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by Jerry Jennings

NEW INJURIOUS WILDLIFE PROPOSAL PUBLISHED

The U.S. Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service announced its latest attempt to regulate the importation of wildlife on Monday, March 7, 1977.

The appearance of the proposal in the Federal Register marks the third time in little more than three years Interior has moved to control importation of exotics. If "the third try is the charm", then the charm is to the benefit of aviculturists, for Interior has finally demonstrated a sense of reasonableness.

Rather than espousing a wholesale ban on birds, Interior has listed only a handful of species for regulation and appears to be doing so with a greater degree of scientific credibility than in the past. Species proposed for regulation include two finches — Java Rice Bird (*Padda oryzivora*) and the Red-billed Weaver (*Quelea quelea*), the genus *Pycnonotus* (Bulbuls), the Japanese White-eye (*Zosterops japonica*) and all the species of the family Sturnidae (Starlings, Grackles, Mynahs).

Several criteria were employed in arriving at an injurious determination:

1. The species occupies an ecological niche (including feeding habits, roosting habits, requirements for reproduction, and other factors) that overlaps to a considerable extent the ecological niche of a native species;
2. The species is a close relative of a native species with which it might be expected to compete with for food, space, or some other resource, or with which it might be expected to interbreed;
3. The species has behavioral traits, feeding habits, or ecological requirements that could be disruptive or destructive to natural communities or environmental features, or in conflict with man's use of the environment;
4. The species is known to have feeding or foraging habits that include crops or other agricultural products or harvested natural resources, or that suggest that it may readily be able to adapt to such food resources;
5. The species is known to be the host of a parasite that would be detrimental to humans, domestic animals, or native wildlife, or is known to be a reservoir or vector of, or the host of a parasite that is a vector of, a disease that can readily be transmitted to humans, domesticated animals, or native wildlife.
6. The species is known to be dangerously venomous or toxic or otherwise noxious to man or to other animals;
7. The species occupies ecologically disturbed areas, particularly urbanized areas or those altered by the addition of exotic vegetation, as a major portion of its habitat;
8. The species has demonstrated an ease of establishment, colonization, or dispersal, or has reproductive characteristics that suggest an ease of establishment in the absence of its normal population controls; or
9. The species is a close relative of a species that falls into one of the above categories.

Of the above mentioned species, none except the Greater Indian Hill Mynah and the Rothschild's Mynah are of profound avicultural interest. The Red-billed Weaver, Java Rice Bird, and Japanese White-eye were once common in aviculture, but have been banned by a number of states. There are a few Java Rice Birds in private collections, however, they are on the decline in view of the current climate.

The restrictions on the genus *Pycnonotus* has been proposed as the result of two species becoming established in the continental U.S., according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Japanese White-eye is established in Hawaii, albeit through

intentional releases, and is therefore restricted under the proposal.

In responding to the present proposed restrictions, it appears a good case can be made for the Indian Hill Mynah and Rothschild's Mynah (a color photo of this magnificent bird appeared on page 21 of the Dec/Jan 1977 Watchbird). In the latter case they are nearly extinct in the wild, require an endangered species permit to import, and an export permit from the country of origin — all suggesting great difficulty in any attempt to import them.

The proposal further states that additional species may be added from time to time as becomes necessary. The present species listed and future additions to the list will be dealt with by A.F.A. so as to minimize the impact on aviculture.

Permits for the importation of injurious wildlife will be made available for medical, scientific, or zoological purposes. Zoological has been defined as "...the use of wildlife for (i) public display by bona fide zoological institutions, or (ii) developing propagation and animal husbandry technology for maintaining captive strains of wildlife.

A.F.A. will submit its comments to the: Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Post Office Box 19183, Washington, D.C. 20036. A.F.A. members may do likewise. Letters, etc. should display the file number REG 16-02-2 and must be in the hands of the Fish and Wildlife Service no later than May 6, 1977.

NOTE: THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE INDICATED THEY RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING BREAK-DOWN IN COMMENTS ON THE SECOND PROPOSAL:

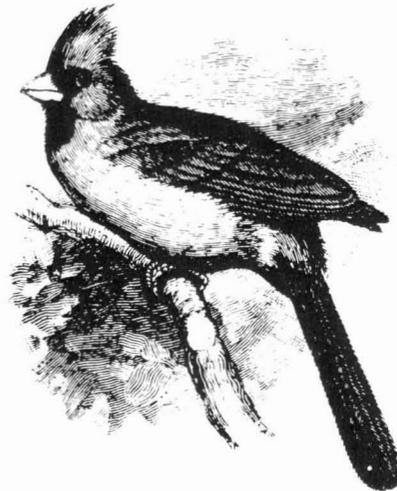
Government (State & Federal)	25
Research (medical and university)	32
Zoos and aquaria	58
Pet industry	151
Conservation organizations	31
General public	444
Special interest groups:	
Aviculturists	214
Game bird breeders	137
Falconers	39
Aquarium hobbyists	12
Aquaculture	10
Herpetology hobbyists	5
Big game breeders	4

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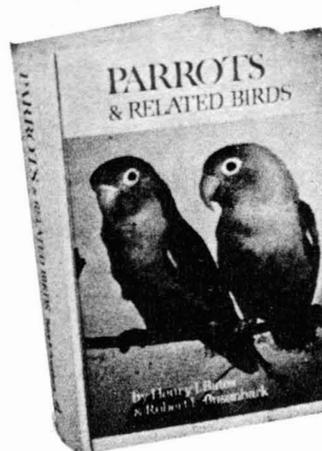
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