

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

JUNE 1992

## Aviculture a Winner at CITES Meeting

by Jonathan Fink,  
AFA Cites Committee Chair  
Tempe, Arizona

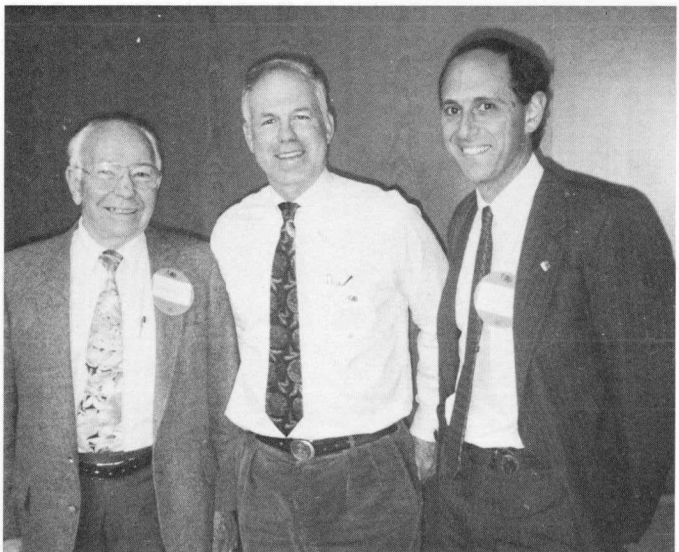
Most aviculturists expected the worst from the 8th Conference of the Parties to CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which was held in Kyoto, Japan in early March. After the last meeting in Switzerland in 1989, animal rights groups vowed to push for a total ban on trade in all wild-caught birds. Fortunately for AFA members, nearly all of the resolutions in Kyoto that would have seriously curtailed bird-keeping were defeated. This outcome did not reflect widespread support for captive breeding of birds, but rather came from a general attitude favoring sustainable utilization instead of strict preservation of wildlife. Serious concerns still remain about the high mortality associated with transport of wild-caught birds and will no doubt lead to renewed calls for trade restrictions and bans at the next CITES meeting to be held in the United States in 1994.

AFA, one of over 150 non-government organizations (NGOs) in Kyoto, was represented by Val Clear and myself. There is an unwritten but definite caste system in effect at CITES meetings. Delegates from the richest nations and members of the CITES Secretariat (the bureaucracy that enforces the treaty) are at the top of the pyramid, representatives from less-developed countries and from large international NGOs such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF) come next, and relatively small groups perceived as representing special interests, such as AFA, are at the bottom. Seniority also plays a role: the more previous CITES meetings you have attended, the more you are listened to. Despite this arrangement, it is possible for representatives of a small NGO to have some influence by talking one-on-one with individual delegates and by becoming allied with better-known groups.

Before leaving for Japan, Val and I had laid the groundwork for our participation by writing to delegates from over 100 countries and sending them copies of the CITES issue of



Dr. Susan Lieberman, John Turner, and other members of the U.S. delegation to CITES.



Val Clear (left) and Jonathan Fink (right) with John Turner, Head of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Head of U.S. delegation to CITES.

## AFA CONVENTION — August 2 - 6, 1992

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Watchbird and of a trilingual brochure about AFA. We had also been in frequent contact with members of the U.S. delegation (mostly from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington) and with representatives of World Wildlife Fund - Traffic (the branch of WWF that monitors wildlife trade), Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria. Even with this preparation, the Conference was full of surprises.

Because most delegates initially considered us to be trade lobbyists paid to protect our "industry", we had to convince them that aviculture was not the same as the pet business but rather could be part of a comprehensive conservation strategy designed to save endangered bird species. This was made more difficult because the same animal welfare groups that have been our adversaries in the drafting of domestic bird trade legislation (Humane Society of the US; Defenders of Wildlife) tried to label us as spokesmen for the pet industry. Another complication was that many positions of the U.S. delegation, which we had carefully studied prior to the Conference, were changed at the last minute so that we had little idea of what we should be arguing for. It was disturbing to note how consistent the new U.S. platform was with the ideas of the animal rights groups. Fortunately we received excellent advice from Marshall Meyers, head of PIJAC and long-time veteran of CITES meetings. Furthermore, the most influential conservation groups, particularly International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and WWF, shared our positions on most of the bird trade issues and were able to use their lobbying clout to convince a majority of delegations to support propositions favoring rational bird trade.

