost estimates at present are about $80 per cage for one bird, and $100 per cage for two psittacines (or a larger number of small soft-bills) which must be paid upon release from quarantine. Obviously, it is more practical and economical to bring in two birds as long as they get along well together.

Additional charges can be incurred for transporting birds from the Port of Entry to the quarantine station.

When a bird is purchased in a foreign land, it is necessary to obtain a health certificate signed by a veterinarian accredited by the government of that country, certifying that the bird is free from any communicable disease. It must also indicate that the bird is being exported in accordance with the laws of that country, and must be written in, or translated into the English language. When applying for the cage reservation, request that U.S.D.A. form 17-23 be sent to you. It is an acceptable health certificate in English. Transportation from the Port of Entry to the bird's quarantine station must be pre-arranged as well. When the bird is released from quarantine, it may be examined by your personal veterinarian, and treated with C.T.C. for thirty days.

Ports of Entry:

In order to obtain the cage reservation, first write to the Import-Export Staff, Veterinary Services, A.P.H.I.S., U.S.D.A., Hyattsville, M.D. 20782. Request a copy of the pet bird import regulations and Form 17-23. Send the form and a certified check for $40 to the Port Veterinarian, A.P.H.I.S., U.S.D.A., (City, State, and zip code below):

Nogales, AZ 85621
Lawndale, CA (L.A.) 90261
San Ysidro, CA 92703
Miami, FL 33152
Honolulu, HI 96850
New York, NY 11430
Brownsville, TX 78520
El Paso, TX 79902
Laredo, TX 78040

Canadian Birds:

The same basic rules apply, but the
birds need not be quarantined as long as you certify that they have been in your possession for at least 90 days, were kept isolated from other birds during that period, and are in good health.

**Taking your bird out of the U.S.?**

Identification of the bird is the key factor. Either a numbered leg band or a tattoo is essential. Leg bands can be removed or exchanged, so a tattoo is a much more reliable means of identification. If a bird is going out of the country for less than 60 days, a health certificate signed by a U.S.D.A. accredited veterinarian, identifying the bird by tattoo or numbered leg band is all that is required. Special provisions must be made in advance with the U.S.D.A. if the bird is going to be outside the U.S. for more than 60 days. The bird must also be isolated from other birds during its absence.

**Tamaulipan Biotic Province**

Announcing an International Symposium on the Tamaulipan Biotic Province. The Symposium will include all ecological aspects of the biome: vegetation, invertebrates, vertebrates, ecological structure and function, biological resources (use and effects), and management. It will include aspects of applied science and conservation. The meeting will be held at La Quinta Royale Motor Inn, Corpus Christi, Texas, on October 28, 29, 30, 1982. Those interested in contributing papers should submit an abstract by 1 August 1982; abstracts for contributed papers must be received by 1 September 1982. For information on either, contact Gene W. Blacklock, Curator, Welder Wildlife Foundation, P.O. Drawer 1400, Sinton, Texas, 78367 or David Riskind, Head, Resource Management Section, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 77841. For information on registration, contact Jeanne R. Picquet, Director, John E. Conner Museum, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 77846. A cost of $75.00, which includes a registration fee, hotel room, meals, and transportation to the symposium, will be charged to those who do not arrange their own accommodations. A limited number of student registrations are available. For further information, contact Dr. James C. Doolittle, W.S. Mackey Foundation, Box 1394, McAllen, Texas, 78504.

**Watchbird Deadlines**

The "Watchbird" deadlines are as follows: All copy and photo support must be in the editor's hands two months before the publication date. The August/September material is due on June 1st.

All camera-ready ads must be in the hands of the art director one month prior to publication date, i.e., an ad for the Aug/Sept issue is due July 1st.