

AFA in action...

NEWS and VIEWS

JUNE 1991

The Club Connection Avicultural Society of America

by Nancy L. Vigran

Meeting Location: Guiardo Park, 5760 Pioneer, Whittier, California (November - April). Outdoor meetings at members' homes (May - October).

Contact for more information: Helen Hanson, membership secretary, P.O. Box 5516, Riverside, CA 92517, phone (714) 780-4102.

1991 President: Aletta M. Long (213) 596-7429.

General Information: The Avicultural Society of America (ASA) was founded in 1927 in New York City. The first membership roster held approximately thirty names and announcements and information was published in a monthly trade magazine, the *Pet Dealer*. In 1929, the first formal elections were held and William Browning from California was elected the first president of the ASA.

The first ASA *Bulletin* was published in January of 1929. A chapter of the society was formed in Los Angeles and in early 1934 the Society transferred itself from New York City to Los Angeles. The Society had grown to 408 members and the first dues collected were one dollar per year.

The ASA was undoubtedly the original "bird club" in the U.S. and is still going strong today with a membership ranging with members from most of our 50 states and many foreign countries. The ASA *Bulletin* is published monthly with informative avicultural articles and other information pertinent to exotic birds. Dues are \$20 per year and run from January through January.

Activities and Special Events: A unique feature of the ASA is their outdoor spring and summer meetings. Each month, members are taken to different aviaries to get a look at how other members raise their birds. In October, the ASA holds their annual fund-raising auction. Birds and bird related items are donated by members and all proceeds from the auction are put into the club treasury.

The ASA has currently become involved in the Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas project of supplying nesting sites in the Los Colorado Ranch in northeastern Mexico. Having donated \$1,000 towards increasing production of wild Yellow-headed, Blue-fronted and Green-cheeked Amazons, ASA members will be able to travel to Mexico to view the habitat in this region and to see firsthand where their money is being put to good use ●

Quaker Parakeet Confiscated

by David Asakawa

On January 15, 1991, a Quaker or Monk Parakeet, *Myiopsitta monachus*, was found in a pet shop in Oxnard, Ventura County, California.

CDFG entomologist David Asakawa found the prohibited

psittacine while doing pet shop surveys for hydrilla and prohibited vertebrates and invertebrates.

Information concerning the find was referred to Ventura County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner David Buettner and a hold notice was issued to the pet shop owner. Game warden Ernest Acosta of the California Department of Fish and Game was notified and on January 22 the find was confirmed and the bird confiscated.

In response to this find, additional surveys of local bird breeder facilities are being coordinated with CDFG, Pest Exclusion, and Ventura County. ●

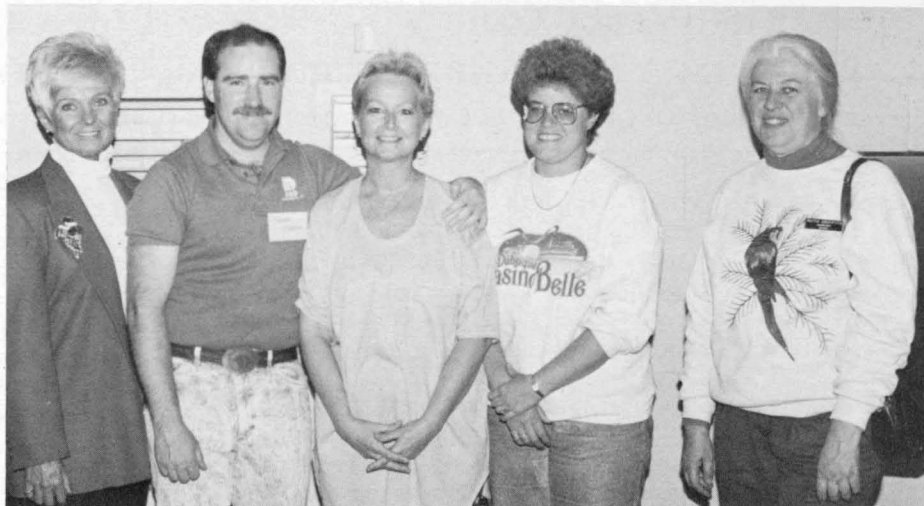
Parrotswood Seeks Assistance in Establishing Pileated (or Red-capped) Parrot (*Pionopsitta pileata*) Census and Cooperative Breeding Program

