

# Club Sponsored Avian Conservation

by Ross Anderson  
West Valley City, Utah

Wide spread increase in the human population and the effect this has on the balance of the world is of concern to all of us. From the aviculturalist's point of view, this means more and more encroachment by people on the natural habitat of the wild birds, and their subsequent competition for space and food. Many populations of animals including birds are being pushed out of their traditional homes and into the territories of others. This places an extra burden on the remaining "natural" habitat which, in many cases, is not of the quality of that annexed by humans. In a given area, only a finite number of similar animals are able to successfully make a living for themselves and their families. With massive regional exploitation by man, whether it is in the form of deforestation, mining, or other development, the crowding of animals for the remaining area can result in a

lower standard of living for all the residents, new or old. A new equilibrium will be achieved. Certainly some species of animals are more adaptable, diverse, prolific, or for some reason successful and will maintain their representation. Other less successful species will diminish and possibly vanish.

This phenomenon is not new. The process has been going on since the beginning of life on earth. However, with the innovation and inventiveness of the modern man, and the seemingly insatiable need for more and more raw materials and space, the process has been accelerated geometrically. Estimates are that this rate of growth will continue. To the aviculturalist, the process can have a temporarily positive effect. Birds become available because of the manipulation of man. Whether it is from deforestation and subsequent loss of bird habitat, or from the predominately selfish harvesting of birds to provide income for the expanding human population, the effect is still the same. We are the direct recipient of the benefit. We must use this opportunity in a timely and conserving manner.


Man is an extremely successful animal. There are many explanations for why man is able to be so successful. Most of these explanations are merely rationalizations to explain our actions. When one considers the presumed superior intellect of the human race, one wonders how we can let a world become increasingly devoid of other life forms. It becomes the responsibility of man to preserve the animals he displaces.

Even though in the past aviculturalists have been accused of being self serving and consumptive of avian life, we are, it would seem, the hope for the future of much of the bird world. Collectively and individually, we can and must make a difference. One way that we can contribute is to adopt a philosophy that our birds are here to preserve, to conserve, and to propagate. They are not ours for amusement or prestige. Each person must choose within his or her interests what species they wish to concentrate on, and make every effort to further the knowledge of and numbers of these

animals. Certainly other less vulnerable species can and should be kept to maintain our interest and to make it financially possible for us to keep the others. The main impetus, however, must be one of conservation.

In Utah, our local bird club has within its structure a committee expressly for the conservation and propagation of those birds either endangered, threatened, or diminishing because of habitat destruction. The committee purchases these birds and places them on breeding loan to the zoological institutions in the area. The institutions agree to house and feed them, use them to educate the public, and make a concerted effort to propagate them. A percentage of the offspring produced through this arrangement remains with the institution, and a percentage goes back to the committee. The institution benefits by receiving birds without actual cash outlay, as well as the positive public relations generated by a cooperative conservation measure with the private sector. The club benefits by being able to demonstrate that it contributes more than talk in its efforts to play a role in preservation of avian life.

Purchase of these birds is expensive, and the local club has allowed the committee to act independently to procure funds for bird purchases. Income generation for the committee comes from usual sources including private donations, receipts from raffles and auctions, and theoretically from the sale of surplus birds. Most recently, one of the members of the committee has donated her artistic talents to draw a number of endangered birds. The pictures are printed on various types of paper. We make prints for wall hangings, coasters, coloring books and scratch pads which are sold to members and to the public. The sale of the pictures not only provides money for the purchase of birds, it also serves as a subtle reminder to the purchaser of the plight of the birds pictured. We encourage all clubs to adopt some similar program. As a group, we can provide an alternative solution to the problem we have created. For those wishing further information regarding how our committee is set up, or regarding the products we market, please direct all correspondence to myself or:

Rebecca Dennett  
Chairwoman: Endangered Species  
Committee  
Avicultural Society of Utah  
P.O. Box 20156  
West Valley City, Utah 84120 



The Watchbird offers free publicity for member club bird shows by announcing the dates and locations of the shows. To have your show listed it is necessary to get the data to the Watchbird four to five months before the show date. For example, if your show takes place the first week of October, it should be listed in the August/September issue. The deadline for that issue is June 1st. (Copy/Article deadline is two months preceding publication date.)

**Mid West Hook Bill Club  
5th Annual Hook Bill Show  
Saturday**

**April 23, 1988**

Days Inn — at the Arch  
333 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

Judge:

Ronald Filip - S.P.B.E., A.L.S., A.C.S.

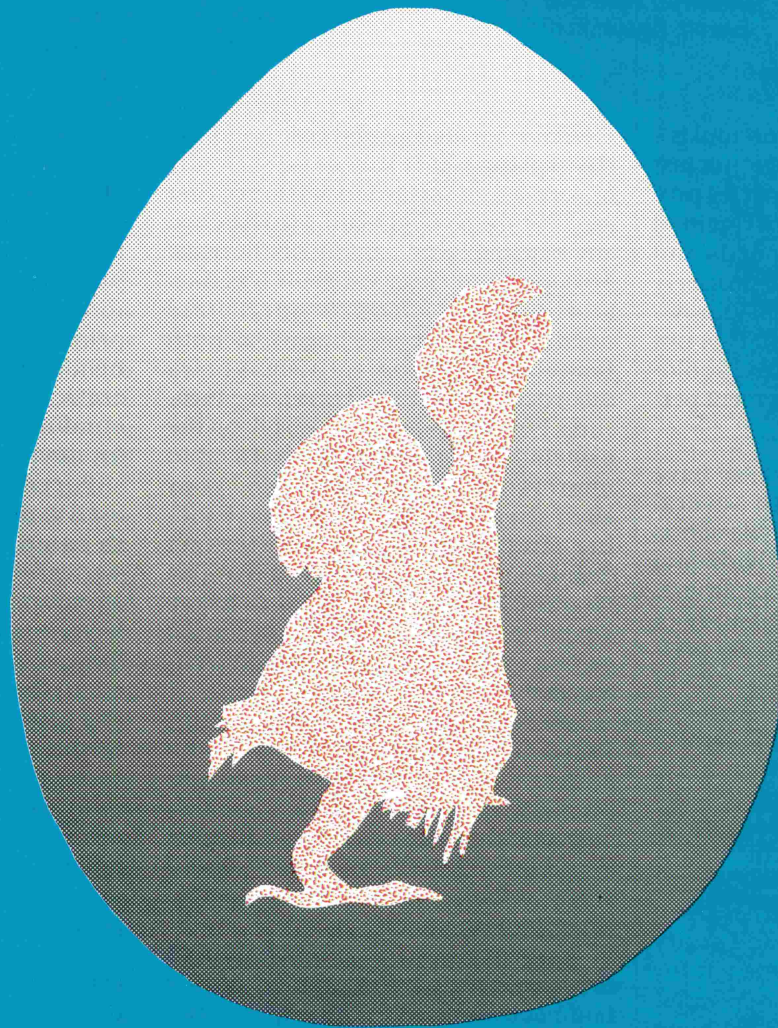
Information:

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or

Marcia Fitch, (618) 656-9567

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