



Rosalie Snell with first two plum crowned pionus raised in the United States.

Pionus Parrots in the U.S.

by H.D. "Hank" Brawley
Dallas, Texas

Through the past three years, several lengthy articles have appeared in various publications concerning this genus of birds. All the articles emanate from Great Britain and would lead one to believe that the U.S. parrot breeders are sound asleep. This thought is far from correct. The record should be set straight.

Having raised birds of one kind or another for 62 years now, it seems strange that parrots, of one kind or another, did not capture my attention until 1952. Surgical sexing was unheard of and the only magazine I had access to was one called "All Pets," which usually

devoted two to five pages to cage birds, and that mostly to budgies, canaries and finches.

Only through common sense and years with other birds, was I able to devise what I thought would be suitable living quarters for birds of the parrot families. I wish to show you a black and white picture (color pictures were not common then) of the first pen I constructed in 1953.

We did not use the words "aviaries" or "aviculturists" in those days. We were classed as some "nuts" trying to raise birds in the backyard.

On to Pionus — I first noticed a color

photo of a white crowned pionus in 1979 while thumbing through a small book on parrots. It was captioned as "quite rare in the U.S., little is known regarding this bird."

I was very impressed by the color placements and the large, bare eye ring. I showed it to my wife and she said the thing was downright ugly. Maybe that did it. I told Evelyn that I was going to find some, get a pair and produce some young'ens. Little did I know then what a task it would be but, then again, those of you who know me best, know that determination is one virtue I have.

To begin with, none of the local pet shops had ever heard of the bird. The local zoo curator looked them up and I read all he had; he had never seen one.

I had a WATTS line at my disposal and called the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. That kind gent (it was not Scott) ran it through the computer and said not one was shown in any zoo on the system. Doubts were beginning to form. I spoke to McElvey at the San Antonio Zoo; he suggested I call Bob Berry, the curator at the Houston Zoo. I did that and did I ever get a stiff reception from Dr. Berry, *but* he said he knew of a woman in Houston who had pionus. He would not give me her name or telephone number, indicating that perhaps he could get her to call me — I had all I needed. Brother Bob did not know it but I am known as one of the best skip-tracers in the country. His two remarks did it!

The Houston operator gave me the numbers of the three pet shops in Houston that ran the largest ads in the yellow pages. The second call was it. The man said that Emma Turner was the one I wanted and gave me her number. I called and Emma knew of others, I called all the others and they knew others until, in one afternoon, in all sections of the states, I had located a dozen breeders. None contacted had ever raised one, nor would they even think about selling me birds.

In this manner I ran across Jo Hall who had raised a nest of blueheads in 1978 and she put me on to A.F.A. and *Watchbird*. I believe it was Jo that sent me an old issue. I found pionus mentioned one time; Rick Zimmerman in Michigan was running an ad wanting to buy pionus. Rick was called, he had two pairs of white crowns and finally agreed to let me have a pair. That was the beginning of a long and good friendship.

This was the beginning of the "Pionus Breeders Association." In mid-1980 I wrote to all and suggested the idea for the exchange of infor-

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The first U.S. bred coralbill pionus after fledging.





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

JUNE 1987

AFA Proposes Thick-billed Parrot Project

On December 10, 1986, the American Federation of Aviculture proposed the establishment of a legitimized self-sustaining population of thick-billed parrots in the United States. The proposal is presently under consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and AFA has great hopes for its adoption. The proposal on AFA's part came mainly in response to the uncertain status of thick-bills held in captivity in the United States, some of which quite obviously had entered this country illegally and some of which are legitimate "pre-Act" birds or their offspring. The following is the first portion of the proposal. Due to its length the full proposal will be published in parts in consecutive issues of the *Watchbird*. The purpose for publishing this proposal is to demonstrate AFA's keen interest and concern for conservation programs which it feels are, in light of the situation in today's world of disappearing habitats and killing of avian species as pests, synonymous with aviculture and necessary in order to ensure the survival of many avian species. AFA sincerely appreciates the interest of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in reviewing this program. Needless to say, there are numerous legal and technical issues which will need to be resolved if and before such a program could be adopted and implemented. While some of these issues are difficult ones, AFA is committed to using its energy to find their solution. This proposal not only offers the opportunity to create a consortium for the breeding of an endangered species and a vehicle for prevention of illicit trade in those species, but also presents the unique opportunity for re-establishing and sustaining a psittacine species in the wild in the United States which, according to all reports, is currently extinct in that range. The leadership of AFA is extremely optimistic that this proposal could be one of the foremost psittacine conservation projects in the history of the United States.

Proposal by the American Federation of Aviculture for Establishment of a Legitimized Captive Self-sustaining Population of Thick-billed Parrots in the United States Under a Program to be Monitored by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service ©

I. Introduction

The thick-billed parrot (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) (the "thick bill"), indigenous to Mexico and previously indigenous to the southwestern region of the United States, has, in recent months, become the subject of enforcement

activity by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (the "Service"). The Service believes that thick-billed parrots have been or are being transported into the United States in violation of applicable federal and international law. As a result, in cases becoming known to the Service, thick-billed parrots are being seized and forfeiture proceedings considered. Controversy exists as to whether or not there are legal thick-billed parrots or their offspring within the United States versus those which may have been taken from the wild in the United States in violation of law or transported into the United States from foreign countries in violation of applicable laws. In some cases, the Service is able to identify and take appropriate action against those illegally possessing such species. In other cases the legality of possession is unable to be proved or disproved.

