

Recognizing the Animal Rights Agenda

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Since we all want the best for our birds, and we all have great concern for welfare and care issues concerning all birds, we are all vulnerable to accepting one or another of the many different statements of the animal rights agenda as legitimate, instead of recognizing propaganda.

We read about proposed regulations or legislation concerning animal welfare or care. We hear comments such as “there ought’ a be a law” about some aspect of bird breeding or pet bird care. Instinctively, we want to support proposals that are going to benefit our birds and all birds. But, there are often consequences to many of these proposed laws that are hidden in the legal language or crop up in the written regulations. The words often make sense at a superficial level. If you are a reasonable person, you believe that reasonable people will be the ones writing the regulations under the law, and enforcing the regulations under the law. However, that may not be the case. A hidden agenda may be at work. We are especially vulnerable to it if we are not familiar with the area the law covers.

Sometimes the drafted law will state that it is concerned with animals, such as dogs and cats or perhaps wild animals or dangerous animals. For bird folks, they assume that means they have no concerns — it is only about animals. Well, in most situations, animals means birds too, unless they are specifically written out of the bill by statements indicating they are exempt. In fact, there have been some instances where birds have been said to be “wild and dangerous.”

Sometimes we aren’t reading about laws being proposed, but only about an idea for a law. This can be observed on some internet bird lists. Often such statements come from a new or inexperienced person who is enthusiastic about birds. He or she believes that a law should be put in

place to provide a) some specific “protection” for birds, b) penalties for law-breakers, and often, c) exemptions for adoption and rescue facilities (because they are doing such good work for birds!).

Here are some tips to help you recognize an animal rights agenda. If you see these statements in support of a particular rule, regulation or law, then be aware that the persons making these statements are either a) definite supporters of the animal rights agenda, or b) definite sympathizers, or c) bird lovers who have not questioned the basis or factual nature of these particular propaganda statements.

The Animal Rights Agenda Implicit in Specific Statements.

1. All birds belong in the wild, flying free.
2. That bird you are considering buying was probably smuggled.
3. Never buy a bird from a pet store.
4. Never buy a bird from a bird breeder.
5. Bird behavior problems are caused by bird breeders.
6. Parrots are wild birds and do not make good pets.
7. Parrot owners do not have the time or interest to provide what parrots need.
8. Parrots bite, scream and destroy their environments and mutilate themselves.
9. Obtain pet birds ONLY from adoption and rescue organizations.
9. Most birds will outlive their owners and be abandoned.
10. Thousands and thousands of birds are now being abused and abandoned.
11. Eventually these abandoned birds will be euthanized just like dogs and cats.
12. All bird breeding should stop since we have an over population of

parrots.

13. Incubation and hand rearing are wrong, (the implication is that it is “evil”).

14. Only parent rearing or co-parenting of parrots should be practiced.

Now, on the face of it, each one of those statements has a kernel of truth in it — which makes it so easily accepted by some pet bird owners and even some bird breeders. Probably each reader can think of examples involving one or more of the fourteen statements that have been proven to be true at least once. However, a handful of generalizations about individual problems should not form the basis for all encompassing laws and regulations. The cure becomes worse than the disease, as in “the disease was cured, but the patient died.”

When broad restrictive laws and regulations are put into place regarding birds and animals, many people who want to keep or breed pet birds and animals are discouraged from participating in these activities. Personal choices regarding our involvement with animals are thus being restricted.

Therefore, when we read or hear statements like those fourteen above, we need to question them. Asking questions about who, what, where, when, and determining actual facts is important. Otherwise, actions may be based on rumor or propaganda, both of which will have consequences for all bird owners.

And when we see the animal rights agenda as a integral part of an organization, we need to point that out to others and to step back from participating or supporting that AR-oriented organization. Keep in mind that many animal rights organizations are now trying to hide that fact by using other words to name their organization and to describe their goals. Often they use words such as “welfare” when the truth as demonstrated by their actions is “animal rights.”

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. ❖