

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

AUGUST 1987

Update on Puerto Rican Avicultural Activities

*by Raymond Jerome, M.D.
Dallas, Texas*

The U.S. portion of the "Puerto Rican Parrot Project" at the El Yunque Rain Forest Station in Puerto Rico has recently been placed under the directorship of Miss Kelly Brock. Kelly is doing some very good things with the project. After Dr. Jose Vivalde (Director of the project for the Puerto Rican Dept. of Natural Resources) and I had discussed the situation with Kelly in depth, she has been able to convince the U.S. government wildlife officials to allow her to move the parrots from completely enclosed housing quarters into outside cages which are half covered and half exposed to the open air, rain and sunshine. There are also good indications that, when a location is found, the birds will be moved to a lower and drier location in the park. I personally believe that the constant high humidity and cool temperatures of the present location are primarily responsible for the decreased number of eggs hatched in recent years. The physiology of the growing embryo within the egg is interesting. The embryo must expel large amounts of metabolic water, as vapor, through the eggshell during its growth. If the outside humidity is *too high*, there is not a sufficient differential water vapor concentration gradient between the inside and outside of the shell for this exchange to take place and the embryo dies.

Another suggestion which both Dr. Vivalde and I stressed very strongly was that we felt that no more Puerto Rican Amazons should be released into the "wild" until at least 40 to 50 breeding pairs had been raised and maintained in captivity. A few years ago, 25 young birds were released into the "wild." *All 25 died!* However, the U.S. Wildlife officials apparently disagree with us and have plans to release more birds into the wild this year, even though only 6 eggs have hatched so far this year.

In spite of these setbacks in the past, things are now looking up for the Puerto Rican Amazons. Along with Kelly's good work, Dr. Vivaldi is taking 1/2 of the captive birds to new Puerto Rican government facilities in a drier and warmer lowland location on the island where the Puerto Rican Amazons originally lived and nested. There he will use the diets and avicultural techniques of Ramon Noegel with which Ramon has been so successful in raising Caribbean Amazons. Also he has stated that he will release no birds into the wild until he has raised and maintains about 40 breeding pair. I feel certain he will meet with great success. There is no reason why he should not be as successful with the Puerto Rican Amazons as has Ramon with the Caribbean Amazons and as I have been with the Swainson's blue mountain lory.

Originally, about 10 years ago, I could only locate eight pair of Swainson's blue mountain lorries in the continental United States. Fortunately, at that time, I was able to obtain three pair of these birds. From these original three pair, I have raised over 80 young which I have distributed to various zoological institutions and seri-

ous aviculturists in this country. I am very pleased to have been able to help to reestablish this vanishing species in our country. I hope to have similar success with the red collared, ornate, and purple naped lorries in conjunction with other aviculturists in this country.

I am also involved with another Puerto Rican project which may be of interest to Watchbird readers. I am giving my entire collection of birds to "The International Bird Park & Botanical Gardens of Puerto Rico." Mr. Alexandro Santiago, former director of natural resources of Puerto Rico, and his son, Juan Santiago, are donating 33 acres of beautiful land for the park in the central part of the island near the town of Barranquitos. They will be directors of the park and I will be a consultant for development, education, and research.

This "bird park" will be a non-profit organization used for avian education, research, and conservation. Hopefully, it will be one of the most complete collections of avian species and one of the most beautiful parks in the world open to tourism. I hope to involve both veterinarian and horticultural students and fellows in the project as they use the collections for their "field" work. Hopefully, we can also involve some of the drug companies in avian research projects at the park.

There is much work yet to be done and funds for construction and maintenance need to be raised before actually getting started on the project. If any of Watchbird's readers wish to help in financing this project or know of foundations or organizations which they think might be open to supplying financial aid to this project, their help in this matter will be greatly appreciated. They may write to me at: 1212 Holly Lane, Colleyville, Texas 76034.

Once the park is completed, several other aviculturists have already expressed a desire to donate all or part of their collections to the park at their death or whenever they cease to be able to comfortably take care of their collection themselves. When one has spent a lifetime building a collection, he/she hates to see it dissipate to the winds at his/her death. If any of the A.F.A. members would care to eventually donate their avian collections to this "non-profit" park, their collection would be well cared for and a plaque of gratitude would be erected in their behalf to honor them for their kindness and contribution to the field of aviculture.

