

AFA in action...

NEWS and VIEWS

AUGUST 1990

Bahamas' "Parrot Lady" Receives National Conservation Award

*Unsung Environmental Heroes
Honored in Program's 36th Year*

SAN FRANCISCO, May 10, 1990 — Rosemarie S. Gnam of Ridgewood, New York, has received a 1990 Chevron Conservation Award for her research of the endangered Bahama parrot. A doctoral student in biology at the City University of New York, Gnam became known as the "Parrot Lady of the Bahamas" for her efforts in educating and involving the island's residents in protection of the bird. Through her research findings, the Bahama government is now considering a 15,000-acre reserve for the parrot and the Cuban government has invited her to advise scientists about the protection of the threatened Cuban parrot.

Gnam will join 19 individuals and five organizations who have been selected by a panel of conservation experts for their independent spirit, vision and commitment to improving the nation's air, water, land and wildlife resources.

To acknowledge pioneering efforts in protecting and enhancing the environment, these individuals and organizations from across the United States will be honored by the program, now in its 36th year. The annual Chevron Conservation Awards will be presented at a special ceremony on May 16 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

The guest speaker will be The Honorable Michael R. Deland, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, which formulates and recommends national environmental policies to President Bush.

The Conservation Awards Program was founded in 1954 by Ed Zern, a nationally known sportsman, outdoor writer and one of the fathers of modern conservation.

Under Zern's direction, the program honors individuals and organizations who devote themselves, often without pay or recognition, to the protection and enhancement of renewable natural resources. In addition, the honorees must display an ability to work with diverse organizations to solve environmental problems.

"Over many years, I've observed thousands of people who have made a difference in our environment," Zern said. "Like award winners before them, this year's honorees represent the commitment needed to better our environment and serve as outstanding examples of what our society can do to improve life for all of us."

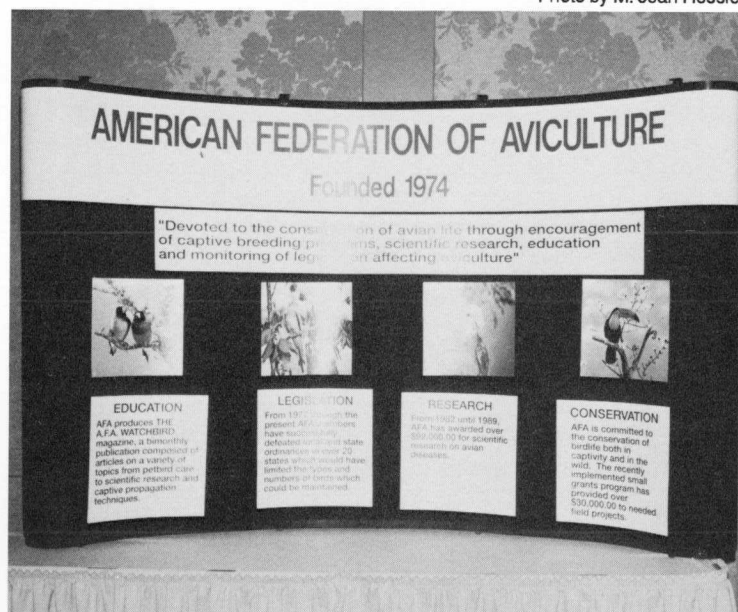
"Becoming involved and taking action are the key steps to environmental solutions," said Willis J. Price, president of Chevron U.S.A., sponsor of the program since 1986. "Chevron is proud to support a program that recognizes the importance of balancing conservation achievements with economic progress."

The 1990 honorees, from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, represent a cross section of people and organizations from 20 states. Their backgrounds vary widely, ranging from leaders of various conservation groups to a Michigan eye surgeon, Kansas courier service employee, former Florida commercial fisherman and Hawaiian park ranger. Together, they share one common trait — the genuine commitment needed to achieve environmental results.

Each of the 25 honorees will receive a \$1,000 cash award, a bronze plaque commemorating their conservation work and a trip to Washington, D.C.