II. Purpose of This Proposal

It is the desire of all persons truly interested in the conservation of species to preserve these species in safe habitats in the wild as well as to establish non-wild, controlled self-sustaining populations ("CSSP"). Therefore, the American Federation of Aviculture ("AFA") as the only national organization of aviculturists dedicated solely to scientific research, education of the public and propagation of avian species hereby requests and recommends that the Service adopt this proposal to grant amnesty to thick-billed parrots currently in the United States. This program would appropriately identify currently possessed thick-billed parrots and guard against future unlawful transportation and possession of protected species from the wild. In addition, it would create a CSSP for the purpose of contributing to and maintaining diverse gene pools, preserving the species out of the wild in the event that the species were ever to become extinct in the wild for, as aviculturists and the Service recognize, habitat destruction, predation, hunting for food and poisoning as pests now threaten numerous endangered species with extinction in their wild habitats. Moreover, the program is designed to provide for a pool from which captive reared thick-billed parrots may be available for reintroduction of the species into safe habitats in the United States thereby re-establishing a native wild population. Due to the unique nature of the thick-billed as to its range and status as a previously native U.S. species, AFA believes that no precedent will be set as to legitimization of illegally possessed species. Additionally, due to the fact that we are only dealing with members of a species currently in this country, we are not suggesting amnesty for the importers of illegal shipments of endangered species, and no such proposal is hereby made or to be inferred.

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III. The Proposal

Subsequent to adoption of this Proposal, the Service will announce, in the manner set forth in the procedural section below, an amnesty for thick-billed parrots currently in the United States, except in those cases where the Service is able to prove that specific members of this population entered the United States illegally and such species have already been seized by the Service for this purpose. Amnesty is a proven tool for cases in which the public interest, on balance, will be better served than the loss due to the short-term enforcement concession. This is truly such a case. The amnesty program shall be for the purpose of identifying currently possessed species so that additional members of this species illegally entering the United States after the identification process is completed are easily identified and so that a CSSP may be established within the United States. AFA will assist the Service through all means at AFA's disposal, including, without limitation, consideration of programs through its well-funded avian research or conservation committees and through dissemination of information through its official publication *The Watchbird* and press releases to its 120 member clubs and to other avicultural publications. AFA shall jointly, with the Service, be the sponsor of the amnesty program.

IV. Procedure

- A. The Service and AFA will announce through the *Federal Register*; if appropriate, Notice of Information from the Service, press releases jointly from the Service and AFA and publication in *The Watchbird* a designated thirty-day period commencing within a reasonable time after all of such publications during which any party then possessing one or more thick-billed parrots may appear with that or those birds at designated points staffed by the Service or its agents or designees, including licensed veterinarians who are members of Association of Avian Veterinarians, if the Service deems appropriate, (the "Designees") in as many places as practical throughout the United States.
- B. Upon presentation of the thick-billed parrots to the Designees of the Service, a butt-end "hard" band shall be applied to each parrot. Bands similar to those used by the United States Department of Agriculture in its quarantine program administered by the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service will be used. Each band will have a coded number which will be recorded with the name and address of the person possessing that bird and to whom such band is issued. Bands may not be removed except as provided below.¹
- C. At the time and place of banding, the party presenting the bird(s) for banding will be required to produce a Captive Wildlife Permit ("CWP") issued to that person by the Service or to complete an application for that permit, which will be made available at the time and place of banding, and forwarded to the Service within fourteen (14) days after banding. If it is determined based upon standard review procedures (not including the fact that the applicant possessed a thick bill prior to the amnesty) that that person is not eligible for a CWP, then that person shall be required within ninety (90) days after a final determination of ineligibility to transfer the thick bill(s) to a person holding a CWP and who must become a member of the Consortium described below. Such disposition must be reported in writing to the Service within said ninety (90) day period. Failure to accomplish this will result in the Service's having the

right to seize that bird (those birds) and commence forfeiture proceedings.

- D. No person presenting thick-billed parrots for banding will have any proceedings commenced against them or the thick-bills as a result of their possessing such thick-bills, except as otherwise contemplated in Paragraph C of this section, and no person presenting thick-bills for banding shall be required to disclose the source from or means by which their thick-bills were obtained.
- E. All banding certificates and unused bands shall be returned to the Service by the Designees within seven (7) days after the end of the banding period.

