

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

FEBRUARY 1992

Bird Breeding Is a Metrozoo Priority

A major goal in simulating the conditions of a Southeast Asian rain forest in the Miami Metrozoo's Wings of Asia exhibit is to induce the birds displayed there to behave as they would in the wild. And the most natural behavior of all is the act of reproduction. Ron Johnson, Metrozoo's curator of birds, is working toward making Wings of Asia a producer of the exotic birds it houses, and notable successes have already been achieved.

The first known captive hatching in the world of the Grosbeak Starling was celebrated in 1984, before Wings of Asia even opened. Since then, other first captive hatchings have occurred, including the Yellow-billed Stork, the Black-naped Oriole, the Greater Coucoul and the Red-wattled Lapwing.

In addition to breeding that takes place inside the aviary,

several off-exhibit areas are being maintained to supplement the breeding efforts.

Johnson's goal of reproduction among the aviary's inhabitants serves the viewing public as well as Metrozoo. Zoo visitors are able to observe the birds' natural behavior of breeding displays and rearing of young. Reproduction is also important to the zoo's aim of conservation, particularly for the endangered species in Wings of Asia, such as the Palawan Peacock Pheasant. Breeding a majority of the birds in the aviary keeps the population steady, and any surplus offspring can be sold to other zoos.

Miami Metrozoo is one of many tours available as part of your registration at the AFA National Convention in Miami Beach from 2-6 August 1992. Plan to attend and hear Ron Johnson speak as well as visit the famous Wings of Asia exhibit. For more information, telephone the AFA office at (602) 484-0931 or Fax (602) 484-0109. See you in Miami Beach! ●

See it while attending the AFA Convention, Miami Beach, FL — Aug. 2-6, 1992

AFA says THANKS to Conservation, Research and General Fund Supporters

**The AFA Conservation, Research and General Committees would like to thank
the following individuals for their generous support.**

Donations received from November 1 through December 31, 1991

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* Memorial for Reene Jakaub



ALL TYPES	ALL TYPES	ENVELOPED SPERMES	BACTERIA (PHAGOCYTES)	FUNGI	POTENTIAL FOR TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE	EFFECTIVE TO HUMANS	POTENTIAL FOR TOXICITY	APPROXIMATE COST OF MATERIALS
1. BLENDED	XXXX	XXXX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	\$0.21
2. BLENDERS	XXXX	XXXX	XX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	\$0.10
3. BODIES	XXXX	XXXX	XX	XXXX	XX	XXXX	XXXX	\$0.10
4. SHOWER	XXXX	XX	XXXX	XXXX	XX	XXXX	XXXX	\$2.50
5. ALTERNATIVE	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	\$3.50
6. CHILDREN	XXXX	XXXX	XX	XX	XX	XXXX	XXXX	\$0.36

52 WEEK RECORD KEEPER

MONTHS	JAN. FEB.		FEB. MARCH		MARCH APRIL		APRIL MAY		MAY JUNE		JUNE JULY		JULY AUG.		AUG. SEPT.		SEPT. OCT.		OCT. NOV.		NOV. DEC.		DEC.			
DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL	DATE	AREA	CHEMICAL

HOW TO USE THIS CHART
 This chart is designed to help you keep a record of the disinfection program in your bird room. It is intended to be used as a guide and not as a substitute for the actual disinfection process. The chart should be filled out by the person responsible for the disinfection program. The chart should be kept in a safe place and not be used for anything else.

A SHORT MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF AFA
 The American Federation of Aviculture is pleased to announce the launch of this new record keeper. This chart is a valuable tool for birdkeepers to track their disinfection efforts and ensure the health and safety of their birds. We encourage all members to use this chart and report back to the organization on their progress.

THE OFFICIAL SPONSOR
AFA
 THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE
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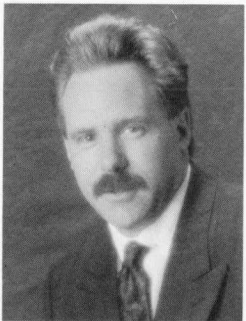
One-Plus-One Participants Receive Birdroom Sanitation Poster