Since this park is being located in a center of tourism, I feel that the education aspect of this project will do much throughout the world to increase interest in aviculture and the conservation of avian species.

I deeply appreciate all of the support I have received from A.F.A. over the years and hope to enjoy many more future years as a part of this superb organization. ●

Legislative Round-up

by Lee Phillips
Harwood, Maryland

Since this is my final column as Legislative Vice President I would like to share some thoughts with you.

Although we are justly proud of our handsome magazine, *The A.F.A. Watchbird*, I think we should realize that the American Federation of Aviculture is much more than a magazine. A.F.A. is an organization in the forefront of protecting your right to keep and breed birds and is also working to protect and preserve bird life. Just look at A.F.A.'s accomplishments over the years and you will see that your membership dues have supported an organization of courage and conviction whose dedicated volunteers have spent immeasurable time and effort to protect your interests and encourage captive breeding:

- In 1975 A.F.A. successfully combatted three injurious wildlife proposals from the U.S. Department of the Interior which would have sharply curtailed bird imports.
- In 1977 A.F.A. members successfully defeated local county and city ordinances in California, Illinois and Maryland which would have limited the types and numbers of birds which could be maintained.
- In 1978 A.F.A. successfully changed U.S. Department of Agriculture procedures for Newcastle disease eradication, thereby saving birds which would otherwise have been needlessly destroyed. This came about because of litigation initiated by A.F.A.
- In 1979 A.F.A. successfully mounted the pressure to keep bird imports open when the U.S. Public Health Service attempted to ban the import of all psittacines based on the threat of psittacosis.
- 1979 saw the successful culmination of five years of efforts by A.F.A. to change regulations affecting captive-bred endangered species.
- Also in 1979 A.F.A. exerted enough pressure to re-open quarantine stations that had been closed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of Newcastle disease outbreaks in the vicinity of two stations.
- In 1980 long-term efforts by A.F.A. prevented the destruction of seized illegal birds in favor of the quarantine and auction of such birds.
- Also in 1980 a "hot-line" was established through A.F.A. efforts to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Customs to cooperate in the effort to halt the flow of smuggled birds. Since then A.F.A. has encouraged people to report smuggling operations.
- In 1981 A.F.A. began allocating funds for research grants in avian medicine, nutrition and field studies. Each year since then approximately \$15,000 has been allocated for this purpose. A portion of each membership dues is allocated for research projects.
- In 1982 A.F.A. was requested by the Venezuelan Audubon Society to assist in the propagation of the Venezuelan black-hooded red siskin. This has been a project of the Conservation Committee.
- In 1984 A.F.A. helped set up the breeding consortium for the confiscated black palm cockatoos and insured that the birds would be auctioned in pairs.
- In 1984 A.F.A. began disseminating information to its members concerning auctions of confiscated birds by the U.S. Marshal's office.
- Also in 1984 A.F.A. sent a representative to the C.I.T.E.S. (Convention in International Trade of Endangered Species) in Buenos Aires.
- In 1984 A.F.A. established a working relationship with World Wildlife Fund.

- In 1985 A.F.A. and its members strenuously objected to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposal to permit the import without quarantine of birds bred in certain enclosed facilities outside the United States. Sufficient pressure was mounted that the proposal was withdrawn by U.S.D.A.
- In 1985 A.F.A. urged the U.S. Department of the Interior to purchase the Buenos Aires Ranch in Pima County, Arizona as a preserve for the re-introduction of the masked bobwhite quail.
- In 1985 A.F.A. was recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and mentioned in the *1985 Yearbook of Agriculture* as the leading organization of bird breeders. A.F.A. was also commended by the Technical Assistance Office of the federal government as the "grass roots" organization for the saving of endangered species for captive breeding.
- In 1985-86 A.F.A. members prevented the passage of restrictive legislation in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama.
- In 1986 A.F.A. members defeated the ban on the sale of wild-caught birds in the state of Maryland.
- In 1987 A.F.A. supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in its efforts to captive-breed the remaining California condors.
- Also in 1986 A.F.A. was able to stem the confiscation of illegal birds which were breeding.
- In 1986 A.F.A. established a legislative resource book.
- In 1987 A.F.A. proposed to the Fish and Wildlife Service a plan for legitimizing thick-billed parrots currently in this country.
- Also in 1987 A.F.A. supported efforts by waterfowl breeders to permit the sale of captive-bred progeny of wild-caught birds.
- Over the years A.F.A. has established an excellent relationship with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and has been asked for recommendations. A.F.A. has also been asked to comment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on amendments to the Lacey Act concerning the humane transportation of birds and we have been consulted by the U.S. Department of the Interior with regard to endangered species issues.

