

AFA in action... **NEWS and VIEWS**

AUGUST 1991



Alert on Proposed National Legislation. Your Action is Needed Now! Support the Exotic Bird Conservation Act of 1991: H.R. 2541, S. 1218

Background

Two and one half years ago, the World Wildlife Fund convened the Cooperative Working Group on the Bird Trade (CWGBT). The Group's members were representatives from American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA), American Federation of Aviculture (AFA), American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society (APWS), Animal Protection Institute of America (APIA), Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV), Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), National Audubon Society (NAS), Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), Society for Animal Protective Legislation (SAPL), TRAFFIC (USA) and World Wildlife fund (WWF).

Recommendations

By March of 1990, the participants in the CWGBT agreed upon and publicized recommendations for improving the pet bird trade, including recommendations on improving quarantine procedures and facilities, gradually phasing out over five years the importation of wild-caught birds for the pet trade, and encouraging captive breeding of exotic birds to fill the demand of the pet trade in the U.S.

Draft Legislation

By April of 1991, based upon the recommendations, the Working Group introduced draft legislation: the Exotic Bird Conservation Act of 1991. The draft act proposes the following:

1. A comprehensive federal program rather than fragmented and inconsistent state-by-state programs.
2. Recognition and encouragement for captive breeding by aviculturists.
3. Encourages the conservation of birds in their native habitats.
4. Establishes a quota system to operate during the five year phaseout of importation of wild-caught birds for the pet trade.
5. Encourages captive breeding in order to replace the wild-caught birds for the pet trade with captive-bred birds or ranched birds.

6. Provides for a simple registration and reporting system to ensure that wild-caught birds imported for breeding programs do not go into the pet trade.
7. The registration system provides for an automatic temporary approval.
8. **IMPORTANT. Only aviculturists desiring to obtain imported wild-caught birds for breeding stock after the five year phase out of import will need to be registered.** The registration system is for the purpose of tracking the birds imported for breeding after the phase out.
9. Marking is required only for wild-caught birds imported for registration breeders. (Banding and implants are types of marking.)
10. **No marking requirements for domestic-bred birds or birds imported prior to phase out.**

Aviculturists Endorse This CWGBT Bill

Members of AFA worked on each aspect of this proposed legislation, seeking to promote the conservation of exotic bird species and to promote the practice of captive breeding in the U.S.

Copies of bills may be obtained by writing to: Documents Room, House Annex #2, Room B18, Second and D Streets, SW, Washington, DC 20515. Include a self-addressed, gummed label. Copies can be obtained by calling: 1 (202) 225-3456 (Washington).

Under the CWGBT Bill, aviculturists wishing to purchase post-act wild-caught birds for breeding stock must do the following:

- a. Certify to the government that you have two years' general avicultural experience.
- b. Certify to the government that you have *not* been convicted of a violation of wildlife laws.
- c. Have your veterinarian verify that your breeding facilities meet minimum standards.
- d. Report on an annual basis any purchases or sales of post-Act imported wild-caught birds.

Look-alike Bill Proposed

A look-alike bill has been proposed by Defenders of Wildlife and other animal rights groups: the Wild Bird Protection Act: H.R. 2540 and S. 1219.

At the last minute, HSUS, AWI, and SAPL pulled out of the Working Group and joined defenders in promoting this more restrictive legislation. The Defender bill requires birds to be marked, no matter when imported, captive-bred or not. This bill encourages states to enact more restrictive legislation on an individual basis. This bill calls for an immediate ban on imports of birds and allows animal rights groups to sue individual aviculturists.

Comparison of the *recommended* CWGBT Bill and the look-alike Defenders Bill follows:

CWGBT Bill: Five year phaseout of imports with gradually declining quotas.

Defenders Bill: Immediate ban on imports for pet trade.

CWGBT Bill: Citizens may file suit against government in cases of alleged violation of the Act or failure of government to perform duties.

Defenders Bill: Well funded animal rights groups *may sue private persons such as aviculturists or pet owners* said to be in violation of the Act.

CWGBT Bill: Act intended to be comprehensive and preemptive with respect to imports and transfers of birds for one uniform, national law.

Defenders Bill: Specifically states Act is intended *not* to have preemptive effect; designed not to preempt stronger state laws, promoting a patchwork of inconsistent state laws.