A new membership promotion has recently begun involving AFA members. Each member is encouraged to obtain one new member and will, in turn, then be eligible for a monthly drawing of a \$250.00 gift certificate from Norshore Pets. In addition, ALL participants and recipients will receive a complimentary copy of AFA's new Birdroom Sanitation poster. Produced with financial support of Sun Seed Company, the poster provides valuable information on which chemical to use, on various surfaces, as well as contains an area to record your disinfection program. The poster will be made available to the general membership after the One-Plus-One promotion terminates in March. For an application, refer to the inside back dust cover of this issue (photocopy if necessary). ●

President Announces Three Point Program to Combat Smuggling

During the recently held AFA board meeting, AFA's president Jack Clinton-Eitniar unveiled a newly commissioned drawing by Florida artist Clark S. Frazier. The full color drawing depicts a burlap bag containing several frequently smuggled birds. The artwork will be part of a poster to be distributed along the U.S. border as well as to bird clubs nationwide. The poster, in Spanish and English, states that transporting birds across U.S. borders is illegal. Such actions promote the spreading of avian diseases, are a threat to bird populations in Latin America and are a violation of U.S. and Mexican law. Individuals or clubs can obtain a copy of the poster, for a small fee to offset printing and mailing costs, from the AFA Business Office.

The additional two points include aiding in the return of confiscated parrots to the wild and a Public Service Announcement for television. ●



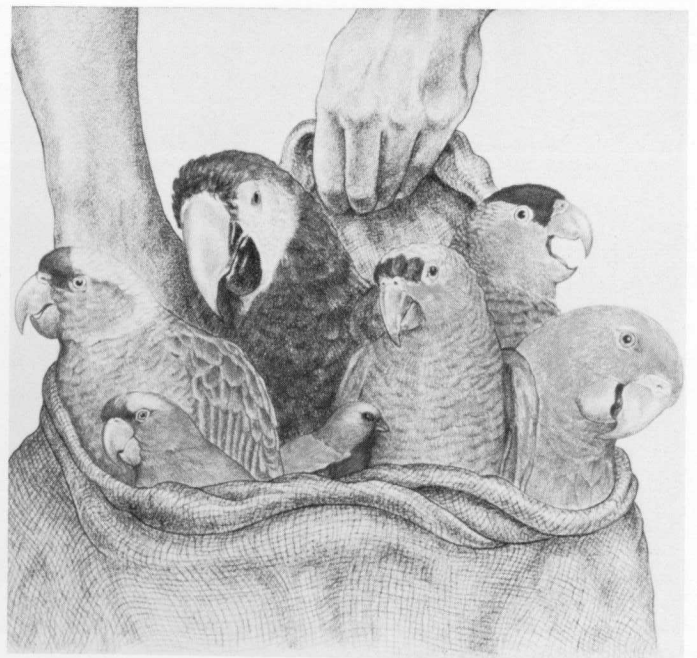
Dr. Clipsham Listed in Veterinary Who's Who

Dr. Robert Clipsham has been selected to appear in the 1991-1992 edition of Who's Who in Veterinary Science and Medicine.

Published every four years, Who's Who in Veterinary Science and Medicine contains biographic profiles of men and women who have made contributions within the entire spectrum of the veterinary profession, including private practice, education, research, public health, government and industry.

Nominations for inclusion come from a wide variety of sources, including leaders of professional, civic and social organizations, academia, industry, and from research by the publication's staff.

The book serves as an authoritative reference source of information about those people deemed to be of reference interest by virtue of the positions of responsibility they hold, and/or by the contributions they have made to their profession and/or the institutions, organizations and communities they serve. Inclusion in the book is based upon data evaluated according to criteria approved by a distinguished Board of Advisors. ●



AFA Board Meets in Washington, D.C.

November 22, 23, 24, 1991

Photos by M. Jean Hessler



Board members hear and discuss contrasting views. L to R: Gary Lilienthal, Ginette Hemley, Michael Sutton, Vicki Fletcher, Aletta M. Long, Kurt Johnson, Jack C. Eitnrear.