Nominations were submitted for this award in three categories: Professional, Citizen Volunteer or Nonprofit Organization/Public Agency. Two endorsement letters, a brief biographical sketch of the nominee and collateral materials accompanied each nomination, which were evaluated by an independent committee of distinguished conservationists. The committee and program director Ed Zern selected the final honorees. ●

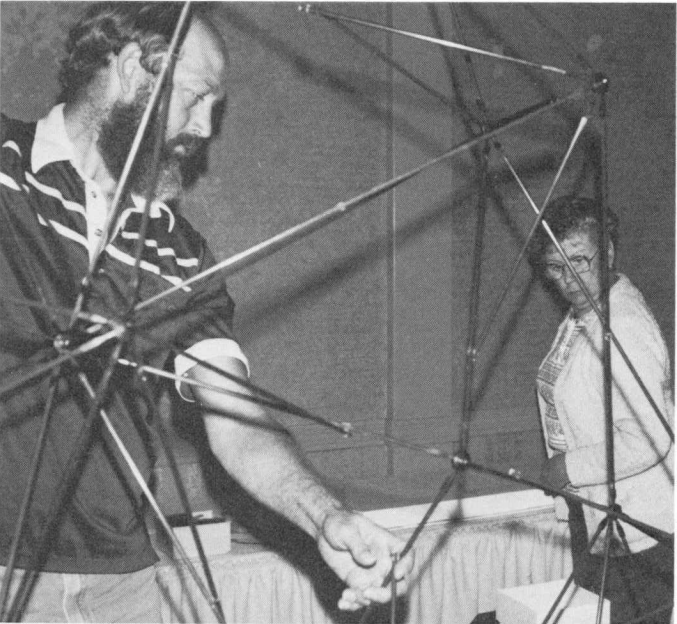
Photo by M. Jean Hessler



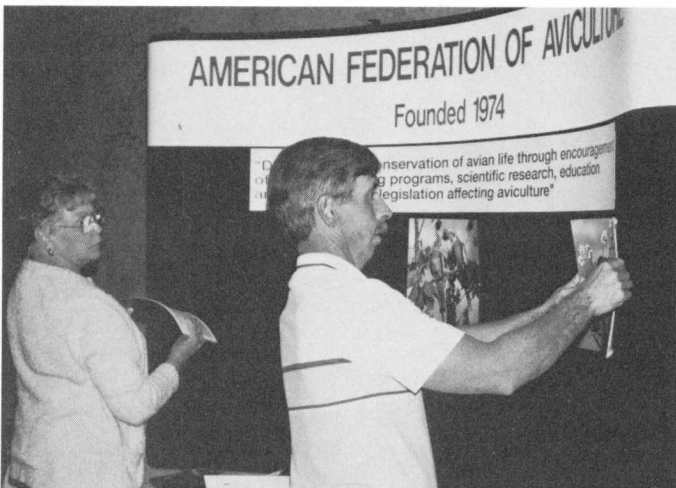
One of the three new table-top displays was brought to and set up at the Las Vegas meeting, June 8-9. At present, due to show schedule activities, one display will be stationed to circulate in California, one in Florida and one along the mid-Atlantic coast area. The big 8-foot floor display, featured in "News & Views" Feb/Mar '90 issue, will be home-based in Phoenix and sent out only to large, major shows.



AFA's new table-top display can be sent anywhere safely in its own special shipping case. Its total weight is 49 lbs. Aletta Long, southern California regional v.p., stands next to shipping case to show relative size.



Steve McNabb, western regional v.p., tackles assembly of table-top unit's fibreglass rods that make up back support. Aletta Long watches in disbelief as an engineer's nightmare takes shape.



After Steve did the hard part, Aletta and Davis Koffron, 1st v.p., tacked on the pertinent decorations that make an attractive display of telling about AFA's importance.

Zoological Gardens Breed Spectacled Owl, Crested Screamer and Lesser Bird of Paradise

A spectacled owl chick hatched on December 8, 1989 at the Oklahoma City Zoological Park. The chick, which was hand raised, is the thirteenth offspring produced by the breeding pair acquired in 1972 as young, wild-caught birds. A second pair is now being set up for breeding.

The Detroit Zoological Park hatched five Crested Screamer (*Chauna torquata*) chicks from February 16 to 18. This is significant because both adults are wild caught and bring new representation into the zoo population. The adults nested, incubated and raised the chicks in their winter-quarters building. A total of 37 species have been successfully parent raised in recent years, including king vulture, greater flamingo, greater rhea, emu and king, macaroni, rockhopper and black-footed penguin. The 33 species which remain at the zoo represent approximately one-fourth of the current collection.

