

# Marking and Identification for Bird Owners and Breeders

by Jerry McCawley, Phoenix, AZ

One of the most important things we aviculturists can do for ourselves and our birds is to take every step possible to "ID" our birds regardless whether pet or breeder. By identifying our birds in some manner, we have the potential to document them in records. In an era where documentation is becoming more and more necessary, such efforts can prove quite rewarding.

There are several reasons why every bird should be "marked" or "identified" in some manner. First and foremost, it allows that particular bird to be recorded in your personal files. All breeders should maintain records regardless whether it is a small hobby or a full time business. Record keeping allows birds to be traced to parental stock, which in turn can aid in efforts to maintain a varied gene pool.

Second, good record keeping, marking and identification helps support your business and breeding program if you or your customers are ever interested in exporting a bird for sale or even if a pet bird is to accompany a family abroad for any length of time. For specific information about exporting birds for sale or as accompanying pets, please contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of Permits.

Finally, in worse case scenarios, marking and identifying can help protect your rights as a breeder and owner. In cases of theft, proper marking and identification can be utilized in the return of stolen animals. It can also help if you are ever falsely accused of an illegal activity.

There are number of ways to mark and identify your birds. Each one affords distinct advantages and disadvantages.

## Ways of Marking and Identifying Birds

### Photos and Videos

One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways is to simply take a picture or video of your birds - *close up*. Although not every bird will have major identifying marks, sometimes a bird will have something which causes it to stand out for identification purposes for documentation or in case of theft. Missing digits, broken toes, discolored markings on the feet, indents in the beaks — basically anything that is slightly different or unique to your bird.

Also, when taking pictures or videos, try to have a historical document in the picture somewhere — the front page of a newspaper, for instance. The headlines are rarely exactly the same, and this serves as a reference point as to when the picture or video was taken. Also, some photographic or video mediums may come with date stamping right on them. This type of documentation helps when the length of ownership is in question.

After you have documented this in a picture or video, write the identifying mark and keep a copy of the video or photograph in your permanent records.

But don't stop there. Place a second copy into a mailing package and mail it to yourself. *Do not open* the package but place it in a secure area off your own property. You now have documents with an official government seal (postal stamp) that should verify the date the material was mailed. This becomes a resource that can be used if your records are ever stolen, damaged, lost due to natural disaster or confiscation. If at any time you must utilize this documentation, go to a notary and your local authorities, open it in front

of them and have the contents notarized. This will help show a trail of good solid record keeping.

When everything is back to normal, re-record your information, and have a notary, once again, see the contents that are being sealed in the package, place the duplicate copy with the notary seal embossed, and mail back to yourself. This type of documentation is very valuable if anything would ever require documentation.

### Traceable Bands

Both open and closed bands can be traceable. One benefit to using traceable bands is that an outside source other than yourself has a record of when the bands were sold, which may serve as a reference point for historical data. If anything should ever happen to your records, a basic idea of what and when items were purchased now becomes available through an outside source.

Traceable bands can be purchased through any number of organizations and societies. Most exhibition societies provide closed traceable bands to their members for a nominal fee. They are most often color-coded for specific years, and contain the breeders ID Code or number and preset numerical

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information that is not duplicated, so no bird may have a completely duplicate band.

The records are usually maintained by one individual in the organization and the records are passed on from Band Secretary to Band Secretary with a complete history maintained by the organization or society. Many societies require that only closed-banded birds be exhibited, and some even go as far as requiring that only birds bred and banded by the breeder be exhibited.

Several AFA national specialty affiliates offer bands to their members. They include: Society of Parrot Breeder & Exhibitors, the American Lovebird Society, the American Cockatiel Society, the National Cockatiel Society, the National Finch & Softbill Society, American Budgerigar Society, in addition to numerous specialty Canary organizations.

The AFA also provides closed and open bands to their members. They come in three distinct forms:

**a.** Open Traceable bands - These bands are constructed of 300 series stainless steel (the same as used by USDA quarantine stations) and are available in sizes from 3/16" to 9/16" in any quantities. Each band contains a numerical reference to the band's size, an AFA code, as well as a unique numerical sequence. These bands are applied with special applicators, and are registered within the AFA Computer Database and identified

with your membership.

The AFA offers the applicator free to all members, but does require a \$25 deposit that is returned if the applicators are returned within two weeks of receipt.

**b.** The second type is closed stock bands which are constructed of aluminum and are silver in color. Each band is imprinted with AFA Coding, which is then identified with your membership. They can be ordered one at a time, and are ideal in emergencies when your custom bands may not be available in time or for those breeders who raise a limited number of birds a year.


Stock bands are maintained at the AFA Business Office and are usually mailed within 24 hours of receipt of the order.

**c.** Custom Closed bands are coded with your preference of information. They can include a code, a color (silver, black, blue, yellow, green, red, orange, or violet), a specific numerical sequence, a state, and a year.

AFA also offers stainless steel closed bands, which look similar to the aluminum except they are constructed with stainless steel and are only available in silver.

AFA recommends stainless steel bands when banding birds such as Hyacinth Macaws, Green-winged Macaws, Cape Parrots, and certain Cockatoos which may have a tendency to destroy bands. All this information is maintained in a central database.

Custom bands are manufactured by an outside vendor so proper planning and forethought is required to make sure bands are received in time for the banding of young chicks.

AFA *never* reveals the information within its database. When individuals contact us about a specific band and require information, we contact the member with the inquiring party's request and information and it then becomes the decision of the member whether or not to contact the inquiring party. This is to ensure your safety and security as well as privacy as a member of AFA. 

# A Dam Unauthorized Project!

*[Editor's note: The following document was taken off the internet which is unregulated and unedited. We cannot, therefore, guarantee the veracity and accuracy of the document but we deem it worthy of publication if only for your enjoyment. SLD]*

DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
HOLLISTER BUILDING,  
PO BOX 30473,  
LANSING MI 48909-7973  
INTERNET:  
<http://www.deq.state.mi.us>  
RUSSELL J. HARDING, Director

DECEMBER 17, 1997  
CERTIFIED  
Mr. Ryan DeVries  
2088 Dagget  
Pierson, MI 49339

SUBJECT:  
DEQ File No. 97-59-0023-1 T11N  
R10W, Sec. 20  
Montcalm County

Dear Mr. DeVries:

It has come to the attention of the Department of Environmental Quality that there has been recent unauthorized activity on the above referenced parcel of property. You have been certified as the legal landowner and/or contractor who did the following unauthorized activity:

**CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF TWO WOOD DEBRIS DAMS ACROSS THE OUTLET STREAM OF SPRING POND.**

A permit must be issued prior to the start of this type of activity.

A review of the Department's files shows that no permits have been issued. Therefore, the Department has determined that this activity is in violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.30101 to 324.30113 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, annotated.

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