Parrotswood has announced the Pileated Parrot (*Pionopsitta pileata*) Census and Cooperative Breeding Program as one of its 1991 Research and Conservation Projects. Preliminary investigations indicate that perhaps less than 50 Pileated Parrots are living in U.S. Captive Breeding facilities. Parrotswood is most anxious to establish both an updated census as well as forming a central gene pool and cooperative breeding program to assure the survival of this CITES I Psittiforme. Any zoological or avicultural facility owning any of these endangered parrots are asked to please contact Pileated Parrot Project Investigator, Parrotswood, P.O. Box 1229, Summerton, SC 29148, phone (803) 478-4300. ●

Green-cheeked (Mexican) Red-headed Amazon Parrot Studbook Published

The first issue of the Green-cheeked Amazon Parrot (*Amazona viridigenalis*) studbook was printed on April 30. The 26 page document includes pertinent information on over 100 specimens in avicultural collections. The report will be updated and reprinted in October. Individuals with this species in their collections are encouraged to register their birds in order to aid propagation efforts in securing genetically diverse stock. A complimentary copy of the report is being provided to participants. Non-participants can obtain a copy for a duplication/postage fee of \$3.00. To register specimens or obtain a copy of the report write: Ron Holtz, c/o AFA Business Office, P.O. Box 56218, Phoenix, AZ 85079. ●

