

AFA Making News

by Tom C. Marshall
Great Falls, Virginia

Breeders Beat Back Bill Banning Birds in Connecticut

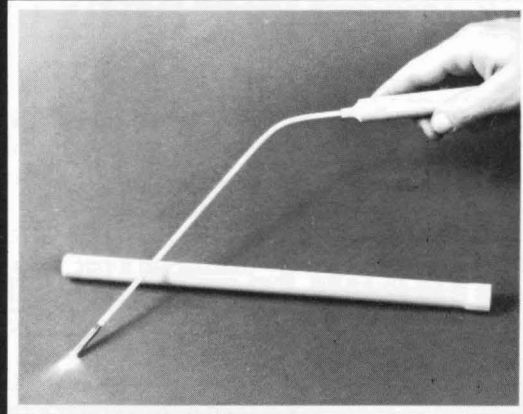
On February 25, 1985, the combined forces of bird breeders (aviculturists) and retail pet stores are credited with the successful outcome at a hearing of the Environment Committee in the Connecticut Legislature, which resulted in the state representatives, who sponsored a bill to ban the sale of wild (imported) birds in Connecticut, to willingly withdraw their bill for further study.

The American Federation of Aviculture represented by their legal counsel, Gary Lilienthal, AFA State Coordinator; Walt Willoughby; Bill Parlee, President of the National Finch Society; Jerry D'Agata, pet store owner and local bird club president, was joined by Marshall Meyers of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) in successfully refuting questionable data presented by the Connecticut Audubon Society, the proponents of the bill.

Some of the erroneous information contained in the Audubon fact sheet, which was refuted by opponents of the bill was: that wild bird populations and their habitats are being decimated by the importation and sale of wild-caught birds; that psittacosis is a serious health problem in Connecticut; and birds legally imported through approved quarantine stations are a primary cause of Exotic Newcastle's disease. All of these statements were shown to be untrue.

"It is very refreshing to find that the legislative process does respond to the legitimate interests of concerned citizens," reports AFA State Coordinator Walt Willoughby. "The type of legislation proposed in House Bill 6541 would not only hurt aviculturists and persons involved in the pet trade, but it would also deprive many citizens of Connecticut from owning a pet bird." Willoughby adds further that, "it is unfortunate that these concerns and the democratic process itself were ignored in New York by the legislature and the Governor." ●

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