If there is any doubt in your mind as to the need for A.F.A. to be a "watchdog" organization, please note that in Pennsylvania Representative Paul McHale has introduced HB-1170 in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. This bill proposes to ban the *ownership and possession* as well as the sale of wild-caught birds and has picked up 16 additional sponsors among the representatives. The bill has been referred to the House Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee. Rep. McHale seems totally committed to the passage of this bill and has received support for the ban on importation and sale of wild-caught birds from over 40 organizations, such as the Humane Society of the U.S., Animal Welfare Institute, Fund for Animals, Wildlife Information Center, local chapters of the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society and also from Don Bruning and Dr. Roger Tory Peterson. How swiftly we have gone from banning the sale of wild-caught birds to banning their ownership and possession!

Pennsylvania aviculturists, retail pet shop owner, veterinarians and game bird breeders have joined in an effort to combat this legislation and I have represented A.F.A. at two meetings in Pennsylvania and have sent two letters to A.F.A. members in Pennsylvania informing them of this legislation and enclosing a list of representatives on the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee and urging them to write and communicate their views. At this writing we are struggling just to achieve a public hearing.

Enjoy *The A.F.A. Watchbird* but recognize that the magazine is a fringe benefit of your membership in an organization whose primary goal is the protection of your right to keep birds. If you wonder whether your A.F.A. dues are worthwhile, think about what you would do with your birds if *your* state passed legislation prohibiting the ownership and possession of wild-caught birds. It could happen. Be sure to renew your membership. ●

THE MARYLAND CAGE BIRD IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Maryland First to Inaugurate Cage Bird Improvement Plan

Inspections of private aviaries and retail pet stores have begun, signalling the inauguration of the voluntary Maryland Cage Bird Improvement Plan, the first such project in the United States. Developed by a group of Maryland pet bird breeders, retail pet dealers and veterinarians and funded by participants and the State of Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Cage Bird Improvement Plan (M-BIP) provides a self-governing program whereby M-BIP participants can implement improved husbandry practices and qualify for official M-BIP recognition for such advances. Essentially, M-BIP calls for humane treatment of birds, inspection for suitability of facilities, record-keeping and ethical practices in advertising and business transactions. M-BIP outlines the minimum requirements for participation and includes an inspector's manual, standards evaluation form and record form. The primary concerns of M-BIP are the welfare of birds and the prevention of disease.

"Participant" status will be awarded in recognition of achieving verified compliance with M-BIP and official emblems denoting same may be used on invoices, letterheads and advertising for those qualifying under M-BIP.

"The Maryland Cage Bird Improvement Plan has been called a 'people's program' because it deals realistically with the special requirements of aviculturists and the avian aspect of the retail pet trade," stated Lee Phillips, president of M-BIP and past president of the American Federation of Aviculture. The Plan was developed with input from the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, the Maryland State Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the poultry industry and state legislators as well as representatives of the retail pet trade and hobbyist bird breeders.

Copies of the Maryland Cage Bird Improvement Plan and further information may be obtained by writing M-BIP, P.O. Box 2826, Laurel, Maryland 20708. ●

Man Held in Selling of Parrots

Reprinted from New Orleans Times, May 5, 1987

*by Judi Hymel
St. Tammany Bureau*

The owner of Bird World in Lacombe has been booked with buying and selling exotic parrots in a \$300,000 smuggling scheme, a federal prosecutor in San Diego said Wednesday.

