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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Dr. Richard E. Baer
 Groveport, Ohio*

Since its inception, the American Federation of Aviculture has been dedicated to the conservation and propagation of bird wildlife.

A.F.A. supports sound regulations that protect wild as well as captive-bred birds. It is in accord with the legislators who write these laws and with the conservationists, ecology groups, and humane societies who propose them.

The Federation is against the arbitrary or needless destruction of avian fauna anywhere.

It is opposed to the arbitrary killing of illegal birds seized from smugglers by custom officials. The needless slaughter of these birds still continues. This is inhumane and senseless. A responsible program of quarantine followed by their release through auction would save all of these birds.

It is the perpetrators of the smuggling crimes that should be severely punished, not the innocent victims!

A.F.A. is rightfully concerned. All conservationists and humane groups should be concerned. This mutual solicitude should unite us in common cause to remedy this wrong.

As president of A.F.A., I stand ready to meet with the representatives of any and all interested parties to stop this needless destruction of wildlife.

Perhaps the cooperation between A.F.A. and other groups in contesting the inhumane treatment of these confiscated birds might lead to a better understanding of each other's objectives and to the establishing of common goals which we can

attain by working together.

If enough clamor is raised by interested organizations operating together, both nationally and internationally, and if enough united political action is brought to bear, even the wanton and indiscriminate extermination of bird wildlife in other parts of the world can be suppressed.

A recent article from Australia gives account of one farmer there who alone poisoned over a thousand cockatoos to rid his property of these birds which were in plague proportions. The man stated that three out of five district farmers follow the practice of spreading poison at the time of crop sowing to destroy these pest birds. The yearly cockatoo destruction must be in the tens of thousands!

While such birds may be pest populations in their native country, can anyone condone this inhumane mass slaughter of bird wildlife? Such a policy is totally indefensible and abhorrent.

Would not a controlled program of ethical harvesting of these surplus birds be the humane and responsible solution to this problem?

Nature is a gift for us to enjoy; not destroy. Here is a renewable natural resource that is being wasted — a bounty that could provide a sizeable revenue to the country concerned and a source of joy to the aviculturist.

Can we, the A.F.A., the conservationists, ecology groups, and humane societies, turn our backs on such inhumane massacres and do nothing to conserve nature and establish humane standards for bird wildlife in all parts of the world? ■