

AFA's Aviculturist's Calendar for 1984



JANUARY 1984							FEBRUARY 1984						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29						

AFA's new 1984 calendar features outstanding color photographs of birds admired the world over: parrots, finches, touracos, cockatoos, and macaws. Each photo has an educational caption.

This year's calendar consists of six pages, two months to a page, a neat tin strip at top with center hanger. The grids are large enough to note hatching dates, bird club meetings, show dates, etc. Size, 17" x 22"

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Bird Smuggling, the Unforgiveable Crime

by Tom Ireland
Lake Worth, Florida

During the last ten years smuggling of exotic birds has been an increasing problem to the American aviculturists and the U.S. poultry industry. Why is bird smuggling such an unforgiveable crime? First of all, each and every bird smuggled into the United States does not go through quarantine and therefore, can and does carry a variety of diseases harmful to all pet birds, and breeding birds in the aviculturist's collection and in the poultry industry. Secondly, birds smuggled into the country are usually done so by some very inhumane methods, such as stuffed in spare tires, in luggage, pockets of clothing, gassed or beaks taped shut so they won't make a sound. Birds are also smuggled by ship and plane and if the person smuggling birds is threatened with capture, he disposes of the birds by throwing them overboard. There is also the person vacationing in another country who will buy a parrot at bargain prices and think it is great to cheat by smuggling this bird into the country. These people feel proud of themselves for scoring against the government and do not know or care that the consequences of their thoughtless action can produce disastrous results.

The smuggler is not the only person responsible for the unforgiveable crime. The buyer of such birds is the person sentencing many, many birds to an untimely death. If there were not such a ready market for these bargain birds then smuggling would decline. We will not realize this decline in smuggling until people are educated and made aware of the dangers of purchasing a bargain or smuggled bird.

One of the greatest fears we as aviculturists and breeders face is the outbreak of VVND (Velogenic Viscerotropic Newcastle Disease). This disease, which

can spread rapidly, affects all birds and is very damaging to domestic poultry. Even if the disease is not fatal there are some birds which can become infected without showing any signs of the disease. These birds are known as carriers and can spread the infection, thereby posing a constant threat to the poultry industry and exotic pet and breeding birds. According to the USDA nearly all outbreaks of exotic newcastle disease can be traced to illegally imported parrots.

When there is an outbreak of highly contagious avian disease such as VVND, USDA inspectors work around the clock tracing each and every bird transaction between wholesalers and retailers, retailers and the consumer, etc. to try and locate any and all birds exposed to the virus. The cost factor of eliminating the threat of a total outbreak of such a contagious virus is in the millions of dollars.

All birds exposed to a suspected bird are placed under quarantine by USDA while tests are done. If these tests are positive then all birds exposed to the disease are destroyed. This is one way to eradicate contagious diseases before they spread to the poultry industry which could cause massive losses to farmers and drive up the poultry prices at the retail level. By taking such drastic measures in controlling the spread of VVND thousands of innocent victims are destroyed. They could be your pet macaw, your breeding pair of palm cockatoos, or your show winning budgie. Again this senseless killing of birds could be stopped if:

(1) You would help educate the public about the dangers of smuggling birds and of buying smuggled birds;

(2) Call USDA, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Services or U.S.

Customs when you suspect someone of smuggling birds, selling smuggled birds, or in possession of a questionable bird or birds which were bought under very suspicious circumstances such as purchased out of the back of a van, truck or car at a very low bargain price;

(3) Support local and national legislation pertaining to regulatory actions dealing with smuggling of birds; and

(4) Request and insist that smugglers of birds be punished by stiffer penalties.

The U.S. Customs Service, Department of the Treasury, is authorized to award up to 25 percent of amounts recovered (not to exceed \$50,000) for original information leading to the recovery of any fine, penalty, or forfeiture, resulting from an actual or attempted smuggling or other violation of the customs or navigation laws (19 USC 1610). They request that if you have or know of persons who may have any information relating to smuggling activities of contraband or merchandise to call either (213) 548-2321 or (714) 638-4123.

In addition, the American Federation of Aviculture's board of directors passed a motion during its 8th annual meeting to further educate the public by initiating a program to erect signs at all border cities discouraging traffic in illegal birds. We are presently working with Customs, Immigration & Naturalization, Fish & Wildlife, and APHIS in setting up the necessary guidelines and requirements to achieve this goal. We are also corresponding with the mayors of border cities asking for their support to try and stop smuggling birds.

AFA has been and is still working with USDA to try and control the spread of bird diseases. We have had several meetings with the poultry industry and government officials trying to come up with a workable system of identifying domestically raised and quarantined birds from smuggled birds.

If there is an outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease (VND) and a flock of birds has to be destroyed, then all birds are destroyed whether they are endangered species or captive bred birds. VND is not selective of its victims and neither can USDA be selective in their decision to eliminate the disease. Can you carry the burden of knowing you helped to destroy the last birds of a given species?

Even if you don't get involved in the issue of controlling the smuggling of birds you are still guilty of the unforgivable crime. Silence is not golden. Speak out, show you care, get involved. Instead of supporting the bird smuggler, help conserve all bird life. ●

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