



A St. Lucia Amazon (*A. versicolor*). If confiscated in an illegal shipment of birds, this endangered species would be destined for a "permanent quarantine."

Some Good News from Washington, D.C.

by Tom Marshall



Washington, D.C. . . . Due to the apparent eradication of exotic Newcastle's disease from Puerto Rico, the eight year old USDA imposed quarantine, which prohibited the movement of psittacines and other birds of avicultural interest to the mainland, has been lifted. The effect of this action, published in the January 11 Federal Register, will probably lead to more frequent importation of Caribbean birds.

After years of outcry from AFA and other like-minded organizations, healthy birds brought illegally into the United States may now be sold at public auction and not arbitrarily destroyed.

Although USDA retains the option to refuse entry into the U.S. any smuggled birds, it is the intent of this amendment to the USDA import regulations to save the lives of thousands of smuggled birds.

Furthermore, the Department has adopted the suggestion to separate threatened and endangered species, so identified by the Department of Interior, for purpose of quarantine and testing and has added this provision to the regulation.

If threatened or endangered species are determined to be exposed to Newcastle's disease (VVND) or other communicable diseases of poultry such birds shall be held

in "permanent quarantine" facilities, such as USDA designated zoos. In fact, all birds on the threatened or endangered list will go to zoos to similar institutions as they will not be sold to private individuals.

This rule change, which provides for salvaging smuggled birds and gives greater protection to vanishing bird species, should have the effect of improving the cooperation received from the general public regarding information about illegal shipments since the birds will most likely end up in the hands of aviculturists and/or zoos and not dead.

It should be noted that at this time the USDA has not determined the manner in which the public will be made aware of upcoming auctions of confiscated birds. It further should be noted that birds, which would require hand feeding will be refused entry, due to the lack of adequate facilities and personnel to handle them.

Another unknown at this time is what happens to those birds which are refused entry? Is such a refusal tantamount to the death penalty?

AFA will continue to seek clarification of these concerns and others as they arise. In the interim, I think we can be justly proud of AFA's lobbying efforts on behalf of its members and in the interest of preservation of smuggled birds.

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