AFA Board Meets in Minnesota

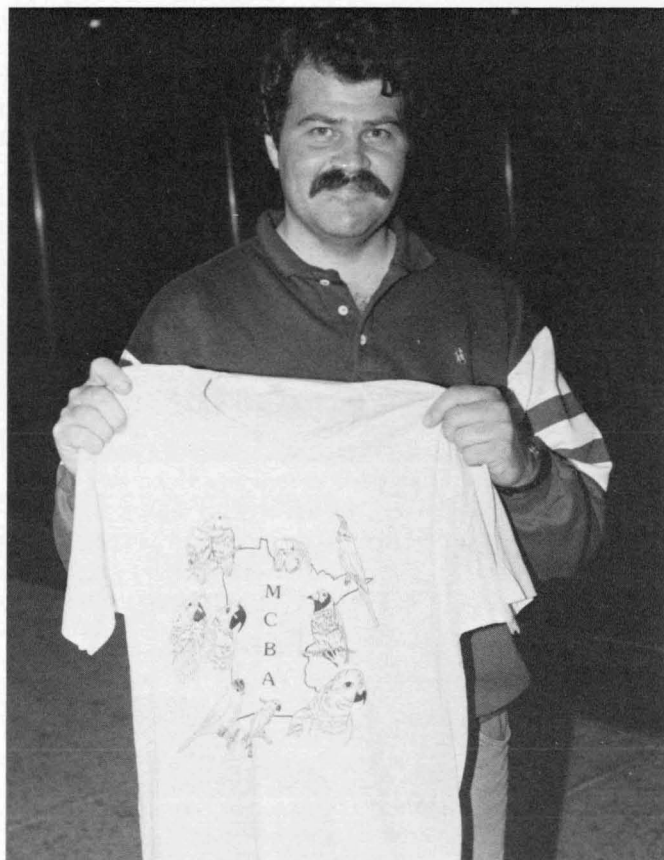


Photos by Jack Clinton-Eitner

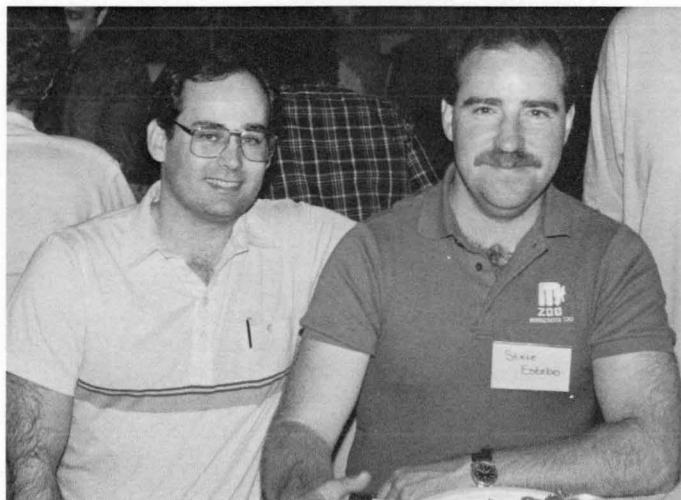
Minnesota Companion Bird Association officers, L to R: Mary Karlquist, treasurer; Steve Estebo, director; Susan Bazzalli, president; Mellissa Cuddeback, director; Ruth Griffith, secretary.

The spring meeting of the AFA Board of Directors was held from May 17 - 19 at the Holiday Inn, Burnsville. Complete minutes of the meeting, in addition to a summary to be read at club meetings, will be mailed to all members of the House of Delegates. For those not members of an affiliated club, the following motions were approved:

- To offer book specials as an additional benefits to membership.
- Adding bird bands (any quantity or size) as a membership benefit.
- To investigate bird insurance and tours as possible membership benefits.
- To contract with CONFERON to service our 1992 convention in Miami, Florida.
- To mail out lapel pins to those with upper level membership categories (supporting patron, sustaining).
- To promote AFA through a mailout to small animal veterinarians.
- Approval was given to the new members of the Research Committee.
- Support was given to the CITES committee's fund-raising effort to provide financial assistance to a field study on African Grey Parrots in Ghana, West Africa.



To get one of these T-shirts, you have to visit the Minnesota Companion Bird Association. AFA club delegate Kevin Brooks shows his club's logo on shirts presented to the AFA Board members, May 18, 1991.



James McCabe (left), AFA North Central Regional Vice-president, introduced Steve Estebo, currently working with birds at the Minneapolis Zoo, as the new Minnesota state coordinator.

After our Saturday business meeting, the AFA board was invited to a potluck dinner by the Minnesota Companion Bird Association at the Minnesota Zoo. Following the dinner, the AFA President addressed the group with a talk and slide presentation titled, "Aviculture as conservation: don't forget the softbills!"

The AFA Board of Directors would like to express their appreciation to the Minnesota Companion Bird Association and the Minnesota Zoo for the outstanding hospitality and facilities. ●

The Parrot Society Celebrates its 25th Anniversary

*Hosted by United Kingdom Parrot Conference for
the Advancement of Parrotlike Species in Captivity*

To commemorate this special even the United Kingdom Parrot Conference will host the second convention on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of November 1991 at the Conference Centre, Penguin Hotel, Chester, England.

The Chairman will welcome delegates to the conference on Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. Informal lecture workshops will follow.

Saturday and Sunday will be devoted to top international and national speakers. Subjects will include Beak and Feather Disease Update, Conures, Parrots in the Wild, Pediatrics, Embryology, Australian Parakeets, Nutrition and Macaw Husbandry.

A buffet lunch has been arranged for Saturday and Sunday with a dinner-dance at the Penguin on Saturday evening. Veterinary lectures followed by a forum will take place after lunch on Sunday and the conference will close at approximately 5:00 p.m.

The cost is £85 (approx. \$1.90 to 1 English Pound) per person and this includes all lectures, lunch and dinner on Saturday, lunch on Sunday and tea/coffee/biscuits throughout both days. Accommodations are to be arranged by individuals. The Penguin Hotel has allocated rooms for conference delegates at a special rate of £28 per person per night for a single room and English breakfast or £25 per person for two nights stay. Their telephone number is 0244-851551.