A Lesser Bird of Paradise (*Paradisaea minor*) hatched recently at the New York Zoological Park. The chick is, as far as can be determined, the first of this rarely kept species to be hand raised in captivity. The protocol established for the successful hand raising of ten red birds of paradise in 1988-90 was used. The Lesser Bird of Paradise, endemic to New Guinea, lays only one egg per clutch. The hatching of this chick is of special interest as the sire is an unplumed three year old usually considered to be immature. A research project is under way to study the reproductive behavior of the red and the lesser birds of paradise.

AAZPA Communique, June 1990, pg. 20-24. ●

Call for Papers For AFA Convention 1991

A New Era for AFA

We are embarking on a new and innovative program for speakers for the 1991 convention in San Diego, August 6-11. We intend to have all speakers confirmed and the speaking agenda printed in the February issue of *AFA Watchbird* and presented at the AFA mid-winter Board meeting. Furthermore, we will have proceedings printed for distribution at the conference.

We want to enhance professionalism in the selection of speakers for future AFA conferences. Therefore, we are issuing a "Call for Papers" and requesting a brief summary of topics you wish to present with times of 20, 30 and 45 minutes. Presentations will be followed in the same session by a round table of the speakers in that session allowing time for questions from the audience. We are interested in a variety of topics and probably will present them in session groupings. For a few suggestions, we will be pleased to receive papers on aviculture techniques, handfeeding, incubation, pediatric care, cage and aviary construction, field biology, conservation, and avian medicine. Veterinarians are invited to participate and, if selected, may also be asked to speak at the Veterinary Seminar on Sunday, August 11, 1991. All speakers will be required to submit a written paper for the proceedings.

We appreciate your cooperation and participation in the speakers program. The deadline for submission of titles is October 31, 1990. Please submit to Jerry Pace, 1991 National Speaker Chairman, 4315 Highway 301, Lake Cormorant, Mississippi 38641. ●

AFA Balance Sheet December 31, 1989

Assets	Total
Cash	\$ 144,533.21
Accounts Receivable	8,310.48
Furniture and Equipment	14,224.99
Total Assets	\$ 167,068.68
Liabilities and Fund Balances	
Accounts Payable	340.24
Total Liabilities	340.24
Fund balances	
CITES fund	4,402.30
Conservation fund	10,855.84
Convention fund	65,398.34
General fund	68,074.30
Research fund	17,997.66
Total fund balances	166,728.44
Total liabilities and fund balances	\$ 167,068.68

Experimental Population of the Guam Rail is Approved

The Fish and Wildlife Service has published a final rule authorizing a nonessential experimental population of the endangered Guam Rail (*Rallus owstoni*) under Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (F.R. 10/30/89). Currently, the species survives only in captive breeding facilities. The wild population will be established on the island of Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which is outside the probable historical range of the species. This exception to normal reintroduction policy is necessary because the species' primary habitat on Guam has been "indefinitely altered" by the accidental introduction of the predatory brown tree snake (*Boiga irregularis*), which has virtually wiped out the island's native birds.

It is hoped that wild rails from the Rota experimental population eventually can be reestablished on Guam after a way is found to control the snakes. Designating the Rota population as nonessential provides considerable flexibility in managing the population. The Service proposed the experimental population designation on June 19, 1989. ●