Gregory B. Jones, 50, Route 2, Box 1025, Lacombe, was arrested Tuesday afternoon by U.S. Wildlife and Fisheries agents and charged with the illegal buying, selling and interstate transporting of yellow-naped Amazon parrots, Assistant U.S. Attorney Steve Crandall said.

The parrots can carry Newcastle disease, a virus that can kill domestic poultry, he said. It does not directly affect people.

Jones also was charged with conspiring with four others to buy and sell the birds.

Jones was brought before U.S. Magistrate Ivan L.R. Lemelle in New Orleans and released Tuesday on a \$250,000 personal security bond, Crandall said.

Also arrested Tuesday were Eugene Carrier, 37, Theresa Mooney, 25, and Robert O. Wild, 62, all of Escondido, Calif., and Joseph Olive Rowe of Conway, S.C.

The three from California were booked with smuggling more than 300 parrots from Mexico into the United States between January and March. The parrots were sold to Jones and Rowe, who owns a pet shop in Conway, S.C. The parrots are valued at \$1,000 each.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego began investigating the bird ring in January, Crandall said.

Officials learned the three from California smuggled the parrots out of Mexico in their car, sometimes stuffing the birds in the vehicle's side panels, he said.

They would then ship the parrots to Rowe and Jones, who would sell them through their stores, Crandall said.

The smuggling went on from January through March and probably longer, officials said.

None of the parrots have been confiscated, but Wildlife and Fisheries officials are searching for the birds, Crandall said.

Wildlife and Fisheries officials searched Bird World and found crates used for smuggling parrots, but no illegal birds.

Crandall said the parrots pose a serious health threat to domestic poultry because they have not been quarantined.

"This is a health concern as well as a wildlife concern," he said.

Jones and his wife, Phyllis, own and operate Bird World, Louisiana's only tropical bird importing business. Jones also runs two businesses in Miami where animals can be quarantined while they are inspected for entry into the country, Crandall said.

Jones could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

An international treaty prohibits the importation of wildlife unless the importer has a valid export permit that has been issued by the country of origin.

None of the defendants had such permits, Crandall said.

Bond was set Tuesday at \$100,000 for Mooney, who was still in custody in San Diego on Wednesday. Wild and Rowe were released Tuesday on bonds of \$50,000 and \$100,000, respectively.

Bond has not been set for Carrier, who also remained in custody in San Diego. ●

Extinction is Forever...

Extinction is Not Acceptable!

It is unfortunate that with the passing from this earth of the last dusky seaside sparrow, groups who hold themselves out as being "conservationists" and "humanitarians" fail to recognize that the inevitable encroachment of man onto nature may well result in the extinction of many species of avian life from this earth. Legislation such as the New York bill will only insure total extinction rather than the ability of aviculturists to preserve those avian species through continuing importation for sale and breeding in this country. As if the New York bill was not enough, we have moved from the absurd to the ridiculous. H.B. 1170 has been introduced into the legislature of the state of Pennsylvania. This will would not only *ban the sale* of live wild birds, but would also *ban the importation, ownership, possession ...* Upon becoming aware of this, AFA and concerned aviculturists in Pennsylvania immediately moved to inform legislators in the state of Pennsylvania of the detrimental aspects of this legislation inasmuch as AFA feels that the proponents of this legislation have only related one side of the issue. On May 4, 1987, AFA Legal Counsel issued the following letter on behalf of AFA. AFA is hopeful that when informed, legislators will see that such laws are extremely detrimental to conservation, wildlife management, survival of avian species and humanitarian issues. Needless to say, all aviculturists will have their eyes on Pennsylvania for passage of such sweeping legislation will have impacts beyond that state's borders.