There were two main proposals (both put forward by the United States) that we were most alarmed about. The first would have immediately and completely halted the trade in all bird species for which "adequate" population studies in the wild had not been completed. This would have effectively shut down the trade in nearly all parrots, finches, and softbills. It was vigorously opposed by a large number of producer coun-

tries, such as Guyana, and developed nations, such as Switzerland, which all claimed that the U.S. proposal punished the less-developed countries that had natural resources without giving them a financial incentive to conserve their wild populations. The motion was voted down by more than 2 to 1 and replaced by a much more flexible alternative that gave authority to a standing CITES committee (the so-called Animals Committee) to review on a regular basis the impact of trade on many of the most endangered animals.

The second proposal, which focused on mortality in transport, sought to end trade in all species that suffered more than some minimum percentage of deaths between the time of capture and emergence from quarantine. This highly restrictive and unrealistic idea was eventually watered down so completely that it became almost meaningless. The debate about this proposal pointed out the conflicts that aviculturists confront at a highly political meeting such as CITES. Even though we agreed that measures were needed to ensure safe transport for birds, we were forced to counter the blatant misinformation spread by groups whose goal was a total bird trade ban. There was no acceptable middle ground.

Much of the discussion and lobbying during the two weeks of the Conference centered on the trade status of individual plant and animal species, resulting in new restrictions on several types of birds. The delegates have three main ways they can limit trade. The most drastic is to place a species on Appendix I, which prohibits practically all international commerce. In practice it is nearly impossible to lift an Appendix I designation once it has been imposed. Less-threatened species are commonly placed on Appendix II, which allows some carefully monitored trade as long as it can be shown to have no detrimental effects on the wild populations. The third and most flexible alternative is to impose a temporary quota on a species until adequate studies can be completed. This option was selected in several cases in Kyoto.

The most controversial bird issue was the proposal (again from the USA) to place Blue-fronted Amazons (*Amazona aestiva*) on Appendix I. The main exporting country (Argentina) along with Traffic and IUCN argued that many populations of Blue-fronts are stable or increasing, and that export taxes on the parrots are being used to pay for studies of the birds in the wild. The logjam was broken when Argentina offered to impose a voluntary 2-year ban on exports until the population studies could be completed and evaluated. Similarly, Indonesia agreed to a zero quota for the Blue-streaked Lory (*Eos reticulata*). The only common bird in aviculture to be added to Appendix I was the Goffin's Cockatoo (*Cacatua goffini*), whose wild populations are in serious decline (mostly due to habitat destruction). Other birds occasionally found in aviculture that were added to Appendix I included the Red-vented Cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*), and the Rufous-necked (*Aceros nipolensis*) and Great Indian (*Buceros bicornis*) Hornbills. Almost all of the rest of the hornbills were added to Appendix II, along with six species of toucans (Keel-billed, Toco, Cuvier's and Channel-billed toucans; Black-necked and Green Aracaris).