V. The Thick-billed Consortium

At the time of banding, each person presenting members of the species for banding will be required to become and remain a member of a "Thick-billed Consortium." The rules and agreements for the Consortium will, if this proposal is adopted, be drafted by the Service and AFA. The Consortium will basically provide as follows:

1. No party shall sell or transfer any thick-billed parrot in its possession to any other party unless such transferee holds a CWP and is a member of or joins the Consortium.
2. Each year every member of the Consortium will report on prescribed forms to the Service delineating all activity with respect to the species possessed under the Consortium Agreement. Such report shall also be used to satisfy the CWP reporting procedures as to this species;
3. Every offspring produced from any pair of thick-billed parrots within the Consortium shall be held subject to the rules of the Consortium and shall be banded with a closed-ring band which will be obtained from the Service and be coded in a manner prescribed by the Service so as to identify the member of the Consortium (see Note 1);
4. Of offspring produced by any Consortium member during each year (tbd)% may be retained or transferred by the owner in the manner prescribed above and in the Consortium Agreement and (tbd)% of the offspring shall be the property of the Service, to be maintained by the Consortium member at its expense, and may be claimed by the Service within (tbd) years after their hatching is reported by the Consortium member. In the event the Service fails to claim such species within the prescribed period, they shall become the property of the Consortium member to be held or disposed of in accordance with the terms of the Consortium Agreement. (tbd = to be determined by the Service and AFA at the time the program is drafted).
5. A Consortium Management Board comprised of persons designated by and from the Service and AFA including members of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums and from the Association of Avian Veterinarians shall be established to maintain Consortium records.²
6. Any member of the Consortium found to possess illegal thick-billed parrots or who fails or neglects in any material way to abide by the Consortium Agreement shall, in addition to other penalties prescribed by law, be removed from the Consortium and required to dispose of their legal stock of thick bills in a manner prescribed in the Consortium regulations.

VI. Enforcement

From and after the close of the amnesty banding period, any non-Consortium thick-billed parrots found in the

United States shall "per se" be deemed to have been obtained unlawfully and shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture proceedings. AFA believes that the amnesty program will enable the Service to have far better control and enforcement over the thick-billed population in the United States currently estimated to be between 200 and 400 members of the species, many of which are producing pairs and domestically-bred stock. Through the amnesty program the Law Enforcement Division of the Service will be assisted by those private citizens holding legitimized members of the species whose own economic, pecuniary and personal interests will be served by reporting any unbanded species to the Service in order to keep their thick-billed parrots among the exclusive group from which future populations will be drawn. In addition Consortium members will have tremendous incentive against possessing illegal thick-billed parrots due to the penalties imposed. From time to time, AFA through its official publication *The Watchbird* announces the telephone numbers staffed by the Service to be called to identify illegal species in the United States. Strictly from a selfish point of view of wanting to protect their own economic holdings and preserve a disease-free population, AFA believes Consortium members and other aviculturists will report violators to the Service. At this time there exists a disincentive to report thick-billed parrots as the natural instinct of even dedicated, law-abiding aviculturists is to promote the establishment of CSSPs. Additionally, at this time no one knows which of the thick-billed parrots now possessed are legal and which are not. Furthermore, there currently exists a great deal of confusion among aviculturists as to the legality of possessing thick-bills with a CWP. All of these considerations are further reasons for adoption of this Proposal. As with every program there exists potential for abuses, but AFA feels that these potential abuses would be minimized by the controls imposed. Additionally, the implementation of the proposal would have many enforcement and conservation benefits including the establishment of an identifiable, legal flock and expansion of a CSSP for preservation of the species and, hopefully, re-introduction into a safe habitat. The only conceptual potential for abuse is that someone holding a pair of legitimized thick-billed parrots could allege breeding successes by unlawfully obtaining *extremely* young offspring of this species and banding them with closed-ring bands; however, under the Consortium there are reporting requirements, and the Service would have reasonable inspection rights of premises and could demand some kind of reasonable proof of breeding successes. Also, the avicultural community is extremely small in terms of each member's knowledge of the other one's activities even though the community itself in the United States is quite large population-wise. Breeding successes are usually known and able to be documented. Overall, the Proposal eliminates far more of the potential abuses than might remain. Finally, as a by-product of this proposal, if it is wished, the Service could use the Consortium as a resource to place and control any seized and forfeited thick-billed parrots. This proposal poses viable solutions for most of the legal problems relating to thick-billed parrots.

VII. Banding and Removal of Bands, Death of Consortium Species (see note 1)

In some cases, for protection of health, safety and welfare of members of the species, bands applied under the amnesty program or to domestically-bred members of the Con-

sortium may have to be removed. The Consortium agreement will require that except in the event of imminent danger to the life or physical well-being of the species, such band may only be removed by a licensed veterinarian who shall provide the Consortium member with written documentation of removal and description of the reason for removal along with the band so removed. Where removal by the owner is required due to imminent threat to the life or welfare of the species, that owner shall be required to bring the species and the band to a licensed veterinarian within seventy-two hours after the removal and justify the reason for removal and obtain the certificate referred to above. In all cases the owner shall retain the original certificate and band with the species from which it was removed. In the event of the disposition of the species, the owner shall be required to transfer the certificate and band with it. In every event the Consortium member shall forward a copy of the band removal certificate to the Service within seven days after its issuance. Certificates shall be in the form prescribed by the Service in the Consortium Agreement. A similar process for deceased members of the species, requiring presentation of a corpse to a licensed veterinarian, completion of a certificate and band removal will be employed. In the case of death of a member of the species, surrender of the certificate and the band to the Service shall be required.