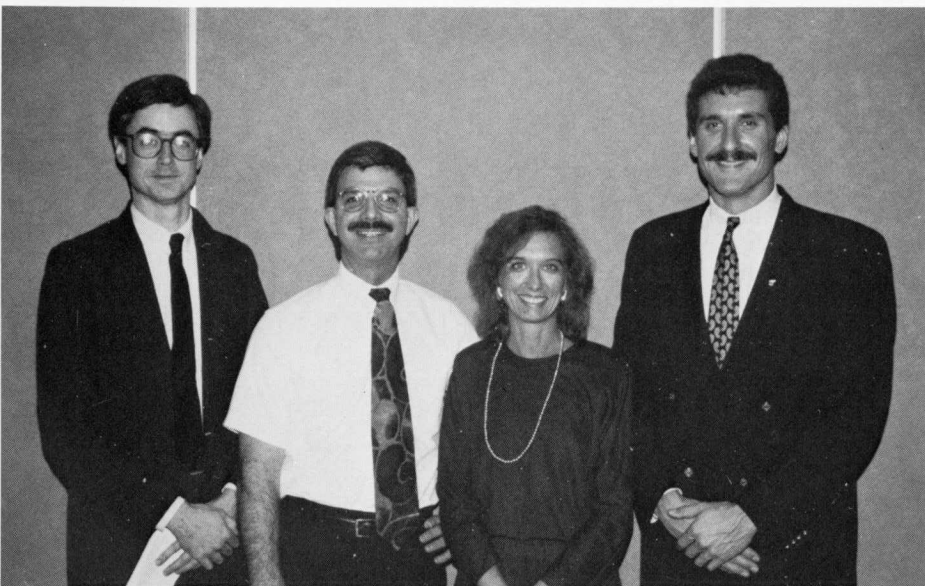
Representatives from the World Wildlife Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Office of Scientific Authority, Traffic/U.S. and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (P.I.J.A.C.) met with the AFA Board during their recently held fall quarterly meeting. Those assembled discussed the status of the Exotic Bird Conservation Act as well as the upcoming C.I.T.E.S. planned for Japan March of 1992. While it does not appear that the submitted bill will be dealt with during the 1991 session, it was stressed that next session would undoubtedly see an even more strict version from the animal protectionist organizations.

Four C.I.T.E.S. proposals were unveiled including elevating several genera of toucans to Appendix 2 and the Striated Lory, Blue-fronted Amazon and Goffin's Cockatoo to Appendix 1. These proposals were submitted by the U.S. delegates along with a proposal to implement a moratorium on the importation of over 40 species of Appendix 2 psittacines until evidence (e.g. field studies) can be conducted to indicate that current levels of trade are not negatively impacting upon wild populations. An additional proposal by the U.S. delegates would limit the number of several species to less than 50 that could be imported. While all Appendix 2 species require documentation that removal from the wild is not jeopardizing the survival of the species, recent importations, according to U.S. authorities, have contained only a signature indicating that evidence exists, when in fact it has been lacking.

Additional board activity included approval of a 1992 operating budget, hiring of a business office director, and approval of providing financial support to offset costs in the 1991 Traffic/AFA Breeding Bird Census. ●



L to R: AFA Legal Counsel Gary Lilienthal, AFA CITES Chairman Jonathan Fink, PIJAC General Counsel Marshall Meyer.



World Wildlife Fund — L to R: James P. Leape, senior vice president, U.S. & Developed Countries Program. Kurt Johnson, TRAFFIC-USA. Ginette Hemley, director, TRAFFIC-USA. Michael Sutton, senior program officer.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service — from the Office of Scientific Authority, Robert R. Gabel, biologist and Susan Sima Lieberman, Ph.D., CITES policy specialist.

Thick-billed Parrot Reintroduction Project Progress Report of 12-23-91

by Terry B. Johnson, Noel F.R. Snyder and Mary A. Franks

After more than a year of preparation, the second phase of efforts to reestablish Thick-billed Parrots in the wild unfolded the day before Thanksgiving when the side of an acclimation cage in the Chiricahua Mountains dropped to the ground, freeing 18 parrots. Two dozen observers sat quietly in blinds close by, and on the surrounding mountain sides. They sat as still as possible to avoid disturbing the captives.

The first bold birds came out slowly, dispersing into the surrounding understory but staying close to the security of the release cage. Finally, the first emerald and scarlet parrot emerged above the tree tops, squawking and flying in circles that rapidly grew larger. In staccato bursts of noise and color, others joined it aloft. Many for the first time knew what it was to really fly, unrestrained by cage wire. Sound a little anthropomorphic? Ask any of the observers stationed on the surrounding hillsides, who maintained quiet only to avoid disturbing the birds. Some had tears running down cheeks, all had grins that threatened to split faces in two. To these earthbound observers, the 18 Thick-bills overhead knew they were free, and gloried in it.