May 4, 1987

The Honorable Paul McHale
P.O. Box 46
House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Main Capital Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative McHale:

I have been asked to correspond with you on behalf of the American Federation of Aviculture, the only national organization dedicated solely to avicultural pursuits, including scientific research, education of the public and promotion of controlled propagation of avian species in the United States. The officers, Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the American Federation of Aviculture ("AFA") have asked me to express AFA's extreme concern and consternation over information which we have received about a bill which we have learned you have introduced into the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Due to our concern for the future of aviculture through which thousands of our members in zoos and the private sector throughout the United States are attempting to save endangered and threatened species from extinction due to their tenuous status in the wild, our organization uses every effort to educate the people as to the "true" story about the status of exotic (not native to the United States) species in the world today.

Much of AFA's concern stems from what we perceive to be a lack of understanding, due to an incomplete airing of all the issues, surrounding legislation such as that which we have been informed has been introduced in Pennsylvania and the misconceptions proffered by certain of its proponents such as those which have appeared in a letter dated March 19, 1987 from the Wildlife Information Center, Inc. of Allentown, Pennsylvania and a statement concerning importation and sale of live wild birds issued by that Center. When reading that letter and statement, there are certain additional matters of which you and your fellow representatives should be aware.

Did you know that it has been estimated that in one year alone over One Million Five Hundred Thousand Greater Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, majestic birds which make wonderful pets, were poisoned in Australia due to their characterization as agricultural pests? Such poisoning goes on in other nations throughout the world and a bill such as that being proposed would prevent the rescue of these species through importation and maintenance as breeding stock in the United States to prevent their eventual extinction in the wild and, yes, even for keeping them as pets for the enhancement of the lives of your constituents. Did you know that every four days developing nations clear tropical areas equalling the size of the State of New York of all plant life and vegetation? This deforestation leaves the avian wildlife which inhabit and rely on those areas for their food without habitat. Did you know that importation of avian species into the United States is one of the most highly regulated pursuits being monitored by the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, the Treasury Department, the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services? Yes, all of this regulation to insure that importation is conducted in accordance with the laws of the local countries from which such birds would be imported, the existing international treaties and laws and United States law. Trade in endangered species and in our native species is all but prohibited and laws of foreign countries are enforced by our Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. No avian species may be imported into the United States from a country which bans their exportation. Only species from countries which have made a conscious decision to allow their avian wildlife to be exported for a number of reasons discussed below, are allowed into the United States.

We are only dealing with legal importation of species where the countries of origin have determined that those species may be exported for economic, conservation, wildlife management, agricultural and humanitarian reasons. Countries from which breeder and pet avian species are transported have made a conscious decision that their species may be placed in commerce, subject to stringent regulation, for the purpose of breeding and as pets for numerous reasons including their preservation from extinction, sensible harvesting for conservation and ecological purposes, to save them from death due to loss of habitat and poisoning as pests, their presence as agricultural pests in developing tropical nations, the need of these countries for commerce to feed their starving people and for the benefit of humankind for companionship worldwide. Many of these countries cannot even feed their people, let alone make a conscious effort to protect their avian species and preserve their habitat. For them both the humane and economic thing to do is allow and promote exportation of exotic avian species to the United States for sale in states like Pennsylvania.

As you can see from the enclosed Fact Sheet prepared by our organization, it is estimated that seventy (70%) percent of exotic avian populations perish annually in the wild. The greatest number of these species that perish lose their lives due to poisoning and habitat destruction. This is well recognized by all realistic conservation and wildlife management groups. To the extent these species perish as a result of habitat destruction, hunting or poisoning as pests, the removal of an infinitesimal number of these species for breeding purposes and pet companionship, subject to the regulations previously mentioned, only serves to allow other displaced and doomed avian species to assume their space in the diminishing ecosystem. This is sensible wildlife management and conservation.

Experts tell us that, but for sensible wildlife captive breeding, many species face extinction from the face of the earth in the next several years. This has been shown recently in the United States by virtue of our own Fish and Wildlife Service "bringing in" the only remaining living California condors. Unfortunately, so-called conservation groups objected to the gathering and protective management of the condor for a long enough period of time that the last

breeding female condor in the wild died due to lead poisoning from ingesting carcasses of animals shot by man. Fortunately, organizations which share our goals were able to prevail and have successfully protected the condor in controlled environments and have now bred the condor so that it may have a chance to survive extinction. What is even more amazing is that our country protects its avian species and yet they still face extinction. In most developing nations birds, such as those for which your bill would seek to ban the sale in your state and therefore remove any economic incentive to their importation into this country, are facing a far more accelerated fate due to the uncontrolled destruction of habitat, hunting and poisoning. Our organization is committed, no, dedicated, to promoting captive breeding so that no species may ever again have to face extinction.

