

In Memory of Clark R. Bavin

by Gary P. Lilienthal
Boston, Massachusetts

It was with great sadness that AFA learned of the recent passing of Clark R. Bavin, Chief of the Division of Law Enforcement of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. Over the years, Clark had many dealings with AFA and its representatives in areas of mutual concern to aviculture and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Many of Clark's decisions were extremely difficult when it came to dealing with exotic avian species and, in every case, he attempted to understand the meaning and ramifications of his department's actions as they affected aviculture and exhibited a willingness to listen and understand the concerns of the aviculturists. In several instances, Clark and his staff sought the input of AFA representatives as to matters affecting aviculture. AFA's last contact with Clark was at the U.S. State Department at the March 1990 briefing on the Recommendations of the Cooperative Working Group on the Bird Trade at which time Clark committed his Department's efforts to the realizations of the Recommendations of the Cooperative Working Group. The avicultural community's condolences go to Clark's family and his associates at the Division of Law Enforcement in Washington. ●

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Understanding the British Exhibition Budgerigar

by Jeffrey Attwood
Stock Gabriel, Devon, United Kingdom

A great deal of misunderstanding has arisen regarding the British exhibition budgerigar. This is particularly true with respect to breeders from other countries who have obtained British stock. Our own fanciers, who have limited experience with the long feathered, so-called "power birds," are appearing at shows and exhibitions and then walking away with the leading awards.

I know many of the breeders who have obtained these birds are enjoying limited or no success in the reproduction of these types of birds, yet when the birds reproduce, the offspring are in many cases inferior to the adult stock. This leads to the breeder believing he or she has been "ripped off" in respect to the original stock purchased.

I am not so naive as to believe unsatisfactory stock is sometimes supplied at exhibition prices. Such stock often gives poor results. However, the poor offspring can be the result of a lack of experience. For this reason, I have chosen the subject as the basis for this article. I want to, in some small way, attempt to put the record straight.

A Look at History

To understand, we must look into the history of the present day exhibition budgerigar. We must examine where and how the notable changes have taken place. Top class British budgerigars of today in no way resemble the Warbling Grass Parakeet (*Malopsittis undulatus*), illustrated in Gould's lithograph of some 150 years ago. The birds have changed so drastically that the Australian Parks and Wildlife Department put forward a submission to the effect the birds were genetically different from the wild type. That was sufficient to block the importation of British stock into Australia. These writers cannot be criticized for their comments. Many breeders of pet class stock have mistakenly believed the birds were/

are a different species due to the existence of different chromosomes.

It was about 1840 when the first consignment of wild budgerigars arrived in the United Kingdom. Between that time and the year 1924, very little was done with regard to selection of type, other than the production of colors quite different from light green found in the wilds of Australia.

The "Budgerigar Club" was formed in 1925. Late in 1927, the name was changed by royal request and patronage to the "Budgerigar Society." The new Society membership consisted of many established and internationally respected livestock breeders, with the objective of improving the budgerigar to a determined standard, with the establishing of established varieties.

In the early 1920s, few of the budgerigar varieties we know and admire today were even to be seen. I believe the formation of the Budgerigar Society was the first step that, in later years, led to problems that I will go into and explain later on.

It is interesting to note, in 1927 an exhibition of budgerigar light yellows, a recessive variety, has now all but disappeared from our show benches. This species was the predominantly popular species. During this period of popularity (1930 to the early 1940s), many of the new mutations evolved. But as the yellow declined, the rate of mutations slowed considerably. Thus, over the past 30 years, only the dominant Pied and Spangle have been fully established.

The Longflight Appears

During the early 1950s, the "long-flight" mutation made its appearance. Breeders began to see characteristics never previously observed. The most notable change was, of course, the exceptionally long wing carrying additional flight feathers, as compared with the wild budgerigar.