VIII. Summary

This Proposal affords the Service and AFA a unique opportunity to commence an historic conservation program with the additional benefit of enabling the Service to use grassroots participation to establish, at the expense of the participating aviculturists, a controlled, self-sustaining population of an endangered species, now extinct in the wild in the United States, for re-introduction into appropriate and safe habitats in the United States. Furthermore, this Proposal affords the Law Enforcement Division of the Service another unique opportunity to identify endangered species, appropriately issue permits for them and establish a control over this species currently held in the United States for the purpose of combatting illegal commerce in this species. Never before and perhaps never again has such an opportunity existed. It would truly be a shame to see all of the potential benefits to be derived from adoption of the foregoing Proposal lost due to what AFA considers to be minimal concessions and risks. As was so appropriately noted in a recent Office of Technological Authority publication, AFA, with its grassroots resources, offers a true opportunity for retrieving and sustaining species from extinction. If this observation is truly to be a reality, then let it begin here.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary P. Lilienthal
National Legal Counsel for
American Federation of Aviculture, Inc.

FOOTNOTES

1. AFA does not advocate or promote banding of large parrots. The potential for harm is sometimes great. However, in this case, weighing the alternatives, AFA hopes the need to establish an identifiable group of one unique endangered species to enable aviculture to establish and preserve a CSSP will outweigh the risks. In addition, a safeguard for this one exception is provided elsewhere in this Proposal. AFA feels that this banding experiment should be closely monitored to insure the safety of the birds.
2. It is worthy of note that the Sacramento (CA) Zoo has attempted to establish a stud book for thick bills, and their efforts, knowledge and participation may be of value to the program.

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Illinois, 88 birds; Cincinnati, Ohio, 54 birds; Boston, Massachusetts, 74 birds; Germantown, Tennessee, 620 birds; and Maryland, 147 birds. The indemnity for these 1,025 birds was \$71,777. It is expected that additional depopulations will occur in Montauk, New Jersey; Herndon, Virginia; Orlando, Florida and Melbourne, Florida.

The second instance of VVND involved Jamul Pet Ranch near San Diego, California which shipped four young yellow-naped Amazons to New York, Massachusetts, Colorado and Maryland and had secondary shipments to California, New Mexico, Colorado, Washington, Nevada, Hawaii, Arizona, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Georgia. As a result, premises in California, New York and Massachusetts were depopulated for a total of 220 birds with an indemnity of \$60,939.

Dr. Wesley Garnett, acting chief staff veterinarian of the Emergency Field Operations of the USDA-APHIS, stated, "I am encouraged that we seem to have the outbreak contained; we have had no spread to secondary sources from the original shipments."

USDA-APHIS is making every effort to combat the introduction of VVND through smuggled birds and Dr. Gary P. Combs, assistant director of USDA-APHIS domestic programs has asked for the help of aviculturists and others in the exotic bird fancy for suggestions in eliminating the smuggling of yellow-naped Amazons and the resultant VVND. Please cooperate in this effort to eliminate VVND by sending your suggestions to Dr. Gary P. Combs, Room 750, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782, or phone (301) 436-8097.

Illinois Bill 373 Killed

On March 19 Senator Roger Keats introduced, into the Illinois State General Assembly, Senate Bill 373 which was an amendment to the Wildlife Code. A portion of this bill read, "*Live wild birds which were not born in captivity shall not be bought, sold or bartered in this state.*" The bill was referred to the Senate Agriculture and Conservation Committee.

Thanks to prompt action on the part of A.F.A. midwestern regional vice president Tony Silva and Craig Hendee, large numbers of aviculturists and retail pet dealers were alerted and urged to express their views to the bill's sponsor. Because of the large number of people expressing opposition to the bill, Senator Keats has decided to "pull the bill" and not proceed with it. A member of his staff stated "The senator was given bad information."

Pennsylvania Alerted to Proposal of Wild Bird Import and Sale Control Act

It's not all good news. I have been informed that a bill known as the Wild Bird Importation and Sale Control Act is about to be introduced in the Pennsylvania state legislature. As written, the bill would go into effect November 1, 1988 after which only captive-bred birds would be permitted for sale. Although breeding establishments would be able to import birds into their breeding stock until November of 1991, a bird breeder's permit would be required.

With reference to the Model State Regulation for Control of Zoological Animals proposed by the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, a second draft of these regulations is being prepared for distribution tentatively set for June 1. Mr. Peter K. Swiderek, research coordinator for the study, states, "We have received more than 300 written responses and I have personally reviewed every single written comment; Dr. Nettles and I are very carefully considering all the comments in the preparation of the second draft." He stated further that he wants to work through organizations which, he hopes, will poll their members. He currently has a mailing list of over 500 names.

CITES To Hold 6th Biennial Conference July 12-24, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Ninety-six member nations will convene in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada July 12-24, 1987 to review the effectiveness of international regulation of world commerce in wildlife as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) begins its sixth biennial conference.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora seeks to regulate the trade in hundreds of species of animals and plants by establishing management and scientific authorities in every member nation and requiring that documentation accompany international shipments of designated species or of products made from these. Such documents cannot be issued unless a scientific authority first determines that trade would not be detrimental to the survival of the species. The agreement complements U.S. laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act that also regulate trade in endangered species and other wildlife.

