

# It's Appendix II for the Psittacines!

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On May 31, 1981, it was announced that Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, decided not to enter a Reservation on the vote of the Convention on International Trade In Endangered Species to place all psittacines on Appendix II, Threatened. This was the culmination of a ten month controversy that first saw A.F.A. battling with the USFWS to stop the U.S. Proposal to the Convention to place all psittacines on Appendix II for control purposes, then fighting for a U.S. "Reservation" on the proposal by Great Britain, which was adopted by the Convention, to place all psittacines on Appendix II, Threatened. The deciding factor seemed to be that the State Department claimed it would be bad foreign policy for the U.S. to take a Reservation unless it would affect, in a significant way, the citizens of the United States.

The decision to not take a Reservation was not without a special twist, however, Watt has ordered that a letter be drafted and circulated to all member countries of CITES. That letter is to put them all on notice that the U.S. disagrees wholeheartedly with the listing of an entire Order and emphasizes that strict adherence to the listing criteria is essential if CITES is to retain its credibility. It will further point out that had the mass listing of psittacines included a native species, the U.S. would have taken a Reservation. Other things to be included in the proposed letter to the Party Countries will be seen at the time the letter is made public. Richard Parsons, Chief of the USFWS Permit Office, is designated as the lead person in drafting this letter with the assistance of Dr. Richard Jachowski, Chief of the Office of the Scientific Authority.

As most of you know, the Convention on International Trade In Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is a treaty with 67 member nations designed to control detrimental utilization of wildlife. Its goal does not, supposedly, preclude trade in wild specimens, although recent ac-

tions bring this into question. Heavy political control of CITES by "conservationist" groups has alarmed aviculturists, pet interests, State Fish and Game Agencies, and others, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Among the published objectives of the U.S. Delegation to this recent meeting of the Parties in New Delhi was to stress the real function of CITES and to resist broad listings of species on the appendices without meeting established criteria.

Other items reported in the April Endangered Species Technical Bulletin included a resolution to impose strict standards for listing lookalikes jointly proposed by the U.S. and Canada. The intent of the proposal was to establish standards, thereby excluding reasons other than similarity of appearance (such as monitoring) as the basis for inclusion of species under Article II 2(b) (lookalikes). This resolution was not accepted.

The U.S. Delegation emphasized the strict application of the listing criteria for other listings on the appendices. The U.S. withdrew 11 of its own proposals and encouraged other countries to withdraw or modify 17 proposals because they did not fully meet the criteria.

In spite of the U.S. efforts, the Convention, in a vote of 32 to 4, adopted the Proposal by Great Britain to list all psittacines with the exception of the Budgie, the Cockatiel, and the Indian Ringneck Parakeet, on Appendix II, Threatened. A backlash reaction in the United States caused many groups such as A.F.A. and many more individuals to request that the U.S. take a "Reservation" on this wholesale listing, a process whereby a member country disassociates itself from the Treaty on that particular item and refuses to enforce it. As reported above, the decision was made not to take a Reservation in spite of the absurdity of the notion that all psittacines are threatened. (The complete, official, A.F.A. Comment on the Reservation issue is on file in the Home Office for your reference.)

Since Appendix II no longer reflects the biological realities of population status, the credibility of CITES has been seriously opened to question. Two years from now, at the next regular meeting of the parties, we and others will make an effort to remove the psittacines from this mass listing to help restore that credibility. In the meantime we must look back on the last ten months and note the positive things that emerged from the conflict and we must look ahead to the immediate future and understand what an Appendix II listing will mean for aviculturists.

The greatest benefit to come out of the CITES activity this past year was that

aviculturists in large numbers participated, most for the first time, in the process of formulating the U.S. position on matters relating to international endangered species regulations. Thousands of people became familiar with "CITES" for the first time and the concept of Appendix I, Endangered, and Appendix II, Threatened. It was the first time that we, as an organized group, made our presence known to many officials in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They are now aware that we are to be taken seriously. The positive spin-off of this impact is already being seen as our input on various bird-related matters is being openly sought and seriously considered by the government.

Along with this comes ever greater expectations of us by the government in our role as responsible conservationists, particularly where the Annual Bird Registry is concerned. It is only through us that anyone will ever know what is going on with captive propagation of birds. The Government is depending on us to document, for the first time, the numbers of birds bred in captivity. Future regulations will be substantially influenced, *for better or for worse*, by our A.F.A. Bird Registry. It already has been included in the draft of upcoming application forms for the importation of Appendix I species. It may eventually be relied upon to determine whether you, the breeder, are qualified to keep or obtain certain species. History is likely to look back on the Bird Registry as the most important thing A.F.A. ever attempted. Larry Shelton, keeper of the Registry at the Philadelphia Zoo, will be holding meetings at the San Diego A.F.A. convention outside the regular scheduled activities to determine how we can increase participation in the Registry to 100%. If you have any suggestions you are urged to contact Larry *now* at the zoo.

Now, what will an Appendix II listing really mean to us? At the most cynical end of the spectrum it can be said that the flow of birds will continue at a slightly higher price. This, unfortunately, belies some of the serious ramifications of an Appendix II listing for all psittacines. It means that all birds will now have to receive a certificate of "non-detriment" before they can be legally exported from their countries of origin. The non-detriment requirements mean that the government of that country has determined that the export of that bird will not be detrimental to the wild population of that species. These kinds of studies are complicated and difficult. After all, if there were existing population studies all this would probably never have happened in the first place because we would know what is

threatened and what is not. None the less, non-detriment certificates must be issued or the bird will be considered illegal both by the exporting country and by the United States. *This also applies to "pet birds" being imported on the USDA "two per year" program utilizing the plastic isolettes we have seen at past A.F.A. conventions. So be careful if you plan to bring back birds from your summer vacation this year! (Unless that vacation is at the A.F.A. convention in San Diego, of course.) Other things which logically could happen are as follows:*

- The supply of birds may slow down because of the processing of the new paperwork.
- Certain species may dry up altogether where the export countries cannot "get it together" in issuing the non-detriment certificates and refuse to succumb to the graft that will be offered by importers to speed the process.
- Smuggling may increase for species heretofore not considered popular as smuggled birds. Paperwork constraints may make it so difficult to get birds out legally that otherwise honest importers may be tempted to skirt around the new restrictions.

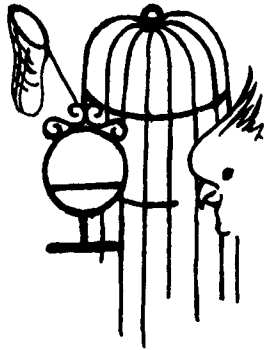
And the bottom line, the real horror of it all, is that if such a powerful body as CITES can throw out all criteria and rules for listing and get away with it, then what is to stop them from placing everything on Appendix I next time? Shall we believe them just because they say they would never do such a thing? I don't think so. No one is safe when the rules of the game are abandoned. Rules protect us and the democratic process. Without them we are staring into the Twilight Zone. All of you who have direct contact with our Federal legislators on a personal basis will have to discuss this issue with them over the next year and prepare them for the next attempts to change the CITE's appendices in 1983. The rest of you must, I repeat, *must* get every bird person you know to join A.F.A. That is where our strength lies—our numbers and our Annual Bird Registry.

Complaints about getting your Watch-bird late, or local political squabbles with your State Coordinator or Club Delegates, or worries about the IRS or nosey neighbors finding out how much money you are making on your birds all become absolutely meaningless if we are prohibited from obtaining and keeping birds at all. We must rise above this nonsense and make A.F.A. ever stronger through new memberships, cooperation, and the Bird Registry ●

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