The principal organizers of this event are Allison Dutton, R. Kay and Eric Peake. Checks should be made out to: "United Kingdom Parrot Conference," 61 High Street, Tarvin, Chester, Cheshire, United Kingdom CH3 8EE. Tel. 0829-41215. ●

Red Siskin Program Brochure Available

A full color brochure detailing the AFA Red Siskin program has been printed and is available by contacting the AFA business office. The brochure will be used to increase awareness of the plight of the species and enhance participation in AFA's program. The cost of the brochure was offset by a generous donation from Kellogg Inc. Seeds and Supplies. ●



Blue-eared Pheasant Feather Give Away Program

Feather Way intends to conduct a give away program to all fly tiers in the states of Washington and Oregon who would like to participate. Feathers and skins will be provided from birds that have died of natural causes. Quantity of material available will depend upon cooperation of pheasant breeders nationwide. Distribution of material is planned to begin toward the end of May.

These feathers will be available at no cost to individual fly tiers only and are not intended for resale. Owners of fly fishing stores or supply companies are not eligible for this program.

It has been brought to my attention that Blue-eared Pheasants are being murdered and skinned in Washington State, by the owner of a fly fishing store, in an attempt to develop a market for their feathers.

Commercializing an exotic species that is threatened in its country of origin by developing a market for feathers that are not called for in the traditional patterns is irresponsible, senseless, immoral and cowardly.

The overwhelming, vast majority of pheasant breeders and fly tiers in this country do not approve of the slaughter of Blue-eared Pheasants for their feathers as there are dyed substitutes already available in the marketplace for fly tying.

The cash market for the feathers of the Blue-eared Pheasant must be effectively destroyed before it breaks out of a localized area and becomes a national or international problem. The only practical solution to this problem, at this time, is to flood the market with free material and destroy any price structures that are developing for these feathers.

Dick Stewart, of American Angler and Fly Tyer Magazine, has commented that . . . "it is not necessary to introduce a new feather into the marketplace at the expense of a species."

To receive free material, call or write and I will put your name on a waiting list. Feathers will be distributed in order of your place on the list. If you do not want your name on a waiting list, have a friend apply for you or have your fly tying organization vote on application and apply as a group.

Certain actions are pending and arrangements are being made at this time to put the Blue-eared Pheasant in a protected status along with the Brown-eared and White-eared Pheasants.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.
Sincerely, Kevin Schneider, 14292 Jennings Vista Way, Lakeside, CA 92040. ●

Winter Meeting Donations

In addition to giving away door prizes, AFA held a silent auction at the Winter Regional Meeting in February. AFA would like to express its appreciation and gratitude to the donors who made this possible. Silent Auction prizes were donated by **Arizona Aviculture Society** (*Clinical Avian Medicine and Surgery* by Harrison and Harrison), **Arizona Seed Crackers Society** (*Parrot Incubation Procedures*, a signed copy given by Rick Jordan), **Bay-Mor Pet Foods** (two 25-lb. bags each of parakeet, canary, finch, cockatiel and parrot mixes), **Jack Clinton-Eitnrear** (*Parrots at Risk*), **Nina Dioletis** (Turn-X incubator), **Emerald Park Ltd.** (cockatoo prints from Australia), **Front Range Avian Society** (bird playpen), and **New Mexico Bird Club** (two cages, a stand, a signed and numbered print, and *Pet Birds* by Don Harper. The print came from the

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, the stand and cages from UPCO Pet and Vet Supply.)

Door prizes were provided by Bay-Mor Pet Foods (11 4-lb. bags peanut hearts, a 4-lb. bag parakeet mix and a 2.5-lb. bag parrot mix), Plano Exotic Birds Association (a bird toy and two stainless steel bowls with mounting hooks) and several donations arranged by the New Mexico Bird Club. These were provided by Kelly Tucker (handfeeding formula and two crocks), Riverside Animal Hospital (Nutri-Berries and a bird picture), Pet Options (book for the silent auction, 25 lbs. cockatiel mix), We Are Pets (tabletop bird stand), For The Birds (two \$20 gift certificates, four bird T-shirts), Veterinary Care Center (four LaFeber's Nutri-An, two 5-lb. Topper seeds, 1 Mini-Friends parrot pellets), Ken Gasser (wood chew toys, medium and small), Fins, Feathers and Fur (Kaytee parrot mix), May Lue's Pampered Pets (wild bird feather) and UPCO Pet and Vet Supply (LaFeber's Nutri-An, a parrot perch, a swing toy, a crock set, a coop cup dish set, a fruit chew rawhide toy, 125 g. Super-Preen vitamins, a bell and rawhide toy, Kwik-Stop styptic powder and a chew stick treat.) ●

AFA FORUM

by Jack Clinton-Eitniece, President, AFA

Dear AFA:

I would like to express a few thoughts in regards to the Feb/Mar 1991 issue of the AFA Watchbird magazine.

