

wiped out by the "Dude," Arizona's worst forest fire on record which in 1990 swept across the parrots principal summer foraging grounds.

There is strong evidence, however, that the Thick-billed can make his home once again in Arizona. Prior to the re-introduction effort, there was no real proof that the Thick-billed ever nested in Arizona—but it is highly probable that they did. The sightings of immature birds in 1988 and 1989, with their telltale pale beaks, was proof that they could and would breed in Arizona.

The project's second phase began in November 1991 when 18 Thick-billeds were released just before Thanksgiving. More releases are planned through 1996, at which time the state and federal agencies involved in the re-introduction will reassess the project and determine whether there is enough hope of long-term success to warrant continuation.

As a parrot aficionado, this project is very special to me. I would be

thrilled to see this native come home to stay. We lost the Carolina Parakeet, let's not lose the Thick-billed too.

Update

Phoenix, Arizona, March 14 1995

The Arizona Game and Fish Department just notified me that they have "discontinued the release of captive born and confiscated Thick-billed Parrots due to the poor assimilation success."

Captive raised birds, even when trained intensively, have had serious behavioral problems in adapting to the wild. Flocking and feeding behaviors were deficient. Additionally, the project has been troubled by dangerous and untreatable diseases in birds coming from confiscations and from open multi-species captive breeding institutions.

Presently the Game and Fish Department is assisting an international multi-agency effort to survey and monitor wild populations in Mexico. The goal of the study is to "develop conservation studies for the Thick-billed Parrot and the Maroon-fronted subspecies. Depending upon the results of this study, the Department may investigate future translocation of wild Mexico Thick-billed Parrots [to the United States]." One consideration for any future translocation, besides adequate food sources, would be a location in an environment with fewer predators.

The Thick-billed Parrot with its extremely social habits and exposure to heavy predation from raptors, is a species that is most likely dependent on "critical mass" effects in keeping mortality rates at acceptable levels. In other words, "there is safety in numbers." For a re-introduction effort to have a good chance in an area where there are lots of hawks, there would have to be a release of a large number of birds at once or the birds would have to be released in an area where the hawk population is small.

I'm still optimistic about a native parrot species being re-established in the United States despite the problems encountered in this initial and somewhat ill-fated effort. ➔

New Legislative Handbook Now Available

The Birdkeeper's Legislative Handbook



At last, American Federation of Aviculture's *Birdkeeper's Legislative Handbook* is available. Introduced at AFA's 1996 convention in Concord, CA, this booklet is the first of its kind to give expert advice to bird keepers. Three years in production, this booklet will prove to be an invaluable resource to the pet owner and bird breeder alike—anyone who has a problem with proposed restrictive laws or who wants to avoid problems with law enforcement agencies and their neighbors.

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Kelly Tucker, an AFA Regional Vice President, who donated the prepared manuscript to AFA, believes that "while

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loss of habitat may be the greatest danger to birds in the wild, adverse legislation and selective enforcement present the greatest danger to birds in our homes." Tucker began getting two to five phone calls a week from desperate bird owners who were frantic for information about how to save their birds. Local laws seemed to prohibit every-



Kelly Tucker speaks to the delegates about *The Birdkeeper's Legislative Handbook*. Tucker spent many hours working on the text of the booklet.

thing. When the law did not specifically apply to birds, local authorities threatened people with confiscation and euthanasia of birds based on animal rights activists' cruelty complaints.

Increasingly, Animal Control and other local governmental agencies are being used by neighbors to harass birdkeepers. These situations demonstrate the urgent need for this booklet. It costs only \$6.50 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling.

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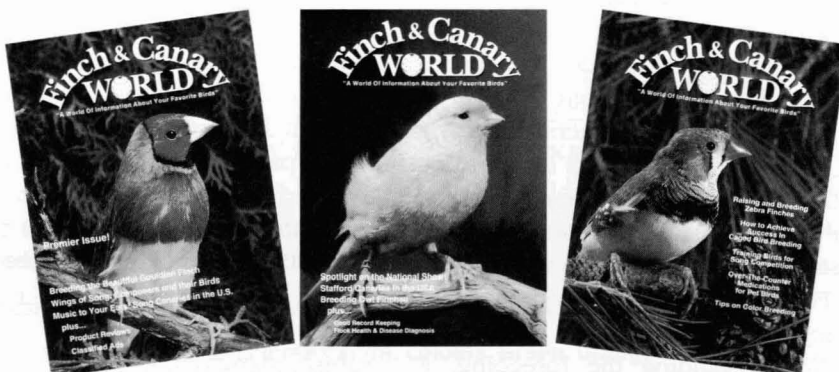
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