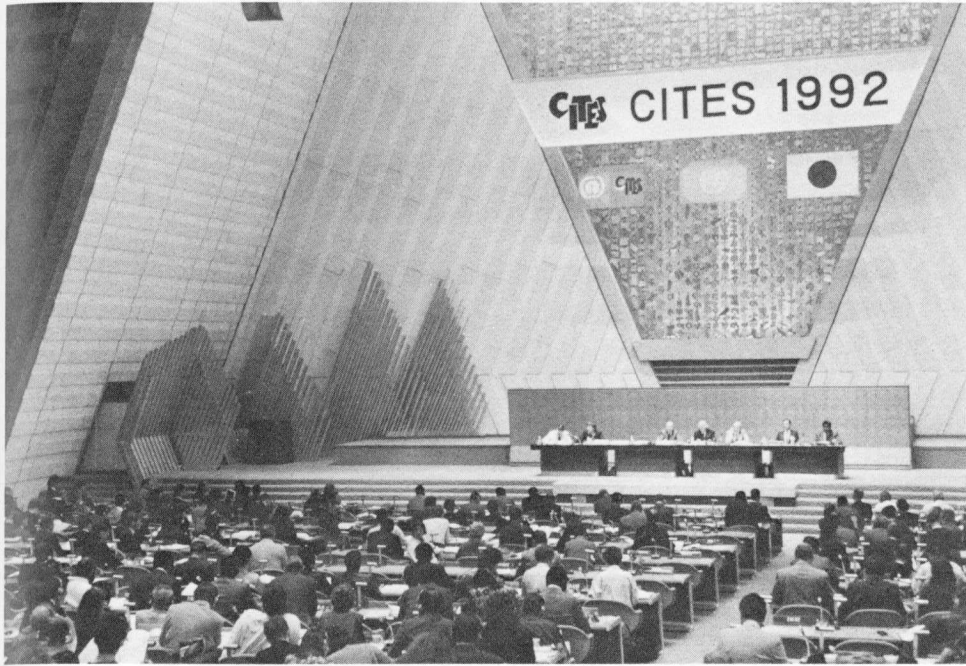
The bird trade fared well in Kyoto partly because it was not the main focus. Larger animals such as elephants, rhinos, and American black bears received much more attention from both the delegates and the press. Nonetheless, birds are viewed by a majority of the delegations as a persistent problem still in need of resolution, so they are bound to remain in the spotlight at future meetings. The fact that decisions about trade quotas can now be made by the Animals Committee, which meets several times a year, rather than just by the full biannual CITES meet-

Photo courtesy of Jonathan Fink



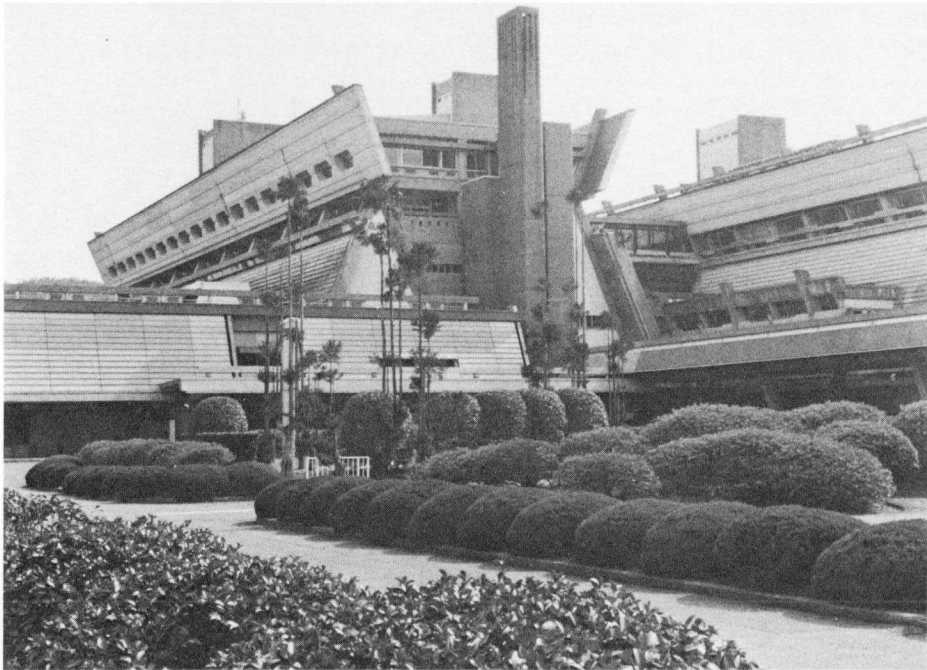
Awaiting the outcome of a committee vote at CITES are AFA representatives Jonathan Fink, Mitsuo Kuribara and Val Clear (front row) and David Alderton and Marshall Meyers of PIJAC (back row).





Plenary session of CITES in the Kyoto International Convention Hall.

