

AFA LAUNCHES ENDANGERED SPECIES COMMITTEE

Effective May 10, 1976 Mark Runnals of Holyoke, Massachusetts (AFA's State Co-ordinator there) will head AFA's Endangered Species Program. He will be assisted by Cliff Witt of Washington, D.C.

The committee will initially endeavor to have the Scarlet-chested Parrakeet, Turquoise Parrakeet, and Rothschild's Mynah removed from the Endangered Species List and placed in the "threatened species" category under the auspices of the "captive, self-sustaining population (CSSP)" rule recently adopted by Interior. The three above mentioned species are in addition to seven species of pheasant (Brown-eared, Edward's, Humes, Mikado, Palawan, Swinhoe, and White-eared), three species of waterfowl (Hawaiian and Laysan Ducks, Nene Goose) and the Masked Bobwhite Quail proposed for CSSP status by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA) and the American Game Bird Breeders Co-operative Federation.

Second, the committee will investigate the possibility of private breeders participating in the AAZPA's International Species Inventory System (ISIS) which has been designed to assist zoos in locating the animals they need for their breeding programs.

The activities of AFA's committee on Endangered Species will be reported in the Watchbird by Mr. Runnals. Members are urged to co-operate with the committee when called upon. Any information provided to the committee will be kept confidential.

L.A. CITY ANIMAL REGS. SENT BACK TO COMMITTEE

The Los Angeles City Council recently referred the proposal to regulate animals back to the Planning Committee on grounds proper notification of the Planning Committee hearing was not given.

At the previous hearing, only RURAL (the Los Angeles area animal-owning homeowners association) was represented. Apparently, complaints were received from individuals seeking greater restrictions.

Originally, the proposal would have virtually eliminated birds from the backyards of L.A. residents. The proposal was drastically modified under pressure from AFA and RURAL in two years of activity. The current proposal leaves birds completely alone and is now backed by AFA.

No date for a second public hearing by the Planning Committee has as yet been scheduled.

USDA LIFTS IMPORT BAN

The USDA imposed ban on importations of birds from several European, Asian, and African countries has been lifted. The ban, imposed on countries having shipped birds found to exhibit Newcastle disease (VVD), ostensibly consisted of a 90 day probationary period, during which the country in question was asked by the U.S. to tighten up measures to prevent further shipment of Newcastle infested birds to American quarantine stations.

Dr. Ceasar Clavell, of the USDA's office in Sacramento, California, has advised AFA of two reasons for the policy change. First, the Department felt it unfair to restrict an entire country because of one exporter, and second, the ban was contrary to the purpose of the quarantine program. Dr. Clavell further indicated the USDA had no future plans to return to the 90 day probationary period policy. Instead, they will take a hard look at those dealers consistently shipping lots of birds which are found to have Newcastle.

According to some sources in the quarantine station industry, the ban was lifted in response to industry pressure. This assertion has been collaborated by Dr. Grass, a USDA quarantine station inspector assigned to the Los Angeles area, however, no details were given.

H.R. 6631 UPDATE

The saying, "no news is good news" aptly applies to the current status of H.R. 6631. There is no news, or at least no new news.

According to our Washington informant, the House Sub-committee on Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation, and the Environment has not scheduled H.R. 6631 for a hearing and will not, at least until after the summer recess beginning July 2nd. AFA has been advised to contact the sub-committee again after July 19th, when the Congress reconvenes.

Recent suggestions by several well-known individuals in aviculture to write letters to Congress concerning H.R. 6631's impact on breeders were premature. Since H.R. 6631 may never be heard (we hope), a letter deluge too far in advance of a hearing is wasted and may only serve to stir up interest, especially from those supporting the bill. A similar response from the bill's supporters will create the controversy guaranteeing a hearing.

The AFA has and will continue to maintain its vigilance. Any change in the status of H.R. 6631 will be reported in the Watchbird.

Individual members and member clubs will be informed of any impending action requiring their response by letter and telephone respectively.

In the meantime it is well advised that AFA members keep their fellow aviculturists informed on the intent of H.R. 6631 to license breeders who qualify under examination, and be ready to write the appropriate officials upon notification by AFA.

Copies of the bill may be obtained by writing your Congressman or calling his local office, asking that a copy be sent to the requestor.