Being a dedicated cockatiel breeder for several years, I thoroughly enjoyed all of the assorted articles in reference to this species. I especially enjoyed the rare cockatiel color mutation article, along with the superb color pictures by Herschel Burgin.

Thanks again for editing such a great issue!
S.P.

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Dear AFA:

This year, with so much concentration placed on doing our best to preserve the environment, I was hard pressed to make a decision on renewing my AFA membership. Our birds are beautiful and we must save them from extinction, but yet your book (magazine) uses non-biodegradable paper. Can this be remedied?

E.M.S.

Dear AFA:

Your magazine is striving to preserve species. Why not use unbleached, recycled paper products and go the extra mile?

P.C.

Response to P.C.:

We have investigated using recycled paper. Unfortunately, both the quality of the magazine and the cost would be negatively impacted from such an action. Nevertheless, we are planning to use recycled paper for the dust cover as well as in the business office.

J.C.E.

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Dear AFA:

It is my opinion after reading the article on "Nutritional Research with Budgerigars" that the research done on these parakeets was a needless waste. The parakeets were "euthanized for carcass analysis of lipid, protein and ash." According to the table, 259 parakeets were used in the test. I am very disappointed in AFA approving a research grant for this type of needless and heartless research in birds.

AFA is "dedicated to conservation of bird wildlife through encouragement of captive breeding programs, scientific research, and education of the general public." If this is your idea of "scientific research", then I am appalled. This is heartless and unnecessary treatment, especially since it is a known fact that seeds do not have a high nutritional value. Whatever happened to observing birds and their lifespan? I believe enough is known about nutrition; come on, give the birds a break!

I am discontinuing my association with AFA because I strongly disagree with dissecting perfectly healthy birds. I will no longer give money to AFA for captive breeding of endangered species which I believe to be important. I cannot accept AFA condoning this type of "scientific behavior."
G.R.

Response to G.R.:

AFA recently re-evaluated its research grant program by sending out a questionnaire to over 200 AFA member veterinarians. One question dealt with the euthanizing issue. A full report will be printed in the next "AFA Watchbird."

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Dear AFA:

I'm a member of A.F.A. I have a retail/wholesale aviary with 100 pairs of breeding birds which include conures, African grays, cockatoos and macaws.

There are many neat things brought to us through hybridizing in our everyday life including turf grass, fruits, vegetables, flowers, food animals, and even our pet cats and dogs. I approve of hybridizing in birds also. All the anti-hybrid articles that I've seen are based on personal opinions, not facts. Hybridization is not threatening any species of birds. Lack of people interested in breeding them is!

I donate to Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease research. I support, with both my time and money, other fund raisers for bird clubs on a local and national level.

I am a valuable member of the avian community. Any club needs me as much as I need any club. I will not tolerate any club dictating what goes on in an individual's aviary through censorship of add policies. Unless A.F.A. changes their policy to accept ads for hybrids, I will not renew my membership after it expires.

C.T.

Response to C.T.:

The Board of Directors felt that until management programs are in place which would assure species genetic survival in captivity, hybridization is not a sound practice.

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Dear AFA:

I subscribe to various avicultural magazines, read every book on the subject I can find, and have come to the conclusion that the Watchbird was the most informative. I have always had trust in your articles and have followed the advice in many of your columns. I supported your stand in hybridism, have recruited new members, and I am also an AFA delegate for a local aviculture club.

After reading the Feb/Mar issue, the credibility of the Watchbird should be judged. Dedicated aviculturists strive to excel in keeping their birds on balanced diets, fruits and vegetables, clean disinfected environments, toys for stimulation, and disease free as possible.