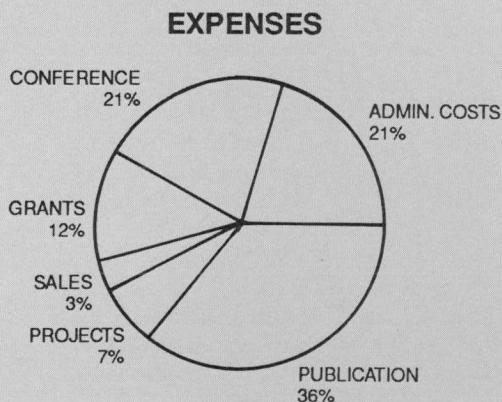
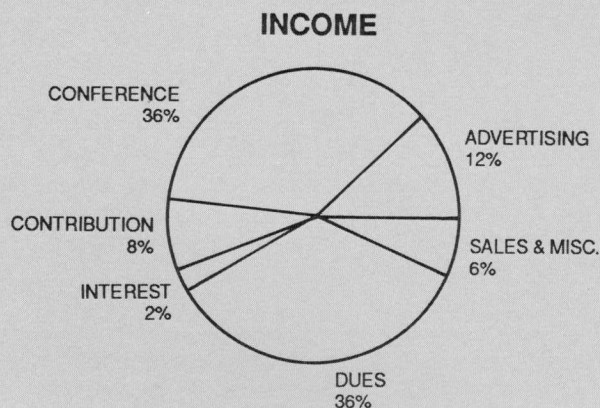
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin,
Vol. XIV, No's. 11-12 (1989), page 12.*

Parrots in Peril Ecuador 1990

*by Jack Clinton-Eitniear
San Antonio, Texas*

An expedition consisting of three British and two Ecuadorean biologists will attempt to assess the current status, population, range and general ecology of the following five endemic parrot species, Golden-plumed Conure, White-necked Parakeet, Grey-cheeked Parakeet, Spot-winged Parrotlet, and Red-faced Parrot. The research will be carried out in two provinces of southern Ecuador; Morona Santiago and Zamora-Chinchipie. Proposals to improve existing protected areas and create new areas will be made after the analysis of results.

The expedition is endorsed by the Royal Geographic Society and the International Council for Bird Preservation. Funding is still needed to offset costs. Donations can be sent directly to: Paul Toyne, Expedition Leader, Department of Pure and Applied Biology, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, London SW7 2BB ENGLAND. ●



Green-cheeked Amazon Pedigree Update

The Conservation Committee is currently producing a pedigree for the Green-cheeked Amazon Parrot, *Amazona viridigenalis*. The pedigree will show the history of the pairs included and their young.

So as to avoid inbreeding in the future, due to breeders not knowing the history of their breeding stock, the pedigree has been implemented. It is hoped that this will aid in the establishment of this species as a genetically diversified population in captivity. Current participants have 100 pairs of *A. viridigenalis* which have produced 59 young in 1989.

For more information write: Ron Holtz, 1066 West Windsong, Apache Junction, AZ 85220. Phone (602) 982-2125. ●

First United Kingdom Parrot Conference Held

by Nancy Vigran

"A smashing success!" Such were the raves of the first United Kingdom Parrot Conference held April 27 through 29, 1990 in Chester, England.

The conference, organized by Alison Dutton, Ron Kay and Eric Peake, was the first of its kind in England. The idea originated after Eric had attended many of the AFA conventions; he felt it was such a good way for people to share their information with others.

Friday evening the conference was started with demonstration workshops by commercial vendors as well as short synopses presented by organizations such as the International Council for Bird Preservation and the World Parrot Trust as to their aims and goals. This is a very interesting concept and a lot was learned just from these short excerpts.

Saturday brought the main body of the conference, organized by chairman and moderator Brian Pettit. The day started with Robert Crossley (U.K.) speaking on simple cockatiel mutations as well as the many combinations now being bred. Bob started breeding birds as a youngster with budgerigars, always putting his earnings back into his collection, and has built up an extensive aviary producing many high quality mutation cockatiels every year. The second speaker was Roger Wilkinson, Ph.D. (U.K.), Curator of Birds at the Chester Zoo, who spoke on breeding birds in a zoological garden. It is interesting to note that Dr. Wilkinson is very much in favor of the reproduction aspect and not simply the display of birds.



Photos by Nancy Vigran

Three key organizers of the first U.K. Parrot Conference held in Chester, England. L to R: Ron Kay, Alison Dutton, and Eric Peake.



Veterinarians at the U.K. Parrot Conference, L to R: Drs. John Baker, Andrew Greenwood, Alan Jones, Brian Coles (chairman), George Smith and Peter Scott.

Next up was an informative talk on African greys by David Glynn (Georgia, U.S.A.). David has been working extensively with African greys since 1977 and has kept very organized educational data on them as well. Following came Dale Thompson (co-editor of the *AFA Watchbird*, from California, U.S.A.) presenting two talks. The first was an information packed presentation on macaws. Later, as final speaker of the day, Dale spoke on cockatoos which seemed to be of particular interest to the attendees.