Both bills were introduced by Congressman Gerry Studds (Massachusetts), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Fish and Wildlife Conservation, and Representative Anthony C. Bielenso (California, 23rd District). Please call the offices of these two Congressmen to register your support of the Exotic Bird Conservation Act, H.R. 2541. Congressman Studds: (202) 226-3533. Congressman Bielenso: (202) 225-5911. In addition to calling, **please write letters to these sponsors of the bills and to your own congressman also. It is important that your congressman be urged to support this bill.** Our opponents are mounting an expensive, major campaign in Congress

to push through their bill and discredit ours. **We must act to protect our interests. Every letter counts.**

1. Urge support and cosponsoring of the Exotic Bird Conservation Act of 1991: H.R. 2541 (S. 1218). This act will provide support for aviculture and captive breeding and will encourage conservation of avian species in the wild.
2. Urge congressmen **not to support H.R. 2540 and S. 1219**, the Wild Bird Protection Act because it is unreasonable, does not enjoy broad support among aviculturists, will not encourage captive breeding and thus will promote increased smuggling to fill the demand for pet birds. This bill places an onerous burden on the aviculturists who are expected to provide the captive-bred birds.

Letters to the bill's sponsors should be addressed:

The Honorable Gerry Studds
237 Cannon H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Anthony C. Bielenso
1025 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

For further information, call: (602) 484-0931, or write: AFA, P.O. Box 56218, Phoenix, AZ 85079-6218. ●



WWF

Fact Sheet on The Exotic Bird Conservation Act H.R. 2541 and S. 1218

On June 4, 1991, Congressmen Studds and Beilenson introduced two bills to address the problems of the wild bird trade — H.R. 2540 and H.R. 2541. The same day, Sen. Baucus and Sen. Chafee introduced companion bills in the Senate — S. 1218 and S. 1219.

These competing bills should not be confused. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act, H.R. 2541 and S. 1218, is the product of three years of careful study and negotiation by World Wildlife Fund and a broad coalition of organizations known as the Cooperative Working Group on Bird Trade. After actively participating in all of these negotiations, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and several other animal welfare groups broke from the negotiating table in the eleventh hour and developed H.R. 2540 and S. 1219, a counterproposal that we believe is unworkable. This fact sheet outlines the major differences between the two bills.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act calls for a rational phaseout of wild bird imports for the pet market rather than an abrupt import ban. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act provides for a phaseout over five years through a system of declining import quotas. The phaseout would give bird breeders time to expand their captive breeding programs to supply commercial quantities of birds for the domestic pet market. In contrast, the HSUS bill calls for an immediate ban on imports of

wild birds for sale as pets. It promises an unparalleled boom in smuggling by shutting off the supply of legal birds before breeders are able to meet the public's demand for pet birds.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act permits continued imports of wild birds for breeding stock. In order to breed enough birds to supply the pet market in the U.S., captive breeders need to be able to obtain wild birds for breeding stock after the phaseout of imports for the pet trade. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would provide for continued imports of wild birds for captive breeding and other approved purposes, after the end of imports by the pet industry. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would authorize the Secretary to deny import permits where trade is causing excessive bird mortality or threatening wild populations. The HSUS bill would establish exceptionally burdensome restrictions on imports for captive breeding programs, assuring that few, if any, wild birds would be imported for breeding stock.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act contains reasonable enforcement provisions that would ensure compliance with the Act. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would require that all birds imported after the phaseout be marked for identification, but would exempt certain commonly-bred species from marking. The bill requires reporting and recordkeeping to provide the documentation needed to ensure compliance with the Act. The HSUS bill would require the marking of all birds in the trade, including millions of captive-bred birds and pre-Act birds currently held as pets. These staggering marking requirements would be virtually impossible for the government to implement, extremely costly and, in the final analysis, would serve no useful purpose.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would promote conservation of birds and their habitats in developing countries. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would allow imports of birds produced in approved "ranching" operations, where artificial nesting sites are provided for wild birds and some of the young are later removed for export. Carefully managed ranching operations can provide opportunities for sustainable use of bird populations and important incentives for conservation of habitat. In

addition, the Exotic Bird Conservation Act would establish an Exotic Bird Conservation Fund to support the conservation, management, and protection of birds in exporting countries. Simply banning trade is never enough to solve deeply-rooted conservation problems in developing countries. The HSUS bill does not provide for imports of birds produced in avian ranching operations in exporting countries.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would permit individuals and organizations to enforce the Act against the government. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act would allow citizens to file suit against the government in cases of alleged violation of the Act or a failure of the government to perform non-discretionary actions required by the Act. The HSUS bill would authorize any citizen or group to file harassment lawsuits against private individuals such as aviculturists, pet owners, or researchers, alleged to be in violation of the Act. This approach would have a chilling effect on captive breeding and research programs.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act, with its broad base of support, is the only legislative proposal to end the wild bird trade that is capable of passage. The Exotic Bird Conservation Act has unprecedented broad support among the major