The article on Arnold Chaney states he keeps his birds in stacked cages without litter trays, no perches to roost on, no

toys, not even fresh water daily. This article also states Arnold Chaney's cages are surprisingly kept clean by the birds themselves. This is because the birds are chewing on their own feces and the feces falling from the birds caged above. This is exactly the type of ammunition legislation needs.

I believe with the new attitude AFA has taken on promoting this type of environment, the *Watchbird* should change its format. Perhaps to a magazine dedicated to stories on Petey the parrot's latest tricks and adventures.

J.K.

Response to J.K.:

Please do not judge the worth of over a decade of publication by one article! The article was an "AFA Visits" showing one method that commercial breeders use to mass produce cockatiels. AFA does not endorse nor condemn his methodology.

♦ ♦ ♦

Dear AFA:

As a member club, we would like to see a breakdown of where our dues go in this organization.

Being members of other national organizations, we see a direct return of our dues in material objects other than a news letter, such as trophies, judges for shows, etc.

Any input that you or your fellow officers can give our club will help our board's decision on continuing our membership in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

M.W.

Response to M.W.:

Affiliated clubs receive "Watchbird" copies, AFA memberships for show awards, AVY Appreciation Awards, "gratis" space at conventions, AFA FastAds for the delegates, use of AFA slide tape shows and videos and other benefits that total much more than the cost of annual dues.

♦ ♦ ♦

Dear AFA:

I joined the AFA with the express purpose of lending a small amount of support toward your very important goals. I am 69, a disabled and retired USAF MSgt and spend many hours each day studying and working with my birds. Our funds are limited, but we wish to convert our present stock into a breeding program that would be beneficial to all concerned. We have found that too many breeders are interested only in making money and care little about the goals that you and I are concerned with.

We have a 24 x 24 ft. building with cement floor, hot and cold water and a lighting system controlled by timers. The building has two sides open and enclosed with 1/2 x 1 inch wire. This side has fold down hurricane awnings in case of a bad storm. In the winter it is covered with plastic. One side has louvered windows that can control the flow of air through the area. The back side is solid. In extreme hot days, fans are used. In the winter, heat is available to a minimum of 40°F. Our birds are housed in various size cages with slide out pans. We live in the country and are always in danger of a woods fire from adjoining property. With our arrangement, all cages can be removed from the building in case of fire. We have the reputation of having the cleanest and best organized aviary on the Gulf Coast. We now have 62 birds of nine species. Some are for sale to finance my proposed research project.

One thing that several of us are concerned about is that large numbers (sometimes 75) of Double Yellow-headed Amazon babies, barely weaned and unbanded, are being brought in from Texas and sold at low prices. It is obvious what is going on but

we don't know what to do about it. We are licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Agriculture and I have spoken to the inspector who periodically checks our aviary. He says it is not his responsibility. The state laws we have are a result of lobbying by persons in the chicken industry many years ago to protect their investments against diseased, smuggled birds. Apparently nothing can be done locally nor will be done at the state level until we have a serious outbreak. Can you recommend a way to report this to a federal agency who would give it more than lip service? I am a member of the Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana clubs; the Mobile, Alabama club and the South Mississippi club. I have recently joined the international club. I am also in the process of chartering a Mississippi State Aviculture Society. Maybe one day we can have enough clout to force state legislation to protect ourselves.

In your literature, I found that you were looking for a person to start programs on selected species. I had forgotten this until I had started off on my own. Here is my proposed program.

In 1987, I read where the Goffin's Cockatoo was losing its natural habitat in the Tanibar Islands and aviculturists were being encouraged to propagate them domestically. I bought a s/s pair and, after two years, produced a youngster. Now they have two more eggs. There are many Goffin's in our area but none have been bred successfully. Most people give up and go to a breed that is more prolific. So, I am in the process of buying more proven and s/s Goffin's. I hope to develop guidelines to make it easier to breed them, thereby attracting more interest in the breeder's avairies. Now, I need to back up, regroup and ask "Is this a worth-while project?" I am getting too old to wait years on results. Maybe I should do this on a lesser scale and work on something more important and a little more prolific. Is there another species that the AFA considers more important that I should be exerting my time and limited funds toward? If so, please make some suggestions.

