

Nestmates Anonymous

by Val Clear, Ph.D.
Anderson, Indiana

This service is to match unmated birds, to bring joy to forlorn single birds and their discouraged owners, and to broaden the gene pool in needy species.

To list a bird give as much of the following as you can: English name or names by which it is known, Latin name and sex; your name, address and phone number; one dollar for up to four birds.

To answer a listing send a separate letter for each bird sought (each one goes to a different source), including your name, address and phone number; enclose a dollar for each bird sought (to cover mailing your response).

No responsibility whatever can be accepted by the Media Committee, *Watchbird* or the American Federation of Aviculture for transactions entered into as a result of this service. All persons' names will be kept strictly confidential. Receipts above expenses go to the AFA treasury for appropriate uses. The facilitator serves without remuneration other than satisfaction for making a contribution to the fancy.

Address all communications to Ms. Cathy Grosse, 3120 Epworth Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211. Do not write to the *Watchbird*.



ENTER THE WATCHBIRD EXOTIC BIRD PHOTO CONTEST

Subject: exotic aviary birds

Deadline: August 1, 1985

Entries: displayed at the A.F.A. convention, commercial display area, Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco

Limit: 3 entries to a category and no more than 5 overall

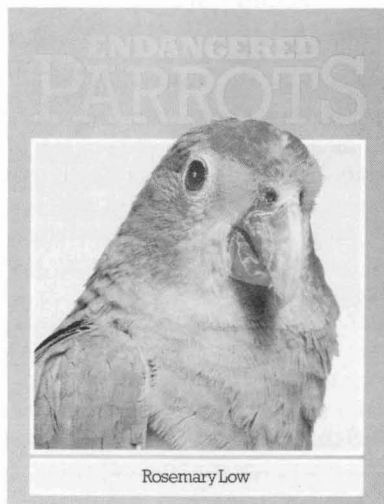
Categories: color prints, color slides, black and white prints

Entry fee: \$1.00 each entry, total fee cannot exceed \$5.00

Winners: to be announced Saturday evening, August 10

Look for details and entry form in the complete convention mailer packet, or contact:

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Endangered Parrots — by Rosemary Low

Reviewed by Tom Marshall
Great Falls, Virginia

Aviculture is conservation too! However, "conservationists" have opposed or ignored perhaps the only practical method of conservation left to them: captive breeding. They cling tenaciously to protection of habitat alone, relying on man's goodwill or on repression, both of which are too uncertain. Protection of habitat and maintenance in captivity doubles the chances of survival of species in danger of extinction.

Rosemary Low has written her most important book to date; she has eloquently defined and described, with specific detail, aviculture and its purpose and value as a conservative tool on behalf of endangered parrots.

Ms. Low states that according to her records, of the 314 parrot species at least 253 have been kept in captivity; of these at least 220 have reproduced and at least 141 species have reared young to second or multiple generations. It is worth noting that private aviculturists, rather than zoological associations, have been responsible for the majority (probably more than 90%) of the parrot species bred in captivity, and of those bred to more than one generation.

To date, it is a private individual from Florida, Ramon Noegel, who has probably achieved the most success

with a single endangered species and also with a single genus. The proof that aviculture can be elevated to a valuable conservation tool is irrefutable; Ramon Noegel reared 81 *Amazona leucocephala* (endangered races of the Cuban Amazons), while his friend and former President of AFA, Tom Ireland, raised 63 golden-capped conures (*Aratinga aurifrons*) in one year.

In New Zealand breeders started with 103 red-fronted kakarikis (*Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae*) in 1958 and, within six years, had increased their numbers to 2500.

Most parrot species live in the rain forest areas of the world where humans often live on a mere subsistence level. These people have a real need. We of the industrialized world are already using more than two thirds of the world's resources and we continue to demand more, thereby putting severe pressures on the parrot's habitat and environment. This combination of need and greed has placed many parrots on the brink of extinction.