organizations concerned with the problems of the wild bird trade including conservation organizations, the pet industry, zoos, and bird breeders. Without the support of these organizations, the prospects for legislation on the wild bird trade are significantly diminished, thereby ensuring the continued decline of foreign bird populations.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Act is supported by the World Wildlife Fund, the largest international conservation organization in the world, with more than one million members in the United States alone; TRAFFIC-USA, the world's leading authority on wildlife trade; the National Audubon Society, one of the nation's oldest and largest conservation organizations, with more than 500,000; the American Federation of Aviculture, the largest organization of bird breeders in the country; the International Council for Bird Preservation, a federation of 330 bird conservation organizations representing 10 million people worldwide; the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums; the Association of Avian Veterinarians; the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council; and the American Pheasant and Waterfowl Society.

Cosponsor the Exotic Bird Conservation Act, H.R. 2541 and S. 1218! ●

Seventy Years in Aviculture!

by Michael J. Demlong

Seventy years in aviculture! An extraordinary achievement when you consider that most aviculturists haven't even reached their "golden years" let alone been keeping exotic birds for that length of time. Yet, on Sunday, June 2, 1991, pioneer aviculturist and long-time Phoenix resident Bernard Roer, observed his 70th anniversary in aviculture.

To celebrate this once-in-a-life-time occasion, Bernard's friends and members of the Arizona Avicultural Society (A.A.S.) hosted a large outdoor party at the bird farm. An enthusiastic group of approximately 225 people from all over the state attended the party, including a few out of state dignitaries: Mr. Jack Throp, retired Australian zoo director and consultant; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Miser, owners of Magnolia Bird Farm and Mr. and Mrs. Francis Billie. Surprise guest of the day was Bernard's daughter Angie, visiting from her residence in Europe. In addition, Bernard's eight other children — and a seemingly infinite number of grandchildren — also participated in the celebration to wish him many prosperous years to come.

Those attending the party would agree that the highlights of the celebration were the telling of individual anecdotes and the commemorative plaque presentation by A.A.S.

Mr. L.M. "Mickey" Ollson, a long-time friend and director of Wildlife World Zoo, presided over the informal ceremony. Mickey encouraged various old friends of Bernard's to recall their favorite "Bernard" story. Stories ranged from the successful rearing of a Scarlet Macaw he sold as an egg for \$25, to the story of Bernard's free bus ride to San Diego, compliments of the U.S. Army. After several of these personally memorable stories (each, of course, embellished upon by Bernard), A.A.S. president Lorene Shepard presented Bernard with an elegant plaque commemorating his 70 years in aviculture and an honorary lifetime membership to the society.

Newcomers to aviculture may be unaware of Bernard Roer and his many contributions to what we know about raising exotic birds. He is a pioneer in the discipline of aviculture, keeping birds at a time of few bird vets, no specially formulated feed mixes, and exceedingly little written material about general bird husbandry. Instead, years ago aviculturists relied primarily on

their common sense when making decisions in the breeding and care of birds, (and according to Bernard, a sense many people lack!). In essence then, the success and experiences of early aviculturists like himself and others, set the foundation upon which modern aviculture rests today. At 75 years of age, Bernard Roer has made countless contributions to this field throughout his lifetime.

Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic Bernard possesses is his ability to retain a true love and appreciation for the birds, and at the same time run a profitable business. Exemplifying this devotion is that when asked "which birds on the farm are his favorite", he invariably replies, "Well, that's like asking a father which of his three children he likes the best."

For all that you have given to aviculture in the past, and for contributions yet to come, thank you, Bernard Roer. ●



Bernard Roer, of Phoenix, AZ, was honored with a gala celebration on June 2, 1991. Bernard, seated at far left, has been involved with aviculture for 70 years. Of the many notables attending this event, two were caught in this photo. Standing in background, top right side, is Mickey Ollson, director of Wildlife World Zoo, Glendale, AZ. Standing directly in front of Mickey is Frank Miser of Magnolia Bird Farm, Anaheim, CA.