The released birds came from a variety of sources and represented several age classes. The eight older birds had been confiscated by Federal law enforcement officers and were presumed to have been taken from the wild by smugglers. When first sent to us, they showed a strong preference for pine cones as opposed to commercial hookbill diet to which most captive-reared birds are accustomed. Although clearly adult, these birds probably ranged from a few to a dozen or more years of age. The younger released birds had been captive-hatched and reared by cooperators across the United States; some were hatched in 1990, others were a year or two older.

Previous experience demonstrated that the biggest handicaps for released Thick-bills vary with the birds' heritage. Confiscated, wild-caught birds know what pine cones are and how to harvest them in the wild, but their flight muscles have often atrophied in captivity. Captive-hatched, captive-reared birds also tend to have weak flight muscles, but they may fail to recognize or harvest pine cones quickly enough in the wild. Even in the presence of abundant cones, some captive-reared birds don't eat enough to fuel their metabolic fires after release. Weak flight muscles and low energy levels combine to make Thick-bills into easy snacks for predators.

To condition these birds for wild living, we had given them branches with pine cones attached and subjected them to rigorous flight conditioning that had varied in intensity according to the dimensions of each cooperator's cages. Four captive-reared birds from The Avicultural Breeding and Research Center had a wing up in that sense; they came from cages twice or more the size of those of any other cooperator. Regardless, in our smaller, on-site, acclimation pens all the birds flew well and fed voraciously on pine cones, even when offered supplemental hookbill diet.

What cannot be tested adequately in cages, however, is flocking tendency. In nature, Thick-bills fly in tightly knit flocks. This gives added security from predators and the younger birds learn effective feeding and survival techniques from more experienced birds. In a cage, there isn't enough room for one bird to get too far from another, so a lazy bird

doesn't have to work very hard to keep up. Perhaps more importantly, there is no price to be paid for not keeping up.

Some of this group of Thick-bills had been together in flight cages for more than two years. Even newcomers had been with us since late summer, plenty of time to sort out the complex social relationships within a flock and to begin pair bonding. Nevertheless, as soon as the 18 birds were free they flew in all directions, as singles or in groups of two to seven. Over the next three days, ten were lost or recaptured: five were killed by predators, two died of starvation before they could be recaptured, one died of unknown causes, one was lost to radio contact (its status is still unknown), and one captive-reared bird was recaptured when it failed to show any inclination to join the other survivors. Three birds that were lost to predators were first thought to have been wild caught, but now we suspect they were just good cone eaters. After release, they behaved like known captive-reared birds.

The good news is that eight birds survived the initial rigors of adjustment (or readjustment) to the wild and are now flocking cohesively and foraging well. They are being offered supplemental cones at the release cage, with two purposes in mind. The first is to make it easier to keep track of the younger birds to see if they are eating well enough. This has already paid off. Soon after release, on a very cold and rainy day, one bird did not come in to the morning feeding with the rest of the flock. It trailed in a short time later, looking weak and vulnerable. The other birds shoved it aside at the feeding trays, so after they had fed we put out more food. The straggler ate ravenously, then flew away with the flock. When the flock returned that evening, the bird in question looked fit. It has had no further problems.

More releases are planned for the spring, and that is the second reason for supplemental feedings. We hope that by feeding the parrots they can be encouraged to stay close enough to the release pens that future releases can be easily integrated into the existing flock. This will help ensure that newly-released birds have the security and experience of a large flock, thus increasing their chances of surviving the post-release period when they are especially vulnerable to predators.

What about 1990? — Those who have followed this project know that 1990 was a frustrating, disappointing year. The last radio-transmitters on wild birds died in 1989 and it became impossible to monitor the flock. There were no more birds available for release and we will not recapture wild birds to replace transmitters, so there was no way to get new radios out. Slowly the numbers decreased, until the flock was down to three to five birds.

In early summer of 1990, the Thick-bills were again seen in the by now well-known breeding area in the Tonto Basin. Unfortunately, the observations were made by U.S. Forest Service crews fighting Arizona's most devastating forest fire on record, The Dude. Six fire-fighters would lose their lives and the parrots would lose their principal summer foraging area before The Dude was conquered. Even so, sight records continued to come in through the rest of 1990; some were credible, some were not. Birds were seen, usually one at a time, never more than three, in central and southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico and extreme northern Mexico. It seems likely that at least two, perhaps four, spent the early winter in the Chiricahuas. We received regular, if undocumented, reports from west-side drainages there until late November 1990 and from Mexican mountains south and east of the Chiricahuas through most of 1991. Were those birds survivors from our releases? Were they even Thick-bills? We

don't know. Suffice to say, for 1990 there was little concrete good news to offer you. Then a computer crash destroyed the one and only copy of our project mailing list and made it impossible to say anything. Technology is great, right up until it fails.

