

.....in Congress Assembled

by Jerry Jennings

VICTORY FOR LOS ANGELES BIRD BREEDERS

After two and a half years of hearings, studies, and more hearings, the animal keeping ordinance proposed by AFA and

RURAL (a Los Angeles property owners association of which Jerry Jennings is President) finally went to a vote before the Los Angeles City Council on November 16, 1976. The ordinance, which limits only cows and horses at a ratio of one per 4,000 square feet on half acre or larger lots, received the unanimous approval of the ten Councilmen present. The Ordinance will become effective 180 days from passage.

Two and one half years ago a neighbor complaint about cows and chickens was blown up all out of proportion. Landing on the desk of City Councilman Donald Lorenzen, the problem was referred to the City Planning Department. After several months of "study" and Planning Department recommended cows be banned, goats and sheep be limited to one per 4,000 square feet, and chickens, pheasants, ducks, and all other small animals and pets be limited to one per 2,000 square feet of lot area. Dogs and cats were excluded as they were limited to three per residence under another law, while horses are limited to one per 4,000 square feet.

Citywide resident hostility towards the Planning Department's proposal, ably demonstrated at a series of public hearings, resulted in the Planning Commis-

sion's override of the original proposal with the recommendation that only cows be regulated and at the same ratio applicable to horses.

The Planning Commission's recommendation was adopted by the City Council Planning Committee and forwarded to the full Council for approval. However, opposition to the proposal voiced by Mrs. Patricia Brown of Woodland Hills, who filed the original complaint in 1974, succeeded in having the proposed ordinance referred back to the Planning Committee for further consideration.

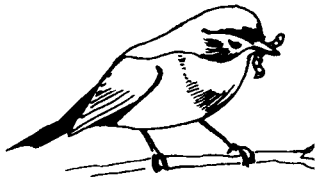
At the subsequent Planning Committee hearing testimony was heard from both sides. Despite charts, tables, and other data prepared by Mrs. Brown to support her argument for tight controls on animals, the committee, for the second time, approved the AFA backed proposal and returned it to the Council.

With no opposition from the floor on November 16th, no further testimony was required prior to Council action. It should be noted that Councilman Lorenzen, who previously indicated his support for the AFA/RURAL proposal, left the Council Chambers at the time the animal keeping proposal came up on the agenda.

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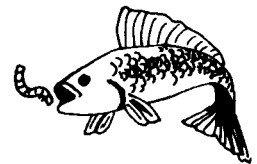
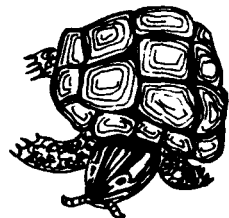


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pensive and not appreciated by most finches.

In addition to the above mix, the birds are fed spray millet, mealworms, cuttlebone, and oyster shell grit. Headstart Poultry Vitamins are given in the water fresh daily at the ratio of one teaspoon per gallon. Other dietary supplements

should include fresh apple, orange, and greens — spinach, romain lettuce, comfrey, etc.

Several pairs of Masked Grassfinches have nested at Walnut Acres over the past couple of years. In every case, the birds have chosen a tumbleweed for a nest site. The nest is ball shaped 6-8 inches in

diameter and so inaccessible generally as to preclude examination even from a distance with a flashlight. Mr. Don Rice, a member of the Avicultural Society of America and the only other successful Masked Finch breeder known to me, recently advised me that some of his birds nested in wooden boxes. Indeed, there are so very few Masked breeders around that it is difficult to compare notes.

Nesting material provided the Masked Finches, as well as to the other finches includes green devil or bermuda grass, string, white dog hair from a Cockapoo, occasional feathers, and charcoal.

Masked Finches seem to be sensitive to interference. The checking of nests should, therefore, be strictly avoided. The average number of young fledged is four, though five is not uncommon. A good pair will produce three to five broods a year totaling more than twenty young.

The Masked Grassfinch is such an attractive and desirable bird, that it deserves the attention of aviculturists looking for a specialty and a project benefitting aviculture. It would do well to have this species firmly established in American aviaries.

In the next issue I will discuss the Australian Mannikins of the genus *Lonchura*.

Masked Grassfinch, breeding pair with five young.



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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BREEDERS WIN

After a lengthy struggle with county bureaucracy the Contra Costa County Planning Department finally has come to terms with the need of local aviculturists to have aviaries.

After several hearings at the Planning Commission level, and despite numerous directives to do so, the Planning Department had failed to budge on their de facto decision to now allow aviaries. As our readers may recall from previous coverage of this continuing saga, local breeders were prohibited by law from having aviaries in their back yards, even if their lots were as big as 2½ acres! Times have changed.

A.F.A. and several of the local A.F.A. members decided it was time to move in

a new direction. Instead of trying to prevent new restrictions from being implemented, A.F.A. was now trying to undo some previous damage enacted several years ago. It has been said by many, and not without good reason, that once a law is passed it is impossible to go back. We have proved this ain't necessarily so!

As late as September the Planning Department had not responded to our letters or proposal. Finally, A.F.A. advised all members of the Planning Commission in writing of the Department's lack of response to us or local breeders. A copy of the proposal was included along with copies of ordinances from several other demographically similar California counties, which covered the keeping of aviaries and birds.

Behold a miracle was born as the Planning Department begrudgingly responded to some apparent no nonsense request from Planning Commission members. On November 16th, the latest Planning Commission hearing, a new proposal was presented, accepted by local breeders, and passed by the Commission.

Under the proposed changes, aviaries will henceforth be permitted on residen-

tial lots in the county. Anyone living on a residential zoned lot anywhere from 6,000 square feet up to 100,000 square feet will be allowed to erect an aviary. Aviaries, however, are restricted in size at a ratio of one square foot of aviary for every fifty square feet of lot area. For example, a 6,000 sq. ft. lot would be allowed an aviary 120 sq. ft.

Although there are some limitations, the newly proposed ordinance does not limit the number of birds that can be kept. It also allows for the application for a special land use permit that would allow more aviary space on any given lot size. Further, and perhaps the open door to unlimited aviaries is the stipulation that anyone possessing a Federal Fish and Wildlife Service Permit or a State Fish and Game permit is exempt from any restrictions on size of aviaries. Contra Costa could become fertile grounds for game bird breeders who routinely possess permits for migratory waterfowl and other native North American species.

This adventure in reversing a bad situation is encouraging. It shows what can be accomplished when breeders get behind A.F.A. ■