Photo by Michael J. Demlong

Annual Review of Avian Psittacosis Cases In California, 1990

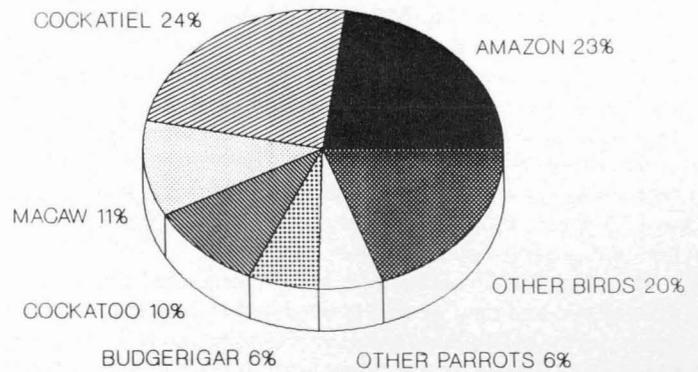
In 1990, 243 cases of avian psittacosis were reported to the Veterinary Public Health Unit (VPHU). From 10 to 32 cases were reported each month (Figure 1), with the greatest number of cases being reported in August and December, 1990. Sixty-one percent of the cases were reported in the last six months of the year. This may be explained by the fact that two of the commercial laboratories (California Avian Laboratory and Medical Veterinary Lab Partners) did not begin reporting avian psittacosis cases to VPHU until July 1990.

The most common species reported to be infected with psittacosis during 1990 were cockatiels and Amazon parrots, followed by macaws, cockatoos and budgerigars (Figure 2). Avian psittacosis cases were identified in 31 of 58 California counties (Figure 3). However, 35 percent of the infected birds resided in either San Diego (46 cases) or Los Angeles (40 cases) county. Both San Diego and Los Angeles county have public health veterinarians on staff and laboratories which conduct psittacosis testing.

Eleven veterinary laboratories and two private veterinary clinics reported positive psittacosis laboratory results to the VPHU. Commercial veterinary laboratories reported 78 percent of the avian psittacosis cases identified. The most common (159 cases) laboratory test used was the enzyme linked immunosorbant assay (ELISA) conducted on feces, cloacal swabs or serum, followed by a serum latex agglutination test (40 cases), fluorescent antibody tests on tissue or feces (24 cases), culture (12 cases) and Gimenez or Machiaveilli stained smears (8 cases). In August 1990, the first report of an avian psittacosis case identified through the use of a new chlamydia ELISA test kit at a private veterinary clinic was received by the VPHU.

Eight cases of human psittacosis were reported to the Department of Health Services in 1990 by five counties (Lake, 1; Monterey, 2; San Bernardino, 2; San Diego, 1; Tulare, 2). All of the infected individuals reported having had contact with

FIGURE 2
Reported Cases of Avian Psittacosis in California, by Breed, 1990



birds prior to the onset of their illness. Four of the patients had contact with cockatiels, one with a parrot and three with multiple species. Two of the individuals worked in an aviary, one in a pet store and one in a feed store. One woman became ill after treating a sick cockatoo for ten days. The most common symptoms were fever, chills and mild respiratory symptoms (including cough). All of the infected individuals recovered. However, two patients required hospitalization. ●

FIGURE 1
Reported Cases of Avian Psittacosis in California, by Month Tested, 1990