After lunch, John Stoodley (U.K.) presented his talk on Amazons. Those of you who attended the AFA convention last year in Phoenix were lucky enough to hear a similar presentation. Mr. Stoodley once again enchanted his audience with his beautiful photography.

Conservation rides high in England and two fine talks were presented on this subject. Roger Wheater, F.R.S.E., C.Biol., FIBiol. (U.K.) spoke on conservation of endangered species. Mr. Wheater is director of the Edinburgh Zoo, and has done extensive travel and research having served as Warden of the Murchison Falls National Park in Uganda and Director of Uganda National Parks as well as having served on many professional boards in the U.K. The second conservation subject was Scandinavian Parrot Conservation presented by Peter Them (Denmark). Mr. Them has long been active in aviculture and has had articles published in previous issues of *AFA Watchbird* as well as other publications.

On Saturday evening, a delightful dinner/dance was held. The major highlight was the presentation of a 2,500 (approximately \$4,125 U.S.) check donated by the Parrot Society of Great Britain to John Stoodley, to be forwarded to Dr. Branson Ritchie and the University of Georgia for the Psittacine Feather and Beak Disease Research Project. Dancing followed and I might add that these Brits can dance and thoroughly enjoyed themselves too.

Sunday's schedule included a veterinary section. Presentations included Avian Husbandry by Andrew Greenwood, M.A., Vet. M.B., M.R.C.V.S.; Research Projects at Liverpool University (including the hatchability of eggs) by John Baker, B.V.Sc., Ph.D., M.R.C.V.S.; Psittaculture by George A. Smith, B.Vet. Med., M.R.C.V.S.; and Bird Importation by Alan Jones, B.Vet. Med., M.R.C.V.S. The lectures were followed by a veterinary forum with these gentlemen as well as Peter Scott, MSc., BVSc., M.R.C.V.S., MIBiol., ACI Arb. and Brian Coles, chairman of this section of the conference (also a British veterinarian).

The final touch was an afternoon at the Chester Zoo. Dr. Wilkinson and his staff showed us quite a bird collection and shared with us some of their tremendous breeding successes including Blue-eyed Cockatoos, Lesser Vasa Parrots and Keas (at the time there was a five-week-old Kea being hand fed). They had a wide variety of softbills including those housed in an immense tropical house that is totally enclosed and heated. The zoo also boasts a tremendous owl collection and they are quite proud of their production with this family as well.

Great efforts are put into breeding success and the zoo is also very education oriented. They have wonderful signs naming the species (both common and Latin names) as well as showing their native habitat and some of their natural habits as well. Signs also explained that in a nesting or expected nesting situation, a particular flight might not be cleaned for a while to avoid disturbance of the birds.

All in all, the first United Kingdom Parrot Conference was, indeed, "a smashing success!" A second conference is currently in the planning stages for late fall, 1991, or early 1992. This is a great reason for traveling as you will see the magnificent sites of England and learn a great deal from some very experienced aviculturists as well. ●



Board of Directors quorum at the June 8-9 Las Vegas meeting, L to R: top row, Steve McNabb, Western regional v.p.; Dallas Johnson, Mid-Atlantic regional v.p.; Ron Sweere, Northwestern regional v.p.; Wilford Pace, Southeastern regional v.p. Middle row: Laurella Desborough, exec. sec.; Aletta Long, So. Cal. regional v.p.; Vicki Fletcher, Chief Financial Officer. Bottom row: Davis Koffron, 1st v.p.; Phyllis Martin, president; Chuck Saffell, 2nd v.p.



Non-voting members of the board contributing to the June 8-9 meeting, L to R: M. Jean Hessler, "Watchbird"; Sallie Klink, corresponding secretary; Richard Schubot, convention coordinator; Jerry Pace, convention speakers; Al McNabney, ways and means; Gary Clifton, parliamentarian.

AFA's Avian Research Fund Is Growing

Special thanks to: **The Avian Research Fund**, Alamo, California and **The Greater Miami Avicultural Society** for their generous donations to AFA's research fund.

