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Endangered Species Permits in Relation to Aviculture

Some of the recent letters from aviculturists to the Fish and Wildlife Service concerning the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (usually referred to by its acronym CITES) have indicated that it would be useful to clarify the requirements of CITES, as distinct from those of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Provisions of CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is a multinational agreement to regulate international trade in certain wild animal and plant species in order to prevent their overexploitation through such trade. CITES operates by a system of permits, which are to be issued by designated Management Authorities in each participating country. A special feature of CITES is that permits are to be issued only on the advice of designated Scientific Authorities in each country. From the accompanying tables, you can see that CITES regulates only international shipment of listed species. It does not apply to shipment or other activities within the United States.

Species subject to trade controls (which apply to all imports or exports, not only commercial traffic) are listed in three appendices to CITES. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. Appendix II includes species that although not necessarily threatened with extinction may become so unless trade in them is strictly controlled. It also lists species that must be subject to regulation in order that trade in other currently or potentially threatened species may be brought under effective control. Such listings may be required because of difficulty in distinguishing specimens of currently or potentially threatened species from other species at ports of entry. Appendix III includes species that any Party nation identifies as being subject to regulation within its jurisdiction for purposes of preventing or restricting exploitation, and for which it needs cooperation of other

Parties in controlling trade.

All together, the three appendices include about 2,400 species of animals and 30,000 species of plants (most of the latter are included under the general listing of orchids and cacti on Appendix II). Presently, 32 species or subspecies of parrots are listed in CITES Appendix I. All other species in the order Psittaciformes are listed in CITES Appendix II, with only three exceptions. These are the rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), which is listed in Appendix III by Ghana, and the budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), which are not listed in any appendix.

Provisions of the Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 is a U.S. law designed to provide for the conservation of endangered or threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The Act resembles CITES in that it establishes permit requirements for the international shipment of listed species. However, the Act goes beyond CITES in regulating interstate and foreign commerce, and the taking of listed species within the United States.

Species subject to the Act are listed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, or by the National Marine Fisheries Service in some cases, as either endangered (in danger of extinction) or threatened (likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future). With few exceptions, the same activities are regulated for both endangered and threatened species. Endangered species permits may be issued only for purposes of scientific research or enhancement of propagation or survival of the species. Threatened species permits may be issued for these purposes and, in addition, for zoological exhibition, educational purposes, economic hardship, or for any other purpose consistent with the overall purposes of the Act.

The Act applies to far fewer psittacines than does CITES. A total of 26 species or subspecies of parrots are listed as endangered under the Act.

Continued on page 22

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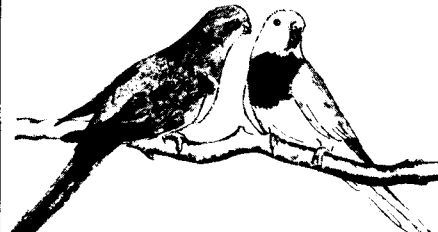


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Table 1. Permits and certificates required under CITES

| Activity | Permit and certificate requirements | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | Appendix I | Appendix II | Appendix III |
| Import from a foreign country | U.S. import permit & foreign export permit or reexport certificate | Foreign export permit or reexport certificate | Foreign export permit or reexport certificate or certificate of origin |
| Import from the sea | U.S. import permit | U.S. import permit | Not applicable |
| Export from the U.S. | U.S. export permit & foreign import permit | U.S. export permit | U.S. certificate of origin (or export permit if U.S.-listed) |
| Reexport from the U.S. | U.S. reexport certificate & foreign import permit | U.S. reexport certificate | U.S. reexport certificate |

Table 2. Exceptions to CITES permit requirements

| Activity or type of specimen | Exceptions to permit requirements | |
|---|---|--|
| Transshipment | No permit or certificate needed if under Customs control | |
| Pre-Convention | Certificate of pre-Convention status needed in lieu of other permits or certificates | |
| Captive-bred wildlife or artificially propagated plants | Certificate of captive breeding for wildlife or certificate of artificial propagation for plants needed in lieu of other permits or certificates | |
| Personal or household effects (non-living) | No permits or certificates needed for App. I unless being imported by a U.S. resident | No permits or certificates needed for App. II or III unless being imported by U.S. resident from country where taken from wild if country requires export permit |
| Scientific exchange | U.S. certificate for scientific exchange needed by U.S. institutions for loan, donation or exchange of scientific specimens between registered institutions | |

None are listed as threatened. Among the endangered psittacines are several species of interest to aviculturists: the paradise parakeet (*Psephotus pulcher-rimus*), scarlet-chested parakeet (*Neophema splendida*), and turquoise parakeet (*N. pulchella*).

The primary concern of the Fish and Wildlife Service with respect to such species is the conservation of wild populations. Because the Act applies to both wild and captive individuals, streamlined methods have been developed to meet the Act's permit requirements for activities with captive-bred birds. General permission to conduct certain otherwise prohibited activities has been given, by regulation, to any qualified person who registers with the Service. These captive wildlife regulations are intended to facilitate routine husbandry work for listed animals. They allow trade in captive-bred endangered parrots among registered psittacine breeders with a minimum of paperwork.

Further Information

For further information about CITES and the Act, and permit requirements in particular, please contact the Federal Wildlife Permit Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 3654, Arlington, VA 22203.

Richard L. Jachowski
Office of Scientific Authority
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



June 13, 1984

Dr. Richard L. Jachowski
Office of Scientific Authority
Fish & Wildlife Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Sir:

In response to your request published in the Federal Register on Feb. 24, 1984, I would like to direct my comments to the inclusion under the CITES treaty of the *entire* Order Psittaformes in Appendix II, as threatened.

Classified as threatened under the treaty are many species of commonly domestically bred psittacines and others that are abundant in their native habitat; some so much so, that they are considered pests and are destroyed by the hundreds of thousands each year. The inclusion of these birds in Appendix II (and the exclusion of one species, the Indian Ringneck, as a political accommodation to a host country) makes a travesty of the purposes for which the Convention was created. It even questions the credibility and intelligence of the delegates who attended the last Convention and who were assumed to be learned scientific personages.

How can such common domestic birds as the Agapornis or the Nymphicus or the Cockatoos destroyed as pests in Australia be possibly considered as threatened? When you rob the treaty of its credibility, you destroy the protection for those avian species which are truly threatened and should be the only ones on Appendix II.

I am enclosing with this letter for your information an article on the Captive Breeding within Conservation Work for Parrots of the Genus Amazona. Such an enlightened approach to the preservation of Endangered Species is one that the CITES Convention would do well to consider as a part of its effort to prevent the extinction of imperiled avian fauna.

I, myself, breed the Double Yellow Headed Amazon, the Blue Headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*) and am establishing self-sustaining colonies of the uncommon love birds, the Abyssinian and the Madagascar. I am acquiring breeding pairs of the Goffin's Cockatoo for the same purpose.

While my work in conservation through captive breeding as an individual may appear to be, perhaps, somewhat inconsequential; hundreds of thousands of aviculturists pursuing the same objective would have a tremendous impact on conservation. This is the goal of serious minded aviculturists and is one that should be encouraged and promoted by such influential assemblages, as is the CITES Convention.

The truly endangered species must be protected and propagated if they are not to become extinct; however, the CITES Convention does a distinct wrong when it attempts to destroy or impede controlled sustainable international bird wild life trade.

Sincerely, Richard E. Baer, D.V.M.

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