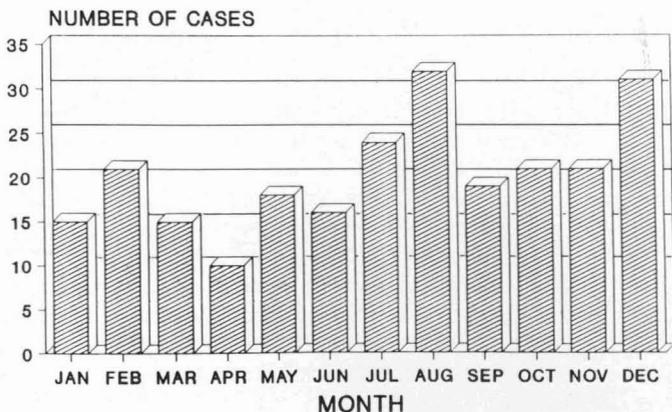
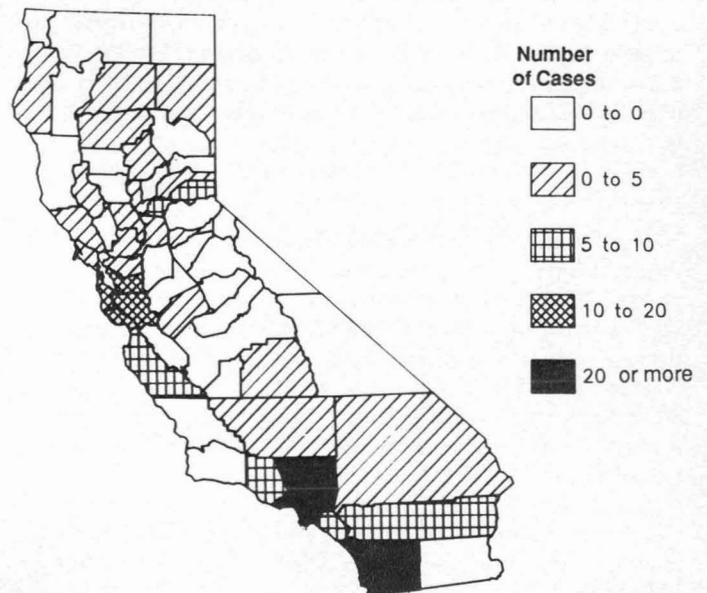


FIGURE 3
Reported Cases of Avian Psittacosis in California, by County, 1990



The Club Connection

Northwest Exotic Bird Society

by Nancy L. Vigran

Meeting Location: Woodland Park Zoo, ARC Building, Phinney Avenue, Seattle, Washington.

Meeting Date: Third Wednesday of the month.

Contact for more information: Cheryl Owen, Membership Secretary, 11037 Palatine Avenue N, Seattle, WA 98133, Phone: (206) 365-2473 or Jeri Wright, 1006 62nd Avenue E, Tacoma, WA 98424, Phone: (206) 838-9802.

1991 President: Mac McGinnis, Phone: (206) 488-0125

General Information: The Northwest Exotic Bird Society was founded in the fall of 1980 by a few dedicated aviculturists. Membership is now 200 members strong and dues remain at a reasonable \$12 annually which includes the monthly bulletin.

Activities and special Events: The NWEBS was one of the host clubs for the 1987 A.F.A. convention in Seattle and remains an avid A.F.A. supporter by donating to the research, conservation and general funds of A.F.A. every year.

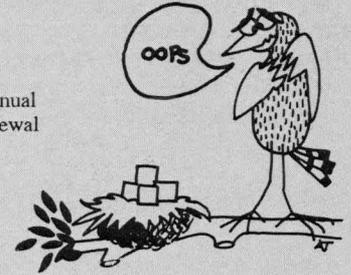
The NWEBS utilizes out-of-town speakers many times a year to keep old and new members educated and entertained on a variety of avian subjects from finches to macaws and waterfowl to pigeons. There is an annual picnic in July or August, often at a member's aviary or in a local park, and they have an annual Christmas party as well.

Editorial Note: The club connection was designed to let members of A.F.A. know what regional clubs are available for members and to give clubs ideas and a chance to learn from what other clubs do. If your club is a member club of A.F.A. and would like to be highlighted in the club connection, please send information with a contact person's name and phone number to: Nancy Vigran, c/o A.F.A., P.O. Box 56218, Phoenix, AZ 85017. ●

Correction for
The Club Connection
in June/July 1991 issue, page 50.

The Avicultural Society of America's annual dues are \$20 per year and the date of renewal occurs one year from whenever original entry payment was made . . . which can be anytime throughout the year. The meeting location has also been recently moved to a larger hall. The location listed is obsolete. The new address has not yet been posted.

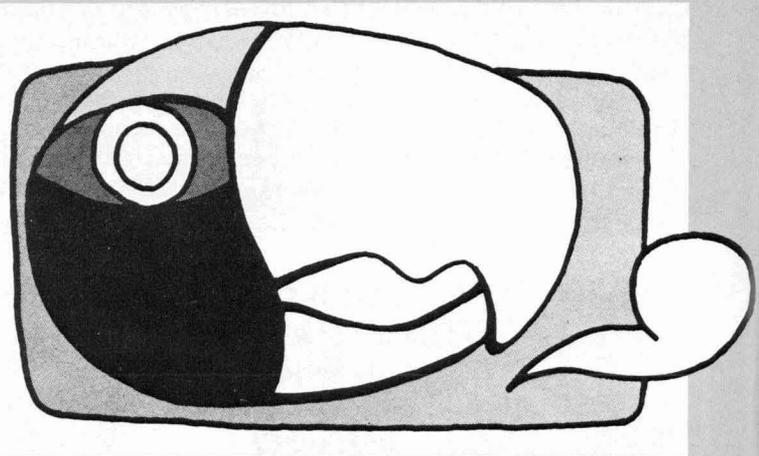
Call Helen Hanson, (714) 780-4102, Riverside, CA, ASA membership for current info. The next indoor meeting will be in November of '91.