CITES establishes three classifications of species it protects. Protected species are listed in appendices to the treaty: Appendix I contains animals and plants in greatest danger of extinction; Appendix II identifies species not presently facing extinction but which could become so if trade is not carefully monitored and regulated; Appendix III contains species that may not be threatened at all but for which certain nations have requested international assistance in controlling trade.

Although specific changes in the CITES appendices have not yet been proposed for the Ottawa meeting it appears that a recommendation will be made to continue a ban on all trade in CITES-controlled species with Bolivia and to impose a ban on trade with Paraguay because of the continuing problem of illegal trade in protected species from these South American nations.

One item under consideration concerns the transport of live species, specifically that permittees should be required to prepare and ship live specimens in accordance with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animal Regulations and that air carriers not accept for shipment young incapable of feeding themselves. A complete summary of the provisional agenda for the sixth regular meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora appeared in the January 13, 1987 *Federal Register*. ●

President's Message

by Jerry Jennings
Woodland Hills, California

This is the season for yellow napes of dubious origin — a time when smuggled birds from Mexico are offered for sale at "great savings" posing a serious risk to the health of your birds and yourself. In the past few weeks we have already seen a serious outbreak of VVND involving twenty-five states and resulting in the depopulation of a number of collections. Not only can we expect Newcastle disease from these illegal birds, they also carry psittacosis, a human health threat.

The illegal importation of birds from Mexico is a continuing activity, which seems to reach its peak every spring when babies are most abundant. Consequently, prices are at their lowest for such species as yellow naped, double yellow headed, tres Marie, and Mexican red headed (green checked), Amazons as well as military macaws, halfmoon conures, and green parrots, which is one reason why there is an illegal trade. Always look for a USDA leg band or know your breeder if the birds are captive bred. Smugglers pay next to nothing for their birds and their willing customers are only too eager to "get a good deal, too good to be true."

Unfortunately, deals "too good to be true" usually are. In the end, the buyer usually pays dearly, though most frequently only with a dead bird, behind which the seller does not stand. That's if the buyer is "lucky"! "Bad luck" usually means several other of the buyer's birds get sick and die, while "no luck at all" usually means the USDA has paid a visit and destroyed the buyer's entire collection that may have taken years to build.

Other deals too good to be true come from people offering birds at exceptionally low prices, or in trade at a good barter exchange. Within the past two years a hyacinth macaw scam operated out of Texas wherein the con men placed ads in distant, out of state newspapers offering hyacinths, released from a "university research program" at under \$1,500 each — "please send deposit." Many were the eager buyers who lost their money. The fuel that drives this machine is GREED — plain and simple. Greed on the part of the seller to make a quick buck, and greed on the part of the buyer to save a lot of "dough."

It is remarkable how often I hear from our members that they bought a sick bird which died shortly after arrival and the seller would not stand behind their wares, even when the post mortem diagnosis was psittacosis or VVND. Or, the buyer sent his money and never received the promised goods. Frequently, in these cases the seller is nowhere to be found.

Although I am personally a believer in the adage "you get what you pay for" and "caveat emptor," the buying and selling of birds poses obstacles and risks not easily overcome. In the light of such circumstances the AFA should help its members ascertain who is reputable and who is not, in the marketplace.

As most members know, AFA publishes notices concerning various people who have been convicted of smuggling. Although a worthy service, these notices are often forgotten or not readily available to new members. Therefore and henceforth, AFA will provide a new service to aid the membership.

If you have concern about the integrity of a seller, whether or not they are a *Watchbird* advertiser, you may contact the AFA business office by phone and inquire if: 1)

said seller has been convicted of other crimes involving birds or moral turpitude, or 2) if said seller has been implicated in any scam involving mail fraud or theft. Further, if VVND is active, inquirers will be provided the names of bird dealers identified by the USDA as having been the source of the VVND outbreak. Please call the AFA office at (213) 372-2988.

This service, although it will reduce the risk, will not totally eliminate it. Therefore, you should "know your seller." If the seller is unknown to you, ask for references or ask your friends in aviculture if they have dealt with this person.

You also may help AFA keep our list updated and our service effective by providing us the names of people known to you who have been convicted of smuggling or theft. And, if you have had questionable dealings resulting in harm to you, please refer these to our ethics committee chaired by Trudi Dam, (813) 422-3772.

The following is reprinted from
the May 1987 ASA Bulletin:

President's Message

by Dick Schroeder
Avicultural Society of America

A WARNING!

There seems to be an "element" in aviculture that preys on other aviculturists! It happens by thievery, misrepresentation or plain old rip-off.

The following is a true story. For your protection, the names have NOT been changed.

Early in March '87 I received a phone call from a "southern gentleman," Charles Young, by name, asking if I could help identify a toucan he had recently purchased. He had seen my ad in *Bird World* magazine advertising toucans for sale.

The bird was described to me and I informed Mr. Young that it was a plate-billed mountain toucan. He thanked me and, after a short discussion of what types of birds we kept, hung up.