Despite the turn of events in 1990, we know now that (1) Thick-bills can indeed be released to the wild successfully, and (2) the long-term prognosis for this effort is directly related to availability of captive-reared birds. Every criterion for successful release has been met so far: many released birds have flown, flocked, found food and water, avoided predators, adjusted to summer and winter conditions, and bred. Successful release is thus clearly achievable, but reestablishment is something else. Only through sustained releases will we be able to determine whether reestablishment of a wild population, whether migratory or resident, can be achieved.

Now for some good news and bad news. The release effort has become widely publicized, and the supply of confiscated birds essentially has disappeared. Has the black-market dried up because of the publicity? Have Federal law enforcement priorities shifted to other species, other problems? Perhaps both factors are involved, or perhaps smugglers and their unscrupulous or unwitting clientele have just become more adept at avoiding detection. Regardless, this source of birds is no longer productive and if the release effort has, in fact, helped diminish smuggling, thus pressures on wild birds in Mexico, we are very happy.

As for captive birds, there are two sources. First, unlawfully possessed captives seem to be numerous and widely distributed throughout the United States. Second, many institutions and some private individuals have lawfully possessed Thick-bills, many of which are breeding successfully. Either source could help the release project considerably.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service broke new ground in 1991, when Region 2 Director Mike Spear signed an "amnesty" agreement with Arizona Game and Fish and The Avicultural Breeding and Research Center (ABRC). The agreement allows persons with Thick-billed Parrots of "uncertain" origin (most any euphemism will do) to donate them to this project. Such persons can contact a local Fish and Wildlife Service office or Arizona Game and Fish and arrange for transfer. The donated birds are quarantined before being integrated into the captive-breeding effort at ABRC and eventually at Tyson. Unfortunately, "amnesty" has not unleashed a flood of birds — the total stands at about 20 birds. If it does not produce more very soon, we may not renew the experimental agreement when it expires. Nobody needs unproductive paperwork.

Some zoos also accept donations of "undocumented" Thick-bills, within the constraints of state wildlife laws and under direction from their local Fish and Wildlife Service office. Many zoos will not accept such donations because of the threat of disease, but others have quarantine facilities sufficient to protect against those problems. The Sacramento Zoo (Susan Healy) has been instrumental in coordinating several donations. Sacramento also has the coordination lead for the Thick-billed Parrot Species Survival Plan (SSP). SSPs provide structure for captive breeding efforts, to ensure a healthy mix of genes among the total captive population.

Perhaps the best news in this area is that legally possessed captive thick-bills are beginning to play an important role in the release effort. Both Tyson and ABRC are producing releasable birds, so 1992 promises to be a banner year, with perhaps 20 to 30 captive-reared birds available from them. The annual yield could easily double by 1993, as cooperating zoos and private individuals increase their contributions. As we see which

birds survive release, and surmise why, we will adjust captive-rearing protocols to produce even stronger birds and higher post-release survival rates. It is probably no coincidence that the three captive-reared survivors of the November 1991 release all came from the expansive flight cages at ABRC.

And 1992? — Nine captive-reared birds will arrive in Arizona next month. After flight- and cone-conditioning, they will be released into the wild flock of eight. More releases will occur as birds from the 1991 breeding effort become available. Each release must be timed to avoid periods when (1) predator populations peak (as during migration), (2) pine cones are not available in sufficient quantities, and (3) previously-released birds are likely to be moving from summering to wintering grounds. Will the releases occur, and if so will they be successful? Again, we don't know. But our trusty old computer now has a new hard drive — which is backed up weekly! — and the mailing list has been painfully rebuilt (hopefully not too many names were lost), so updates will again be mailed periodically. Stay tuned.

Contributions — Private donors help make the Thick-billed Parrot Reintroduction Project possible by matching grants from Wildlife Preservation Trust International, the Arizona Heritage Fund, the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff on Arizona's state tax forms, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please send it to: Thick-billed Parrot Project, c/o Terry B. Johnson, Arizona Game and Fish Department, 2221 West Greenway Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4312. ●

The AFA Green-cheeked Amazon Project

The AFA would like to announce that the Green-cheeked Amazon Studbook Registry has now been upgraded to an active Breeding Consortium called "The AFA Green-cheeked Amazon Project"!