Due to the tremendous success of the January 1990 Avian Pediatric Seminar organized and managed by K. Wayne Arthur, Laurella Desborough and Judy Kiefer-Meyer, the Avian Research Fund was able to donate \$5,000 of the profits to AFA's Research Committee for avian research projects.

In June, 1990, the \$1,261 club treasury balance was donated by the members of the dissolved Greater Miami Avicultural Society, Inc. Thank you to all members who were and still remain supportive of AFA for stipulating the balance of your club's treasury to be donated to AFA's research fund in the event of dissolution. ●

Report to AFA on the Recommendations of the Cooperative Working Group on the Bird Trade

*by Gary Lilienthal
May 1990, All Rights Reserved*

As reported in a previous issue of *Watchbird*, through the efforts of the World Wildlife Fund, in 1988, a broad-based group concerned about the trade in wild-caught birds met in Washington, D.C. to determine if common ground could be found with respect to the future of that bitterly disputed subject. This group, the Cooperative Working Group on the Bird Trade, comprised of representatives of the avicultural, pet, veterinary, conservation, humane and zoological communities, met and deliberated over a period of two years. It was a purpose of the Group that through the adoption of one national policy, the bitter fights which had taken place at the state legislative level would end with the promoters of such types of legislation deferring to the process recommended by the Group. The Group also recognized at the outset that many of the alleged "facts" proffered by various parties concerning the bird trade could not be substantiated.

On March 29, 1990, a briefing was held at the State Department in Washington, D.C. Present at the briefing were Assistant Secretaries of State, Agriculture and Interior and various department heads from Agriculture and Interior. At the briefing, the Working Group's moderator, E.U. Curtis (Buff) Bohlen, now the Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, with numerous members of the Working Group present, briefed the Departments of Agriculture and interior on the Recommendations of the Working Group.

At the outset, these Recommendations acknowledge the agreement of the parties that ratified the Convention in Trade in Endangered Species that one of the goals of CITES is to reduce the demand upon wild populations of (avian) species for trade as pets. The Group further acknowledges that while habitat destruction is the most significant threat to the survival of avian species, the pet trade continues to place pressure on certain wild avian populations. In recognition of these principals, the Group adopted as one of its primary purposes the promotion of domestic breeding of avian species so that the pet trade could be supplied with domestic species for sale as pets. As a part of the Group's Recommendations, it is proposed that the importation and sale of wild-caught birds for pets will cease within five years, to be replaced with domestically-bred birds. In order to accomplish this, the Group intends that aviculturists will, along with zoos and scientific researchers, continue to be able to obtain wild-caught birds for breeding and avicultural purposes.

In order to ensure the human care and treatment of, and therefore the quality of, wild-caught birds being obtained for aviculture, the Group has recommended that numerous actions be taken to ensure safe and healthful pre-export, transport, and quarantine conditions. They have also recommended streamlining and simplifying the importation procedures to facilitate the process of importation of birds to promote breeding. There is also contained within the Recommendations a provision permitting the import for sale as pets of wild-caught birds within certain criteria pursuant to strict control by the Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Management

Authority. This might include birds for which it was proven that the trade was sustainable or for such other possible reasons as excessive habitat destruction, eradication as pests (where the birds would pose no threat to our environment), or where the birds were in danger of extinction and in need of appropriate management. All participating groups made major concessions from what had been previously intractable positions.

As a result, the Recommendations are believed to contain a workable and viable format for national legislation and/or regulation which will improve the bird trade by improving the conditions in importation and quarantine and the quality of the birds available to aviculturists, all to the end of promoting domestic breeding. In turn it is hoped that this will open new sources for aviculturists of previously unavailable birds and will provide an incentive for aviculturists to breed avian species and act as an incentive to the pet industry to rely on domestic-bred avian stock. The Recommendations should also result in the reduction and minimalization of stress, disease and mortality in importation. Additionally, the Recommendations propose that importation of birds which as a species suffer unacceptably high mortality in importation cease until that cause can be alleviated.