Several hours later he called again asking if I was interested in this bird. I was, but since they are rare and worth about \$1,000 each, I couldn't afford it. No problem, says Mr. Young — he'll trade me for a pair of sun conures. I had mentioned previously that I raised them. Mr. Young agreed to this arrangement.

Mr. Young has a good knowledge of airline schedules. He lives in Water Valley, Mississippi, and the nearest airport to him is in Memphis, Tennessee. His suggestion was to work out an arrangement to pick up my birds and ship his to me at the same time. Now, not being totally stupid, I knew he could receive my conures without sending me anything. But, since the toucan was of greater value and more important to my avicultural interests than a pair of sun conures, I took the chance.

No problem. The plate-billed toucan arrived on schedule. In fact, Mr. Young even phoned me the airbill number after shipping. He called the next day to see if the bird arrived all right — and to tell me how nice the sun conures were.

A week later Charles Young called again. Seems he's found five plate-bills — from an employee who used to work for a South American fruit company. He made it sound very plausible. Did I want all five? Well, maybe; how much? He said he had to have a hand fed scarlet macaw plus approximately \$1,000 value in other birds. Mr. Young did not want to take money.

We made shipping arrangements as before. I purchased a wonderful tame and talking seven month old scarlet macaw. To round out my end of the deal I had to include two pairs of softbills — fairy blue birds and lilac breasted rollers.

The macaw and softbills were shipped on the same flight schedule as the sun conures of the first arrangement. As before, Mr. Young called me with the airbill number of his shipment to me. Before he left the airport he even told me how he had boxed the toucans and what he had been feeding them.

Of course, no toucans ever arrived! Mr. Young's phone is out of service and his P.O. Box is in the name of Lonnie Williams.

I've since discovered that Charles Young (*remember that name!*) owes several thousands of dollars to zoos all over the country as well as a few private aviculturists.

I've reported this to the F.B.I. as well as the U.S. Postal Inspector. What will happen? Who knows. Mr. Young is still in business. His phone works when he wants it to. *And*, he is offering, just this week, those same plate-billed toucans to someone here in southern California. Beware!

Another scam has recently come to light involving the same character shipping out of Memphis, Tennessee, this time using the name of Jim McGonigal. Arrangements were made to ship two pairs of plate-billed mountain toucans in exchange for one pair of red-capped parrots and one pair of Princess of Wales. The AFA member shipped his pair of red caps and Princess to McGonigal. When his awaited toucan shipment arrived, the contents of the box was three mallard ducks! ●



Chris Christman, visiting a red tailed hawk that drew a crowd at the booth for Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation Foundation, Phoenix, Arizona.

Members in Action

by Chris Christman
Garden Grove, California

March 6-8, '87 — PIDA (Pet Industry Distributors Association), Tampa, Florida, Curtis Hixon Convention Center. This was AFA's first participation in this trade show. A hearty thank you is extended to association director Brent Council for donation the booth space to AFA. The opportunity for AFA to be represented at this show was beneficial to both AFA and PIDA. AFA gained thirty new members plus \$1,100 from materials sold at the booth. Many retail stores expressed an interest in carrying *The Watchbird* in their shops and the booth's supply of *Watchbird* back issues and veterinarian seminars were fast moving items. Valuable contacts with industry leaders and future *Watchbird* advertisers was an additional benefit. The Tampa AFA booth

volunteers were enthusiastic and eager to do next year's show. Those who worked with me and volunteered their time for AFA are: Phyllis and Chuck Martin, Karen Mylin, Ruth Hanessian, Sandra Page, Roger Kenny and Dick Clarkson.

March 15, '87 — Everybody's Bird Mart, Pomona (L.A.) Fair Grounds, California. This one-day affair netted new memberships and approximately \$400 for the AFA treasury. Along with myself, Aletta Long, Jean Hessler, Jerry Jennings, Art North, Pat Benoit and Reene Jakaub volunteered their time for the AFA booth. Again, the exposure was very good, generating long range advertising interests and cash from sales of material.

March 29, '87 — NRPSGA National Retail Pet Stores and Groomers Association, Holiday Inn, La Mirada, South Gate, California. This was an annual banquet for NRPSGA members and guests. The invitation was extended to me by way of participation in last year's WWPSA trade show. The NRPSGA is a local (southern California) subsidiary of WWPSA (Western World Pet Supply Association). Ira Lippman, Burbank, California, was spokesman for the group and expressed interest in working with AFA by presenting bird care seminars and joining hands to combat legislation harmful to both our groups' interests.

April 11, '87 — AFA Bird Care and Training Seminar, San Francisco, California. This was the first of its kind for the "bay area." Laurella Desborough chaired the event and got it off to a good start. Dr. Lynn Dustin, avian specialist, San Francisco, CA, and Sally Blanchard, bird consultant, Alameda, CA, delivered the two-part information packed program. Laurella's careful monitoring indicated a great number of attendees were the results of promotion through pet stores and veterinarians in that area. This "first for the area" paid for itself, had a profit for AFA, and brought in more new members. Due to stimulated interest, a fall '87 seminar is being planned for the same area. Dr. James M. Harris, avian medical specialist, and Tony Lizotte, bird trainer, are scheduled to speak.