Photos by Jonathan Fink

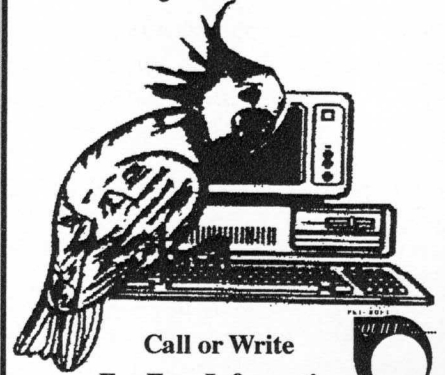


Futuristic Kyoto International Convention Hall.

ings, is a welcome development. The growing support from many Third World nations and conservation organizations for ranching programs and sustainable harvesting of wild-caught birds as incentives for habitat preservation are also encouraging signs. However, aviculturists will have to convince these developing countries that captive-breeding of birds in the U.S. and Europe won't completely eliminate the market for birds harvested from the wild.

Between now and the next CITES meeting (which will be held in the fall of 1994 in the United States), it is essential that AFA maintain its contacts with government, conservation, and pet industry organizations involved in the international bird trade so that we can ensure that the avicultural perspective is represented in all future regulations. ●

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## A La Carte at Metrozoo's Wings of Asia

See this beautiful exhibit while attending the AFA convention, August 2-6, 1992 at the Fontainebleau Hilton Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida

The Miami Metrozoo's grocery list has always been unusual, but the 300 exotic birds on display in Wings of Asia has increased the orders for some of the more bizarre items in the zoo kitchen.

An average of 30,000 mealworms are brought into Metrozoo on a weekly basis to satisfy the voracious appetites of such birds as Chinese Bulbuls, Green Jungle Fowl, Crested Wood Partridges and Greater Green Leafbirds. The zoo's weekly supply of 4,500 crickets goes toward feeding Fire-tufted Barbets, White-collared Mynahs and Black-naped Orioles, among others.

The appetites of the birds exhibited in Wings of Asia cover the gamut of avian diets. Birds that are insectivores, such as Indian Rollers and Blue and White Flycatchers can consume mealworms, crickets, maggots, grubworms, waxworms, corn grubs and fruit flies. Storks and ibises subsist on fish. Nectar is artificially prepared and provided to leafbirds and lories. The rhinoceros hornbill eats mice and apples, along with some soft-bill diet, which consists of fruit cocktail, hard-boiled egg, banana, bird of prey diet, orange, mynah pellets, frugivore diet and a pinch of Nekton-R (a vitamin additive).

Over 30 feed stations are strategically located throughout Wings of Asia, Metrozoo's 1-1/2-acre, free-flight aviary. The various diets are prepared twice daily by Metrozoo's bird keepers and placed at the feed stations during aviary viewing hours, so the public can observe the birds' natural feeding behavior. The birds have free choice among the many diets provided. All have been conditioned during their quarantine periods to particular diets. Upon release into the aviary, the birds recognize their specified diets and continue to eat the menus specially designed for them. ●

## AFA Board Meets in Phoenix

by Jack Clinton-Eitnrear, AFA President  
San Antonio, Texas

The spring meeting of the AFA Board of Directors was held from 15-17 May at Lexington Suites in Phoenix, Arizona. The following are a few of the items of business, among the lengthy agenda, discussed:

The Board discussed responses to the Model Avicultural Plan mailout. It has decided that a statement be issued endorsing the the plan, and other similiar such plans, that enhance avicultural standards. Comments from the various clubs that responded will be forwarded (deleting the club's name) to the MAP organizers.

National legislation was discussed by Gary Lilienthal, AFA Legal Council. The Board shared views on the various bills before the 102nd Session of Congress. Comments from the Board on the most recent bill, H.R. 5013, are to be forwarded to the AFA President by 1 June. A summary of the Board's concerns will then be sent to Mr. Lilienthal.

A detailed report on Business Office activities was given by the new Business Office Director, Mary Bonacci. Low circulation numbers of "Watchbird" are driving the cost of the magazine up. A strategy to increase "over the counter" sales of the magazine was discussed. To increase advertising revenue, it was decided to allow advertisers to utilize the color outside back cover.

Joanne Abramson was approved to co-chair the Conservation committee being responsible for the Small Grants Program. Bob Smith was also approved to chair the Education Committee. Minutes of the meeting will be forwarded to the members of the House of Delegates as soon as they become available.