While there may be a concomitant increase in the cost of imported wild-caught avian species to the aviculturist, in the long run due to the health and quality of the species available and the increase in demand for domestically-bred offspring, higher prices to aviculturists should be offset and negated by quality and result in sales of offspring. An added feature of these Recommendations is the proposal for "self-regulation" by aviculturists stressing minimal involvement, beyond establishment of structure, of government agencies. This condition was one of the critical requirements of AFA in agreeing to participate in the Working Group. It is initially proposed that persons desiring to be eligible to acquire wild-caught birds be required to have their facilities inspected by a qualified veterinarian. It is hoped that this procedure would be fashioned after the Model Avicultural Program now being implemented in California so that it would become a national program recognized by the government. In this way, aviculture will be making a statement that it is concerned about the health and quality of life of the avian species in our care.

The activities of the Working Group have been the subject of much controversy and criticism in that the Group, while communicating regularly with their respective organizations, determined at the outset that in order to effectively and promptly arrive at reasonable recommendations, it would maintain confidentiality about the proceedings. By doing so, the Group hoped to avoid becoming bogged down in what might otherwise be inappropriate lobbying efforts by outside influence groups and premature reports of positions which would stir unwarranted controversy or concerns which might otherwise be alleviated in the final recommendations. Moreover, the Group believed this would promote candid discussions among its members. In fact, these concerns were proven to be warranted and confidentiality appropriate in at least two instances. The first in the printing of an article in a trade publication which contained premature reports of positions being taken by the Group, and the second in actual language contained in legislation proposed in the State of New Jersey which purported to track language adopted by the new Group. In fact, in both cases, the recommendations which it seems leaked out of the Group's deliberations were subsequently changed. In fact, the proposed New Jersey legislation is inconsistent with the Group's recommendations. In this specific instance, it was a great shame to see this happen in that the legislator sponsoring this bill will be promoting legislation which will, if adopted, cause his state to be out of step with what is proposed to be national policy.

In the final analysis, the results of the initial phase of the Cooperative Working Group's efforts signal a great success for all parties and serve all of the interested groups well in important ways. I look forward to continuing to work as AFA's representative to the Group throughout the implementation phase and in working with the AFA Committee which has been established to act as a liaison between the AFA Board of Directors and the Cooperative Working Group to insure that the future of aviculture is and will be secure. I look forward to presenting a more detailed analysis of the Recommendations of the Working Group and will have the 50-page Recommendations available so that I will be able to specifically respond to questions and concerns of interested aviculturists at the AFA annual convention in Washington, D.C. in August.

Excerpts from the General Recommendations

1. Reduce the demand for wild-caught exotic birds for the pet trade by facilitating domestic and international captive breeding of exotic avian species, encouraging the purchase of captive-bred birds in lieu of wild-caught birds, promoting avian conservation in the wild, and educating the public in this regard;
2. Institute new regulations and procedures related to the avian import process, including, but not limited to, those concerning transportation, quarantine, humane care, disease control, inspection, and enforcement; and
3. Institute a new system of federal regulatory controls for live exotic avian imports that will:
 - a. Provide for import quotas on a gradually declining scale in order to reduce and ultimately end within five years the import of wild-caught birds for sale specifically as pets;
 - b. Continue to allow the import of wild-caught birds for approved use in scientific research, zoological display, education, private and commercial captive breeding to produce offspring for aviculture and the pet trade, or captive breeding programs specifically designed to prevent the extinction of species or subspecies, all pursuant to approval procedures developed in cooperation with affected parties;
 - c. Suspend imports for the pet trade of wild-caught birds of species for which captive-bred specimens are or become available in commercial quantities for the pet trade;
 - d. Suspend imports for the pet trade of wild-caught specimens of species whenever it is determined that such trade is contributing to the long-term decline of those species' wild populations;
 - e. Suspend imports of avian species which experience excessive mortality during the import process until the causes of such mortality have been identified and mortality can be reduced to acceptable levels;
 - f. Facilitate the expeditious processing of import and export documentation for shipments of captive-bred birds; and
 - g. Notwithstanding subparagraph a., in special circumstances, pursuant to a finding of the Office of Scientific Authority and a permit application process, allow the import for the pet trade of wild-caught specimens of certain common or abundant species when such imports can be demonstrated to benefit the conservation of that species or the ecosystem it inhabits* ●

* This subparagraph was accepted by a majority but not all of the participating members.



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- Buying? here's your chance to get a real deal or catch that bird you've always dreamed of
- updates weekly

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- love connections for the perfect mate
- gossip, problems, advice

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