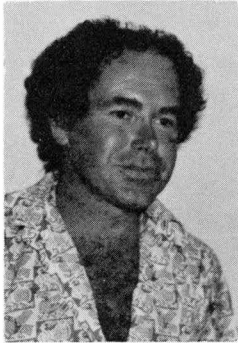




agapornis acres

by Lee Horton

THE AVICULTURIST CONSERVATIONIST



Lee Horton

To digress for a change I have decided to write a few articles on conservation and bird keeping in general. I will return to the botanical view on alternate issues.

Today everyone speaks of conservation, the protection of nature, its checks and balances. Is it possible? Is it perhaps already too late? Does anyone have a proper answer to the problems facing our birds, plants or even Nature itself?

There are at times so many answers that one could almost sit back and assume that all is well and being taken care of by others. But some of these so called cures should be examined more closely. It is truly difficult to believe that most of them can work. The cure-all of many of our conservationists is the setting aside of nature areas to be untouched by man. However, can we realistically expect the countries in Afri-

ca, Central and South America or even our neighbor to the south, Mexico, to give up the clearing of "their" land to plant crops for their people? Is it even feasible that we can overcome the mores of these people and control their ever increasing population? Can any of us even believe that within a short period of time that we could "train" people not to have sacred animals that are often better fed than the people themselves?

Overcoming these, and many more problems seems unlikely to us. However, we as aviculturists must try to do something. The most logical answer for most of us is captive breeding. These breeding programs must include as many birds and animals as humanly possible. It is our duty to save them from the fate facing so many today. Those of us who want Land Reserves and Avicultural and Animals Parks and those of us with back-yard aviaries are all Conservationists. We must find a common ground upon which we all can work together. We need both Captive breeding programs and Land Reserves for Nature in order to succeed in our goals. One of these goals has to be to retain for generations to come, the treasures with which nature has blessed us.

We as aviculturists have a responsibility that must be taken seriously. Are we doing our part for Conservation? Maybe we should clean house. Our aviaries cannot be continually freshened with new wild caught blood. Why must they? Have we failed?

There are many success stories in Aviculture. First time breedings, accurately establishing strains of Captive bred birds that are on the endangered list in the wild (the beautiful Scarlet chested parakeet to mention one. I'm sure that there are more of them in California Aviaries than on the continent of Australia.) There are many of these success stories around the Aviculture World; birds that have been raised for generations in captivity. But maybe there are too few. We must strive harder to include many more birds in our breeding programs and in all of these we must establish a viable strain. It may be too late with many birds, we must join together and work hard on the many obstacles that face us in our aviaries.

How many of us keep records, even the most simple kind? Do you know how many eggs were laid by a hen and how many hatched? How many generations you have bred a certain species? You must be past the third generation in order to feel that you can establish them.

We must all start constructive breeding programs. If you have an extra bird, share breed it with another aviculturist. An ad in this journal could bring results. Don't let birds sit without a mate if at all possible.

WHOLESALE RETAIL

BARONA BIRD FARM



BIRDS OF ALL KINDS and everything you need in bird supplies

▪ WE SHIP BIRDS ▪

Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for prices.

(714) 443-8315 Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mon.

12995 Old Barona Road • Lakeside, Calif. 92040 (near San Diego)

WARNING

To release any bird into the wild where it is not native is a federal and state offense.

Start keeping accurate records and exchanging information backed up by these records. It is time we prove our worth, our ability to do what we claim.

The best way to begin is to specialize in a species of bird, or at most, if you have the space, one genus. In this way you have the time to learn in more detail the problems encountered with the genus or species chosen. You can keep larger numbers of the birds. Keeping more of a species is a great help as you can eliminate more ruthlessly if any birds show signs of deterioration (such as feather problems, poor fertility, high mortality in young etc.). As you can see you must keep records, i.e., how will you know if most birds raised die at eight months, or a hen lays six eggs and only hatches one or two. The young must be banded so you have individual identification. We can never establish our birds without this basic information.

Specialty Clubs should be formed to exchange information on a particular species. You cannot do a good job with all birds, you must specialize. It follows, therefore, that a Club cannot do as good a job with all birds as a specialty Club can with just one genus. Think about what I am saying – Clubs specializing in a genus and exchanging accurate information (not folklore) on that genus, can progress, truly progress. This is what we need, this must be our goal.

We must also educate the public about our birds. The problems and the rewards must be explained to them so that they may share in our concern for them. Every specialty club should strive to do this. One way, perhaps, would be through an Annual Bird Show open to the public. This should not be for the sole purpose of competition among ourselves, but for the purpose of sharing our world of birds with the public. Many programs could be presented at such a show to bring far greater understanding to the general public as to our goals and our legislative problems.

We must have the support of many if we are to succeed.

In another issue I will give a basic outline of record keeping and more thoughts on improving conditions for our birds. ■



SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR APPOINTED

Dr. Lawrence Swan has accepted an appointment to serve as the American Federation of Aviculture's scientific advisor on ornithological matters. Dr. Swan is a professor of Biology, and Ecology, at the University of San Francisco, a Fellow in the California Academy of Sciences, and Director of the San Francisco Zoo.

PLAN TO ATTEND the ANNUAL MEETING

The A.F.A. will hold its annual meeting in San Diego, mid-summer 1975. A forthcoming announcement will indicate the date, provisions for hotel reservations, and the agenda, which will include a banquet, dance, distinguished speakers and displays. The San Diego location was selected to provide a good base for persons interested in visiting famous nearby amusements, the San Diego Zoo, and wildlife exhibits, as well as an enjoyable vacation site.

USE WATCHBIRD CLASSIFIED ADS
TO BUY IT OR TO SELL IT.

MAY 10 – CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINE
FOR JUNE ISSUE.

Magnolia Bird Farm

Owner
Frank Miser



We Buy Birds
We Ship Birds

COMPLETE BIRD SUPPLIES

(714) 527-3387

8990 Cerritos Ave. • Anaheim, Calif. 92804

Open 9 to 6
Closed Sun., Mon., and Holidays