Future Scheduled Trade Shows and Seminars

June 18-20, '87 — APPMA, Washington D.C., Sheraton Hotel

June 28, '87 — Everybody's Bird Mart, Pomona (L.A.) Fairgrounds, Bldg. No. 4, California

July 18-20, '87 — WWPSA, Long Beach, CA. Convention Center

August, 22, 23, '87 — APPMA, Columbus, Ohio, Ohio Center/Hyatt Regency

September 19, 20, '87 — PIDA, Arlington, TX, Arlington Convention Center

September 20, '87 — OCBB, Orange County Bird Breeders 6th Annual Fair, O.C. Fairgrounds, Bldg. No. 10, Costa Mesa, CA

October 24, 25, '87 — WWPSA, Phoenix, AZ, Civic Center/Hyatt Regency

Sept. or Oct. (date to be announced) — Fall AFA Seminar, Concord, CA.

(Contact chairperson Laurella Desborough, (415) 372-6174, for details.)

Do you know of a national or large local trade show at which the AFA should be represented? Would you like to participate in a trade show in your area? Please contact the AFA business office, (213) 372-2988. ●



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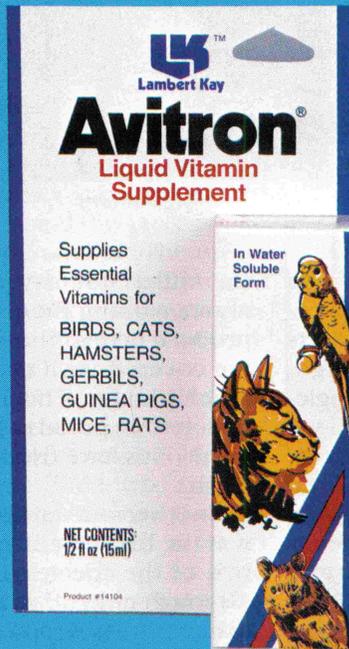
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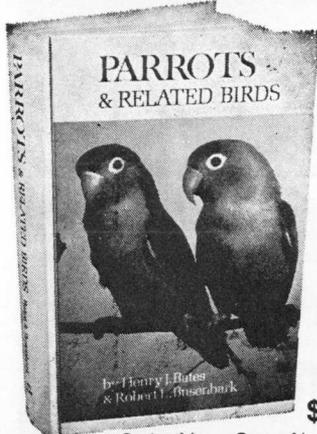
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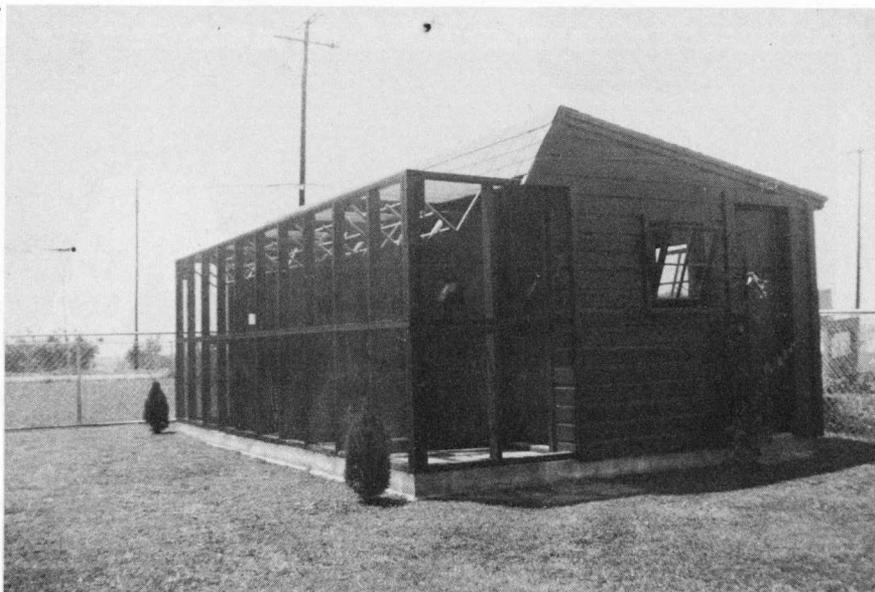


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National Parrot Association

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Photo by Hank Brawley



Hank Brawley's 1953 vintage aviary.

mation and stock to prevent inbreeding and avert what seems to have happened, to a large extent, with parakeets and lovebirds. Thirty years ago, although stock was scarce, the jungle-bred peachface lovebirds that we worked with were almost as large as pionus. Now, the commercially bred ones for sale in pet shops are about as large as a man's thumb. This is the result of the money-hungry commercial breeders who work their birds to death plus allowing inbreeding.

Back to pionus. After I sent notices to the different magazines on the market, the club continued to grow. I operated the association, with a regular monthly newsletter, until January 1, 1985 at which time I gave the whole outfit to Linda Sun, 10062 Hedrick Avenue, Riverside, California 92503. She has since done a remarkable job. Although we have never advertised the thing, the membership is over 250 and in seven foreign countries.