Unfortunately, well funded forces having beliefs contrary to ours characterize themselves as "conservationists," but in reality are "preservationists" who believe that no animal should be removed from the wild regardless of its fate there. They will accept extinction as an alternative to removal from the wild and maintenance in a controlled environment in our country. We refuse to accept the principal that animals are better left to perish in the wild to extinction, than to be placed in appropriate controlled environments for captive breeding and, yes, even as companions to mankind. *Extinction is not an acceptable alternative!* Many people who start with one pet bird become the breeders and aviculturists of the future. My parents gave me my first pair of canaries when I was seven years old, and I am now breeding and maintaining many difficult larger species of parrots and cockatoos. Even more, in this world of apartments, condominiums, elderly care facilities, attention to the special needs population and with families with two working partners, many people are finding that the quality of life realized from a relationship with a companion animal can best or only be fulfilled by an avian species as the facilities or ability to have the traditional dog and cat are not available options. We all know people who would love to have a pet, but are allergic to cats and/or dogs. Notwithstanding what you may have been told, there are not nearly sufficient numbers of domestically-bred pet birds to fill current demands and these birds do make wonderful companions.

So, I trust you can see that a principal such as that proposed by this bill would be a gesture in support of avian genocide, a statement against conservation and a step contrary to the quality of life for mankind in your state. We are aware that the State of New York has passed and implemented a law similar to that being proposed in your state; however, their example is not one to be followed. The New York law was passed in secrecy, in seven weeks, without opportunity for public comment or public hearing and based upon misinformation, misstatements and misconceptions. Unfortunately, these misstatements, misconceptions and misunderstandings went unchallenged due to the fact that no hearings were held and the law's proponents misled the New York Legislature by erroneously stating that there was no known opposition to the law. Please verify this story, it is true. Additionally, when the statistics of the proponents in support of such legislation are called into question, it has been found that many of them are out of context, thoroughly out of date or exaggerated. You should also know that in every other state where such legislation was proposed, after legislators had the opportunity to hear all aspects of the issue, no such legislation has been passed.

AFA is pleased to have the opportunity to offer its comments and experience and we hope and trust that you will understand why we are so concerned that legislation such as this will be so detrimental to avian conservation and the quality of life for mankind. It is truly unfortunate that well-meaning people both in conservation groups and in government often unknowingly move too quickly or on misinformation in a direction which they have yet to thoroughly explore. It is our sincere hope and desire that through our efforts to provide you with the information necessary to make a complete and informed decision you will join with us in promoting and pursuing avian con-

servation through allowing legally-imported, foreign birds to continue to be sold in your state. You should further know that most of the true horror stories concerning importation and referred to by proponents of such legislation relate to smuggled birds. AFA thoroughly opposes and works with the United States Government to stop smuggling of any kind. Smuggling is the greatest threat to private aviculture in this country as it spreads disease. Unfortunately, laws such as the one being considered in your state will leave only the smugglers in business and will promote smuggling, as it closes off all legal channels. Similar to alcohol prohibition, the law will leave only the smugglers from whom unwitting citizens will purchase what would otherwise be a legally-imported and USDA quarantined avian species. New York with its idealistic law prohibiting the sale of wild-caught birds has just experienced an outbreak of Exotic Newcastle's Disease which has been traced to birds which we believe were smuggled into the country and banded with bands with initials to indicate that they were raised by private breeders specifically for the sale in New York to circumvent their law. If the sale of legally-imported birds were allowed in New York as in other states, they would have gone through an appropriate USDA quarantine and been appropriately USDA banded to avoid such a problem. According to the USDA, no outbreak of Exotic Newcastle's Disease has ever been traced to a legally-imported, quarantined bird. Laws such as this invite the trouble we all most fear. In fact, the United States Department of Agriculture has expressed, in writing, their concern about the potential of such laws to increase smuggling. The proposed law, as New York is finding out, is also clearly unenforceable and will cost taxpayers tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in an attempt at enforcing and prosecuting an expensive, unenforceable regulatory system that is both unwanted and unnecessary. As a result, the New York law is not being enforced. We know of Pennsylvania's high concern for its agricultural industry and are amazed that such a law could be considered when in many other states in which similar laws had been proposed, the state's Department of Agriculture, Farm Bureau or poultry industry have openly opposed and testified against the adoption of such laws.