At least half of Ms. Low's well written book is devoted to describing the variety of circumstances affecting endemic parrots in various locations around the world. They range from the Caribbean Islands Amazon parrots whose habitats have been reduced to a few square miles, and the majestic macaws, endangered by the combined pressures of habitat destruction and trade, to possibly the most unique bird in existence, the kakapo from New Zealand, whose strange habits do not benefit it for survival in the twentieth century. Other parrots highlighted include: yellow-eared conure, queen of Bavaria conure, thick-billed parrot, the echo parakeet and many other fascinating parrots the world over.

ENDANGERED PARROTS also contains statements of a controversial nature, which should serve to promote serious discussions in avicultural circles about standards of ethical conduct and present practices. For instance, Rosemary Low says, "Large birds are generally more vulnerable to habitat alteration and predation by man than smaller species. Thus macaws, the largest and most spectacular of all parrots, have declined greatly as a result of man's interference in their environment. There can be no justification for taking the larger macaws from the wild; from those already in captivity the demand should be met. A more responsible attitude on the part of traders and aviculturists is

essential if the future of macaws is to be safeguarded." In another part of the book, she also states that, "Further importation of most Amazons and cockatoos is totally unnecessary, as there are such large numbers in captivity. Some species, such as the eclectus parrot and grey parrots are not yet rare in the wild, yet mortality is so high among newly imported birds that if aviculturists had a conscience they would not permit their import. Breeders ought to be able to supply the demand for both species — and, in fact, are already doing so in the case of the eclectus parrots, which are rarely imported now."

Ideally, those birds that are imported would be in much smaller numbers and would be done so by a central organization so that they would go only to responsible breeders not just to anyone prepared to pay the price.

Rosemary Low also questions the practice of hand-rearing the majority of larger parrots with the result that they are being sold mostly as pets. Hopefully, a responsible breeder would try to pair offspring with young raised by another breeder. Unfortunately we are always in a hurry, and seem reluctant to invest in young pairs, which usually produce far less problems and are a better investment than recently imported adults.

The author further advocates that serious aviculturists keep abreast of field studies so that species bred in captivity which are decreasing in their natural habitat, or what is left of it, can receive the full attention of their captive breeding efforts. "We must regularly participate in and review data produced on species bred in captivity from such sources as the registry of birds maintained by the American Federation of Aviculture, et. al. All aviculturists must contribute breeding results to central sources of information to ensure that the data compiled are as comprehensive as possible. Finally, the number of parrots raised in captivity must be increased so that eventually captive bred specimens will totally replace imported ones."

We, as aviculturists, have an opportunity to raise in the eyes of the world our avocation of aviculture to more than a hobby. We can start by reading *ENDANGERED PARROTS* and by pointing out to the world that aviculture is conservation too.

Endangered Parrots

By Rosemary Low

Blandford Press, 160 pp. \$25.00 ●

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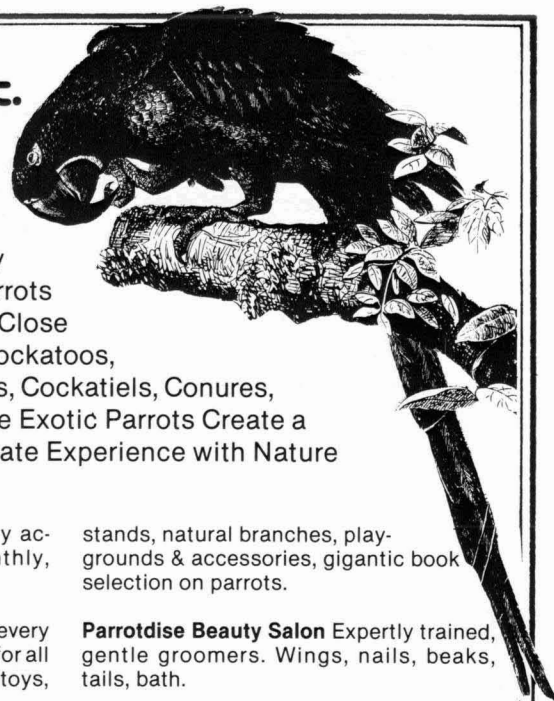
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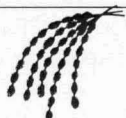
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