injurious” but government, dear reader, is entry
Man)  
birds die, the Federal depopulators mobilize
birds, zoning people attack. If he sells
erers, and Interior bans the
Can he look for help? If he has too many
Health Department quarantines. If two
troubles are multitudinous. His enemies
seem to stumble against our most
Oh! Glum and Gloom!! Woe is the
aviculturist. His enemies abound.

Chiefest among the enemies, you
might think, is the government. It does
seem to stumble atwart our most
progressive plans for expansion, and it
does wreck occasional havoc in our
flocks, but government, dear reader, is
not avicultures worst enemy. Disease is.
More birds are lost to disease than to any
other factor. In fact, if we’re honest
about it, even the governments most radi-
cal activities have been in response to
disease in our flocks. Think of it – no
disease, no depopulation. If we could
only eliminate avian disease we could do
much to eliminate government – well, at
least get them off our backs.

Paradoxically, virtually every agency
of our government concurs with our wish
to prevent disease. There are numerous
Federal, State, and local procedures
designed to preclude outbreaks of avian
disease. Unfortunately, many of these
procedures are bypassed by a species of
skunk called smuggler. Although smuggled
birds are not the only source of
disease they are a most dangerous source
and pose an immense threat to aviculture.
Everything we do to eliminate the smugg-
gling of birds will work in our favor on
several fronts.

Again paradoxically, there is a branch
of government that is our great friend
when it comes to squashing the smuggler. It
is the U.S. Customs Service. Many
aviculturists are unaware of what
Customs is or what it does and conse-
quently have an instinctive fear of it. Per-
haps a better understanding will dispel
the fear.

The major responsibility of the U.S.
Customs Service is to administer the
Tariff Act of 1930, as amended. Its pri-
mary duties include the assessment and
collection of all duties, taxes, and fees on
imported merchandise, the enforcement
of customs and related laws, and the
administration of certain navigation laws
and treaties. Customs agents are stationed
at over three hundred ports of entry
throughout the United States where they
are called upon to enforce their own as
well as some two hundred other Federal
laws on behalf of over forty Federal
agencies.

Because Customs officers are stationed
at the frontiers of the United States they
have an ongoing program with the U.S.
Department of Agriculture to assist them
(U.S.D.A.) in the control of imported
birds. According to U.S.D.A., smuggled
or illegally introduced birds create a
potential health hazard and a serious eco-


American aviculture will be. Despite
our many differences with government,
despite the steamroller attitude of govern-
ment, we do have a few friends on the
Federal payroll. Cooperate with Customs
regarding any birds you feel might be
smuggled. Tariff, shmeriff – don’t worry
about that. Just remember that customs
catches crooks.

Maybe things are not as bad as the first
paragraph sounded.

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