Please join with us in the recognition which we have found that "**Aviculture is Conservation**" and that in order to insure the continuing survival of avian species through captive breeding and avoid the extinction which has been experienced in the past due to the lack of caring for the survival of these species, even if it meant in controlled environments, we must recognize that we have not inherited these species from our forefathers, we have only borrowed them from our children. Hopefully, with this in mind, some day we will be the source to reintroduce many of these species into the wild when safe habitats, such as for the California condor, can again be provided and even though those species may then be extinct in the wild. The Audubon Society of Venezuela has recently requested that our organization start a breeding consortium for a small bird which used to be indigenous to that country, but the population of which has dwindled due to artificial forces. Fortunately, U.S. aviculturists, perhaps even in Pennsylvania, had acquired and are now successfully breeding these birds. We have now started that consortium and it is our hope along with that of the Venezuelan Audubon Society that some day we may be the source to reintroduce these birds into protected habitats. This proposed legislation, if enacted, might mean that other species might not be so fortunate.

If our organization can provide you with further information or materials, we would be more than happy to do so and we will make ourselves available to speak with you by telephone or to have a representative meet with you and/or your colleagues to discuss these issues. We thank you for your kind concern and consideration.

Very truly yours,
American Federation of Aviculture, Inc.
Gary P. Lilienthal, National Legal Counsel

Bird Clubs of Virginia

by Dick Ivy
Yorktown, Virginia

Bird Clubs of Virginia is a state federation of six independent, exotic cage bird clubs which celebrated its third annual convention, bigger, more well attended, and more productive than in past years, at a new resort hotel and convention center at Virginia Beach, Va., during three days of stormy surf of the Chesapeake Bay the last weekend of April.

This year's convention club was the Parrot Breeders of Virginia, of the Virginia Beach-Norfolk area, whose work, as well as BCV's growing reputation, attracted more than 115 registrants, up 100 percent from last year's convention south of Virginia's capital city, Richmond. There were also 22 registrants from Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Michigan and North Carolina.

BCV's stated goal of inter-club cooperation and support of better aviary management and legislative action has won adherents among the leaders of clubs in Newport News, Richmond, Norfolk, Charlottesville and Washington, D.C.'s environs as well as in other states.

The 1987 convention began with registration and welcome in a hospitality room reminiscent of AFA conventions. Saturday, the speakers began at 9 a.m. and lasted through 6 p.m. The speakers covered topics from birds and zoo breeding to management and veterinary.

Principal speaker was Keven Flammer, DVM, clinical instructor, clinician and researcher of the school of veterinary medicine, North Carolina State University. Flammer also conducted the Pet Bird Medicine Seminar on Sunday, organized by the Virginia-Maryland School of Veterinary Medicine at Blacksburg's Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and was open to local veterinarians, students and aviculturists.

Presentations were audio-visual. Howard Voren, Florida aviculturist and a field collector for importation, spoke on creating stimuli for Central and South American psittacines. Patty Knoblauch, aviculturist and Maryland AFA state coordinator, showed ways to train large birds with local birds she had only a brief time in which to become acquainted. Marc Valentine, cytogeneticist and aviculturist, addressed the skills of chromosome identification and evaluation from feather pulp.

Scott Derickson, curator of birds at the National Zoo's Conservation Program, showed slides and talked about the zoo's endangered species breeding program, and Dr. W.B. "Bernie" Gross, veterinary researcher at the College of Veterinary Medicine at VPI, talked at length about stress and birds from poultry studies.