If I continue with this project or any other, I need all the help I can get. We close band all birds raised and keep pretty good records. However, I am sure they can be improved on. Our sanitation is above average. The aviary is cleaned daily, all water and feed bowls changed, washed and soaked overnight in a Nolvasan solution. But again, anything can be improved upon. We lost our only avian vet to Desert Storm and he relocated close to his home, 150 miles away. Our nearest avian vet is in New Orleans, 70 miles away. Some of us help each other and do pretty good. But we always have the fear of pending disaster caused from smuggled birds.

R.E.

Response to R.E.:

I believe that the Goffin's is a worthy candidate to focus your attention on.

By the time smuggled birds get to Mississippi and the possibility that a federal agent could prove that they were, in fact, smuggled is difficult. Without such proof, seldom will they make an arrest. Someone selling "inexpensive" young birds does not constitute proof of smuggling. AFA is working on the problem through development and distribution of a poster educating people along the border about the perils of bringing birds across. We also plan to meet with wildlife law enforcement officials to discuss the subject this fall.

♦ ♦ ♦

Dear Jack:

I would like to comment on the interesting article by Jill Hedgecock entitled "Parrots in Peril?" in the Dec/Jan issue of *Watchbird*. I would like to point out that my book, which she

quoted from, *Endangered Parrots*, was published in 1984. She quoted from it that "trade accounts for only 3% of parrots having endangered status." This figure was based on information in the 1979 Red Data Book. It referred to species endangered solely by trade. Today it is almost impossible to separate the two issues of trade and deforestation. Many parrots have suffered serious population declines as the result of these combined pressures — but few parrots have declined solely due to trapping because, in the case of rainforest species, trapping is difficult on a large scale until logging has occurred. In less than a decade, this has had a catastrophic effect on a number of species. One of the worst examples is that of the Moluccan Cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*). In this case, it was the trappers who dealt the final blow. Some of the habitat of this cockatoo still survives — without cockatoos. This species is on the verge of extinction in the wild.

It is no coincidence that during the past 20 years more than 20 species of parrots which had never been exported commercially from New Guinea, Indonesia and South America have become well-known in aviculture. Now taken for granted but previously known by no more than a handful of specimens collected privately (mostly in the 1920s or 1930s) are such species as Dusky Lorries, Meyer's, Goldie's and Red-flanked Lorikeets, Goffin's Cockatoos, Amboina King Parrots, Austral, Slender-billed, Sun and Golden-capped Conures and Tucuman Amazons. Others previously unknown which have been imported in smaller numbers include Joesphine's, Fairy, Red-spotted and Musschenbroek's Lorikeets, Salvadori's, Edwards' and Desmarest's Fig Parrots, Pesquet's Parrots and Yellow-faced Parrotlets. None of these would have been

available in such numbers had their forest habitats not been invaded by man.

Some of them, including all the lorries mentioned, remain common in the wild. Inevitably, island species such as Amboina Kings and Goffin's Cockatoos have declined. But the greatest tragedies lie behind trade in such species as Citron-crested and Umbrella Cockatoos and Hyacinth Macaws, which are approaching extinction in the wild, while captive populations number thousands. To my mind, the greatest tragedy behind the huge captive populations of such Appendix I species as Scarlet, Hyacinth and Red-fronted Macaws and Moluccan Cockatoos, is that a very small percentage have the opportunity to breed. It is a paradoxical situation. The demand for Hyacinths and Moluccans, for example, as pets has almost led to their extinction — thus there can now be no justification in keeping them as pets. The genes of every single individual must be passed on to ensure the long-term survival of these species in aviculture.

This raises another issue. Some parent-reared young reared in large aviaries where they retain their natural wildness may become important for the survival of the species. Perhaps a way will be found to return some captive-bred parrots to their natural habitat when few others survive there — but numerous difficulties are involved (as has recently been demonstrated with the Thick-billed Parrot in Mexico). For many species, re-introduction will be a pipe dream. But for others it may become reality. Only then will aviculture prove its worth in a way which does not directly benefit humans.

Rosemary Low, curator

Breeding Centre, Palmitos Park, Gran Canaria, Spain ●



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