Of the eight species of this bird, we have successfully bred seven. The white crown, Maxamillian, and bluehead are usually for sale (in season) but we are holding back on the more rare varieties in order to get the stock more well established. Most of the Central American countries and the northern part of South America are the native habitat. The U.S. is not currently doing too well, politically, with a number of these, so they cut off our supply of stock birds of the rarer species.

Only this year (1986), Robert and Rosalie Snell of Sacramento, California successfully produced the first recorded nest of the plum crowned pionus, *P. tumultuosus*. This species nests high in

the Andes Mountains in cold temperatures making them very difficult to produce here in the states. The chicks are covered with thick white down, much like fur. The Snells have every reason to be proud of this forward step. Many of us have tried for years for this result.

Another outstanding achievement was the first breeding recorded in the U.S. of the species, coralbill pionus. Although rather downy, the chicks are not nearly as furry as the plums. These corabill pionus, *P. sordidus coralinus*, were hatched and raised by Pete Cowan of Bradenton, Florida in the spring of 1986.

More and more people are becoming turned-on to this medium-sized bird because of the very gentleness it shows, its adaptability to people, and the fact that it is not too difficult to breed if the project is approached properly. They

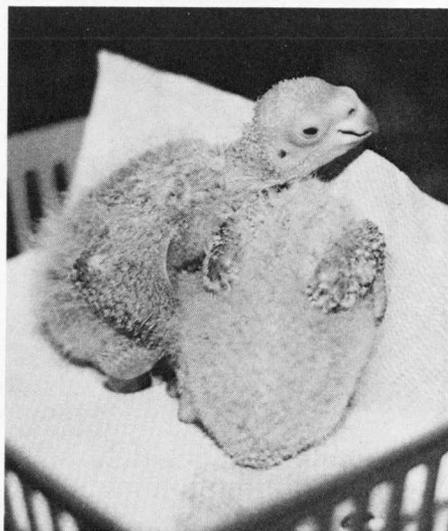


Photo by Pete Cowan

First coralbill chicks at twenty days of age.

are usually quiet as compared to Amazons and cockatoos. An aviary bred, handfed youngster is a real joy to own and shows much affection.

The club's aim now, of course, is to finally have all of our stock to be aviary bred, domestic birds. If a pair of such is properly handled they begin to nest at 24 months of age or less. There are recorded breedings from 18-months-old birds.

Generally speaking, if young imports are used, the usual time of the first nest is around 36 months. This is no absolute. Birds breed depending a great deal on how they are treated. The gentler the bird, the quicker the results.

A marvelous book is written regarding this genus. In fact, I believe it to be the best specialty book I have ever seen. John and Pat Stoodley, very experienced with pionus, authored this piece for us. It can be obtained from Dale Thompson of California, his ad is continually in this magazine. To the novice or anyone else, this book is a must for you if you are getting into pionus breeding.

As a huge demand for the birds developed, all the importers and wholesalers in the country were contacted. Most of them treated me like a bad case of poison ivy; however, I found a few that sensed the business potential in what I was trying to do. I would give a good estimate of what could be moved and in what quantities. They began to get them for me and I advised through the newsletter, what we had on the way and approximate prices. It worked out like a charm.

One fellow even flew to Surinam, got hooked up with a Dutch vet there, and they gathered up about 170 duskie pionus, *P. fuscus*, placed them in holding pens for nearly 60 days to acclimate them to people and feed before shipping. In that accommodation to the birds, their loss ratio was cut to the very minimum. Smart operator!

I could go on for days with this, but I do have one more comment. Pionus are very territorial. Some of the trappers I have spoken with in foreign countries explain that some species are rare in captivity because it is not economically feasible for a trapper to travel vast distances and perhaps only capture ten or 12 birds of the species being sought. It makes sense.

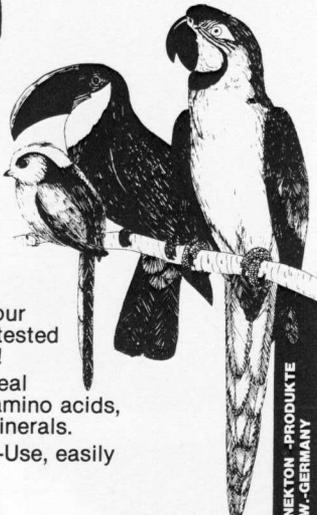
Now you know why the pionus have moved to the forefront in the last six years and perhaps understand the work that the club members have put into the project. It did not happen by accident. ●

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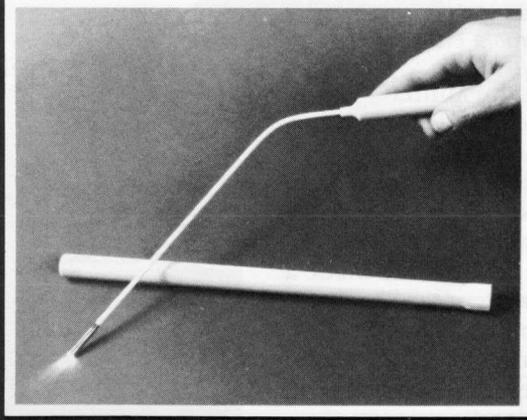
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