In the hotel foyer, several of the clubs competed for the best display. The Cage Bird-Breeders Association of Richmond was assessed by votes of the speakers as having the best display, fleshing out the Newcastle Disease crisis, with the Peninsula Caged Bird Society, which meets in Newport News, a close second with support for BCV and for aviculturists who have created a magazine market and caused a bird publications explosion. There were also commercial displays.

The PBAV members sponsored cash prizes for the winners, and conducted an auction of birds and related items on Sunday concurrent with the veterinary seminar, 10% of its profit promised for avian research. There was a large raffle on Saturday, and the BCV banquet which raised \$950 on the spot for UNC's continuing research program in psittacosis and other avian interests. The BCV coordinators will add more money from its convention proceeds to make it \$2,000.

During the banquet program, the Honorable Shirley Cooper, an elected delegate to the Virginia Assembly from the Peninsula Club's area, presented the framed resolution praising BCV's work in aviary management for the benefit of state aviculturists and bird pet owners. Earlier, when BCV's administrative coordinator

visited the General Assembly, she had him recognized in the balcony with appropriate words and delegate applause for BCV's work.

BCV didn't spring full armed from the side of the Great Amazon in the Sky. Born in the fuzzy period of the now dormant National Cage and Aviary Bird Improvement Plan (NCA-BIP), and following the growth of the new Peninsula Caged Bird Club from which one of its organizers in conversation with influential club members around the state devised a January 1985 banquet in Hampton, sponsored by PCBS. Fifty persons from Virginia's clubs attended and acclaimed BCV into existence. *The Bird Box* would be its printed newsletter, a journal where ideas could hatch and a lot of growth done. The journal includes news of clubs and legislative information but has many features on aviary management as well.

That June, the new group, led by presidents or representatives of the clubs and Virginia's AFA state coordinator Carole Wheeler also representing the National Capital Bird Club, staged their first convention, organized by the Virginia Avicultural Society, in north Richmond. The idea was to be near the seat of government, and the veterinarians from state veterinarian's office were among the first guest speakers. The emphasis at that meeting was legislation with Marshall Meyers, general counsel of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, and Lee Phillips, president of AFA at the time. Not many more than attended the banquet were there, but the registrants were the "cream of the crop."

The second convention was just a bit better, with Dr. Al Decoteau talking about Amazons being a big drawing card. The coordinators, meeting monthly, decided to be more commercial in selecting speakers while not forsaking the new stuff—lighting use in breeding.

The big reason for the creation of BCV was to monitor legislation and state laws, and organize a voluntary Virginia Aviary Management Plan (VAMP), a much more liberal NCA-BIP. When the coordinators tried to tighten up the rules, the plan floundered and it was revived taking the Maryland Bird Improvement Plan as the new base. The state's club members are now discussing the draft plan and it should be ready for state officials this fall. Elements of the Maryland and Virginia plans have been published in the state newsletter, *The Bird Box*.

The Bird Box, edited by Dick Ivy, chairman of PCBS which has become the second largest state club, and BCV administrative coordinator, receives a small but influential distribution. For \$5 to cover distribution costs, aviculturists in Virginia and other states may have the quarterly publication mailed direct. Clubs may reproduce the *Bird Box*, its pages or articles, or contribute for a token "bunch" for club meeting distribution.

Galvanizing interest of serious aviculturists in Virginia, BCV is looking to its fourth and largest convention in April 1988, this one in Springfield near Washington, D.C., sponsored by NCBC, the state's largest bird club.

Purely a federation, BCV makes no decisions binding on clubs. Its meetings are open to club officers and members or unaffiliated aviculturists who generally meet monthly in Richmond. Besides those already mentioned who attended the first meetings are Charles and Cindy Zoby, pet store owners of Norfolk and who were the 1987 convention facilities coordinators; and Ken Warthen, an independent aviculturist and now accepted as a veterinary student from near Blacksburg, as BCV veterinary and speaker coordinator.

BCV, supported more and more by its Virginia clubs, is doing more than individual clubs can. Its interests are more general and attract leaders who are able to devote time to its goal of better aviary management and state awareness that aviculturists are active in protecting their interests while being a willing partner in governmental goals that are related. (Four of its clubs are current AFA members.) ●

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