Bird Conservation Update

The Avicultural Federation of Australia (AFA) has recently joined its U.S. counterpart, the **American Federation of Aviculture** (also AFA), on a comprehensive program to save the endangered Red Siskin. The program includes establishing a "healthy" captive population as well as reestablishing the species somewhere within its historic range. The collaborative effort will get underway in early April when representatives from both organizations travel to Venezuela, the home of the only remaining wild siskins, to discuss the plight of the species with local aviculturists and conservationists.

Seven Green-cheeked Amazon Parrots will be released on a private, protected ranch in Mexico this July as part of a long term effort to return confiscated birds back to the wild. The parrots were confiscated by Mexican wildlife authorities. A radio transmitter harness especially designed for Amazon parrots will allow researchers to monitor the parrots' adjustment to the wild. A second release of over 50 parrots, recently confiscated, is scheduled for 1992. The effort is being undertaken by SEDUE (Mexican wildlife authorities), the National University of Tamaulipas-Mexico, and the U.S. based Center for the Study of Tropical Birds, Inc. Additional information on the project can be obtained by faxing CSTB at (512) 828-5911.



“Un Mundo Sin Loros Es Un Mundo Sin Color”

The famous Australian singer Olivia Newton John has recently become an honorary member and supporter of the "Mexican Association for the Rehabilitation and Conservation of Psittacines." Based in Mexico City, with a facility planned for Merida Yucatan, the group recently produced a colorful T-shirt on the theme "Un Mundo Sin Loros Es Un Mundo Sin Color" (a world without parrots is a world without color). The group's board of advisors reads like the "who's who" of the parrot world including Rosemary Low, John Stoodley, Robert Ridgely, Miguel and Rebecca Alvarez del Toro and Jack Clinton-Eitniar.

Photos by Jack Clinton-Eitneier



This Egyptian Vulture was bred at the Oklahoma City Zoo, one of the few American Zoos working with this rare species.

The endangered species list grew by one recently with the addition of the Palm (Hispaniolan) Crow *Corvus palmarus*. Once frequently encountered in the highland pine forests of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the crow is now confined mainly to the mountains of the Dominican Republic. The Palm Crow joins the growing list of island corvids including the Banggai Crow (Indonesia), Flores Crow (Indonesian), Marianas Crow (Guam) and the Hawaiian Crow (USA).

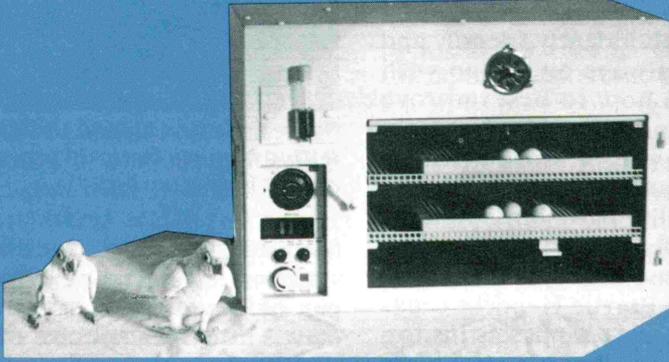
Four captive-bred Egyptian Vultures will soon be arriving in South Africa from Israel. These birds will form the nucleus for a reintroduction program for the species. The vulture is included in the South African Red Data Book - Birds, having only a small population in the Transkei. The reintroduction project is a joint program of the Vulture Study Group and the Endangered Wildlife Trust. The Egyptian Vulture was bred at the Oklahoma City Zoo years ago but is, in general, poorly represented in American zoos. ●



The attractive artwork on the "Asociación Mexicana para la Rehabilitación y Conservación de Psitácidos" T-shirt helps spread the message about their concern for their wonderful native parrots. Their stylized parrot head logo speaks the slogan "A world without parrots is a world without color."

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