The Green-cheeked Amazon is threatened in the wild due to heavy pressures from smuggling. There are currently a sufficient number of birds in both pet owner, and breeder hands to be used as the "founding stock" for this breeding consortium.

The Green-cheek Project will be co-chaired by Ron Holtz of Phoenix, AZ, phone (602) 982-2125 and Sherry Rind of Redmond, WA, phone (206) 869-9212.

Gary Clifton will be the Studbook Keeper. The Green-cheeked Amazon Project also has a newsletter called the "GAP" which will be used as a communication forum to the Green-cheek Project members.

The Green-cheeked Amazon Project has many similarities to the current AFA Red Siskin Project, except that the Green-cheeked Amazon is not currently an endangered bird. Therefore, permit restrictions which apply to endangered birds (i.e. red siskins) will not apply to Green-cheeked Amazons.

How to become a member:

- Anyone who currently has their Green-cheeks registered with the studbook keeper must write Ron or Sherry for an agreement form to participate in the breeding consortium.
- Current owners of Green-cheeks: Please write for an application to participate in this breeding consortium.
- We need birds: If anyone would like to donate Green-cheeked Amazons to this program, contact Ron or Sherry. We especially need females! ●

- Summary of Green-cheeked Amazon Project:
 - founder birds are made up of AFA owned birds (birds which have been donated to, or purchased for, this project).
 - AFA owned birds are placed with qualified individuals.
 - All offspring are closed banded (permanently marked) and are evenly divided between participating individual breeders and the AFA.

—Individuals may use their share of offspring as they wish.

Our first "Breeding Project," The Red Siskin Project deals with preserving an endangered finch. The Green-cheeked Amazon Project concentrates on maintaining a sustained captive-bred population of (potentially endangered) psittacines).

The longer you wait, the more aviculture (and the species targeted for protection) will lose. Time is running out! Aviculturists must pool their collective knowledge and experiences to save the very creatures they love so dearly before these species cease to exist! ●

Bird Clubs Assist in Returning Smuggled Parrots to the Wild

A new program to return confiscated parrots to the wild has been aided by several avicultural clubs/organizations. Thus far, seed and monies have been provided by Long Beach Bird Breeders, Orange County Bird Breeders, the Avicultural Society of America, the American Federation of Aviculture, the Seedcrackers Bird Club of Arizona and Birdie Bordello.

The parrots, mostly chicks, confiscated by Mexican authorities in the border city of Matamores being destined for the U.S., are to be housed at the Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico after which they will be released on private, protected areas in northeastern Mexico that contain small populations of the various species being housed. A small number of each release group will contain radio transmitters so that scientist can monitor the releases success and determine if the parrots are integrated into the local population, leave the area, or are killed by predators. Such radio tracking will, therefore, allow researchers to "fine tune" their methodology.

Any bird club or individual interested in providing funds, seed or equipment to this effort is encouraged to contact the business office at (602) 484-0931. ●

AFA CONVENTION August 2 - 6, 1992

Plan for a hot time in Miami Beach, Florida at the fine and famous Fountainbleu Hotel, Resort and Spa! 20 acres of lush gardens on the beach!

AFA To Initiate Parrotlet Breeding Project

The AFA would be interested in individuals wishing to participate in parrotlet breeding consortiums. We would like to have this consortium cover various species of parrotlets but, initially, we will concentrate on the Blue-winged Parrotlet (native to Argentina).

We are currently discussing arrangements for a possible joint venture with the Forpus Fanciers Group (USA) so that this consortium will have the best chance at getting off to a strong start.

If you currently have parrotlets, we would love to hear from you (see address below)! If you would like to help with a parrotlet breeding consortium as a breeder, or in a leadership position, please contact Judy Landon, AFA Parrotlet Consortium Chair, 25836 Sundown Drive, Eugene, Oregon 97402. ●



A foundation of concrete footing starts the UAT aviary structure on the UAT campus.



AFA's president Jack Clinton-Eitniewar (right) inspects the foundation of UAT's new parrot aviary in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico with Mario Vasquez, UAT's project coordinator. Construction of the aviary was due to financial support provided by several avicultural organizations.

Photos courtesy of Jack C. Eitniewar