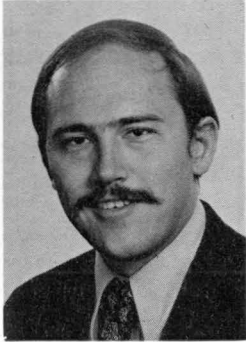


H. R. 6631 Waiting To Be Heard

by Jerry Jennings



Jerry Jennings

Congress recessed over the holidays, returning to work on January 19, 1976. Up to that time H.R. 6631 had not been placed on the agenda for a hearing in the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and the Environment, chaired by Representative Robert L. Leggett (D-Calif.).

H.R. 6631, introduced by Congressman John Dingell (D-Mich.), though ostensibly a bill to regulate zoos would also regulate pet owners, breeders, and the pet industry. The bill defines a "zoo" as a collection of one or more "zoological animals", which are defined as all animals (birds, mammals, fish, etc.) other than farm animals and domestic dogs and cats.

Under the proposed legislation, Dingell would require each private animal owner to obtain a license upon payment of a \$100.00 annual application fee and satisfactory passage of a written examination of his competence to maintain specific animals (See Watchbird, Vol. II, No. 6, December, 1975).

In a phone conversation with Leggett's office, A.F.A. was informed that agenda items were scheduled thirty days in advance and that A.F.A. would be given an opportunity to appear before Leggett's committee when H.R. 6631 is to be heard.

The A.F.A. will be represented at this hearing. Members will be advised of the hearing date, and those residing in the Washington, D.C. area will be asked to attend. ■

Retrieval Program Continues

by Hal M. Koontz

The A.F.A. Feral Exotic Bird Retrieval Program continues its work in cooperation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The purpose of the program is to recapture escaped aviary birds, the main emphasis being on the recapture of Indian Ringnecks, Nanday Conures and Canary-Winged Bee Bees. If the program is successful, the State of California will continue to allow possession of these birds. If the program is not successful, the State may prohibit their possession, as is already the case with several species. The program is in a trial period which is due to be reviewed in June, 1976.

During last December and January, two luncheon meetings were held between Lew Davis and Jim Johnson of the Department of Food & Agriculture and Jerry Jennings, Rae Anderson and Hal Koontz of the A.F.A. At these meetings, the State members were informed as to recent developments in the program. They advised the A.F.A. members as to any new sightings turned into the State and various trapping techniques were discussed.

In early December, a trappers meeting was held in Huntington Beach, California, in which the program was explained and questions were answered. Several types of traps were described and everyone present practiced making a hawk (slip knot) trap.

A few birds have been recaptured under the program. Several factors have limited further success. Although many people have volunteered to help with the program, there is a lack of verified sightings upon which to act. Also, due to the lack of evening sunlight hours during the winter months, there is less opportunity for the trappers to act upon those sightings that have been received.

Please report all sightings of escaped aviary birds in California and especially any sightings of the three species previously mentioned. This is important to the success of the program. Send all sightings to:

Hal M. Koontz
441 South Commonwealth Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 389-4355 ■

Riverside County CA. Moves Against Animal Owners

by Jerry Jennings

On January 13, 1976, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors heard a proposed ordinance to prohibit all wild animals within the county except under a permit to be issued by the County Department of Health. The ordinance is an outgrowth of an incident wherein a Cougar escaped from its owner's yard and severely mauled another person, which led the supervisors to the conclusion that all exotic mammals are a threat to public health and safety.

A.F.A. President Jerry Jennings and Board member Bernie Teunissen, a resident of the county, were on hand to oppose the ordinance. Jennings and Teunissen demonstrated the redundant nature of the proposal, Ordinance No. 555, a much more comprehensive version of which was passed by the California State Legislature in 1974. The state law (SB 1766) is administered by the Department of Fish and Game and covers mammals only.

Both the state and Riverside County legislation are intended to protect the welfare of the animals, though Riverside is looking for a means to prevent future incidents between animals and people. Both the state law and the Riverside proposal contain prohibitions against the keeping of all mammals save dogs, cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, and farm animals except under a permit with attendant fees of \$25 (state) and \$30 to \$75 (county), depending on number of animals kept. Both also prescribe minimum sizes for cages, routine visits by a veterinarian, and guarantees that permitted animals will not escape.

A.F.A. challenged the Riverside proposal on grounds the law repeated state laws that have only recently begun to be enforced. The duplication of effort was characterized as a waste of manpower and resources, while the imposition of additional permits and fees upon the animal owner was decreed as an onerous and unnecessary burden.

After the hearing Jennings and Teunissen met with the Director of County Health and two members of his staff. The meeting resulted in the consensus that the repetitiousness of the proposal made it unnecessary at least in regard to permits.

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