Saturday evening the AFA Board was the guest of Arizona's "Seedcrackers" bird club. An unbelievable array of food was made available as well as a special cake advertising the upcoming convention in Miami Beach. The buffet and raffle profits were to offset the costs of Gary Clifton and Mickey Ollsen's airfare to the convention. Clifton will speak on "Seedcracker's" Half-moon Conure breeding consortium. Ollsen will be our banquet speaker. ●

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## AFA says THANKS to Conservation, Research and General Fund Supporters

The AFA Conservation, Research and General Committees would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support.

### Donations received from February 28 through April 30, 1992

Clarijane Bush  
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David Staley  
Karen Stamm  
William Thorman, Jr.  
Gary Walz  
Judy Webber





Kevin Gorman, of Rochester, N.Y., chairman of AFA Conservation Committee, was the guest speaker at the May 16th meeting of the Arizona Seed Crackers Society. Kevin delivered a detailed talk on breeding Black-hooded Red Siskins and the AFA's siskin breeding program. The AFA board attended this meeting as guests of the club also.



Everyone who attended the Arizona Seed Crackers May 16th meeting was treated to some pretty great homemade food. Dinner was largely the responsibility of Debbie Clifton with her great cole slaw, BBQ beef and chicken. Lorene Shepard made a great pot of baked beans and Bobbie Sessions baked and decorated two beautiful cakes (shown above) to promote Arizona AFA members' support for the August Miami convention.

## Establishing an Adopt-A-Bird Program

by Sharon Garsee  
Sacramento, California

As a member of Capitol City Bird Society and owner of The Bird Shop in Sacramento, I have been in a position to be offered many birds over the years. Numerous customers have asked me to place birds that they can no longer keep. Their circumstances, such as relocating long distances, landlords not permitting animals, marriage, a new baby, pet becomes vicious, have changed and they do not want to sell the bird, only provide it with a good home or specify they want it to go to a breeder only.

For years I tried independently to place these birds with breeders that I knew would pair them and provide a good climate for them. Eventually, most of my good friends and breeders no longer had space to take in new stock.

It finally occurred to me that Capitol City Bird Society could administer an Adopt-A-Bird Program and offer the birds through the club.

When we receive a call at The Bird Shop, we accept the bird on behalf of the club and they are offered to members who agree to: 1) Take full responsibility for its health and well being, 2) Obtain a mate in a reasonable amount of time (usually six months), 3) Set up the pair for breeding and return one offspring to the club in exchange for ownership of the original bird. These original birds cannot be made pets. The offspring that are returned are placed on our monthly raffle table or used for our show raffle. These first generation birds can be kept as pets or used as breeders.

In the last two years we have taken in 240 birds spanning such categories as doves, finches, parakeets, cockatiels, conures, Amazons and cockatoos.

One of the first birds we gave out was to a 13 year old junior member, Mike Beach, Jr. It was an Orange-winged Amazon. The next spring the pair produced one chick which this junior member hand fed and presented to our fall show as a prize for the raffle.

Initially, all the birds donated were taken to the monthly meeting and a blind draw was conducted between interested members. Too many birds were being returned and it was felt that it was becoming an impulsive decision and people were not really thinking through their responsibility. Currently we have an application to be filled out in advance. When a bird is donated, a committee reviews the pending applications from members and places the bird in the best possible home. The club, at it's expense, sexes the larger birds donated and preference given to the breeder that already has a mate.

Since our program was initiated, I personally know of two other clubs who have started them. I hope more clubs will consider this. Members can contact local pet stores, zoos, etc. and even if they don't get these places to refer birds, many breeders are contacted directly and offered birds they can't use themselves.

The Sacramento Zoo recently had a man contact me. A friend of his had died and left fifty cockatiels for him to care for. He stated that if he didn't find a place soon he was considering opening the cage doors and letting them loose. Our club took the birds and currently have 28 of them spoken for. ●

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AFA regrets these last minute changes. Due to cost saving pre-run of the center insert, a few changes were not possible to make at the early March press time. Regrettably, Rosemary Low will NOT be speaking.

Luncheon • Banquet • Big Raffle

See special Convention insert in this issue for complete information and registration details.