

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

OCTOBER 1989

TRAFFIC Senior Program Officer Addresses AFA Banquet

Editor's Note: The following address was given by Jorgen Thomsen, Senior Program Officer with TRAFFIC (USA), World Wildlife Fund, at the 15th annual convention banquet.

Conservation, Aviculture and the Future*

by Jorgen Thomsen

I am honored to have the opportunity to address you this evening. My thanks to your Board of Directors for inviting me here, and to all of you who have shared your thoughts with me throughout this conference.

It has been my good fortune over the past year to work with Gary Lilienthal in his capacity as the AFA's representative to the Cooperative Working Group on Bird Trade. Gary, joined by Susan Clubb, representing the Association of Avian Veterinarians and Marshall Meyers, representing the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, is participating in this working group in an effort to increase communication between organizations concerned with the importation of wild-caught birds. Other Cooperative Working Group members include representatives of the Humane Society of the United States, the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, the National Audubon Society, and other conservation and animal welfare organizations.

These individuals have agreed to work together in an analysis of U.S. avian imports. While each represents a constituency with diverse interests, working group members share the common goal of identifying trade-related problems and developing workable solutions. In addition to discussing the issues, the group is preparing a report analyzing federal controls of avian imports, exports and captive breeding programs. Upon completion, we hope it will form the basis of the group's recommendations to the federal government for improving the importation system.

Much to the credit of Gary, Susan and Marshall, the views of aviculturists have been well represented throughout this process. And well they should be. Because perhaps no other single group has so much to offer and yet so much at stake, so much invested, in the availability and welfare of exotic avifauna as you do. It is for this reason I so eagerly accepted the invitation to address you tonight. Your concerns and activities are critical to the existence of many avian species, both in the wild and in aviculture. Your knowledge of avian nutrition, behavior, breeding and disease will become increasingly important as habitat loss and other pressures drive many species to the brink of extinction.

But in the same breath I must add that your continuing demand for wild-caught birds in conjunction with the pet industry threatens the survival of several species in the wild. This is not emotionally charged rhetoric. It is simply fact.

Few would disagree that the major threat facing the world's birds, especially tropical species, is habitat loss.

But there is no denying that the harvest of wild birds for sale in

international markets has had similarly devastating effects on both individual populations and entire species. The Hyacinth Macaw, several of the Amazons, and other species are threatened throughout part or all of their range as a direct result of their popularity with pet owners and aviculturists. To blame the decline of these species on use by indigenous cultures or deforestation is delusory.

Even many of the species still considered common in the wild are suffering declines due in a large part to trapping for commercial trade. The Orange-winged Amazon in Guyana and the Blue-fronted Amazon in Argentina have become locally uncommon in many parts of their range. The claim that these are pest species and, as such, should be removed from agricultural areas is not well documented. Therefore, it is questionable whether current export levels of these species benefit any but those people actually involved in the trade.

It is clear that a number of wild populations can no longer withstand the dual pressures of habitat loss and commercial harvest. And, if recent trends are any indication, it appears that individual countries and international treaties will increasingly limit the availability of most or perhaps even all wild-caught birds. These eventualities are not a matter of if, but when.

Therefore it is not simply the birds that are threatened by a changing environment, but you and your related interests. With dwindling supplies, the continued viability and diversity of your collections and breeding programs, as well as of the pet bird industry, will depend on your actions over the next several years.

The question I put before you tonight is not what can be done, but *what will you do* to prepare for these eventualities?

Certainly one course of action is to continue the present practice of lobbying against trade restrictions at the local, federal and international level. This approach has been somewhat effective to date. While a few species are no longer in trade, many are still available, if in limited numbers. Unfortunately, as a result, several species are declining in the wild due to the continued harvest to supply the international market. Therefore, in the long run, unrestricted trade will ultimately reduce your access to a growing number of species.

Perhaps a second, less obvious result of these lobbying efforts is their impact on the public's perception of aviculturists. Advertisements stating that "aviculture is conservation too" are greatly overshadowed by the impression that you support the annual importation of hundreds of thousands of wild-caught birds. An unwillingness to acknowledge trade-associated mortality further clouds your image. No one questions the sincerity of your support for endangered species' survival programs such as those of the Bahamas Amazon and Red Siskin. However, you cannot expect the general public and their representatives to view your contributions to these efforts as adequate compensation for the wholesale removal of birds from the wild.

Your reputation's current vulnerability is not lost on the individuals and organizations that would ban trade entirely. As you are all too well aware, many are increasingly pressuring legislators to restrict the importation and sale of wild-caught birds. If

these organizations are successful in some of their efforts, and their growing momentum indicates that they may well be, your access to an increasing number of species will soon be limited to those specimens already within this country. Those of you working with Australian or Brazilian species are familiar with the difficulties associated with these restrictions. At the very least, if present trends continue, you will be forced to spend increasing amounts of time and money fighting for your right, and, indirectly, the right of commercial importers, to obtain these species from the wild.

I make these remarks not to accuse you of driving species toward extinction, nor to alarm you with threats of impending trade restrictions. Instead, my goal is to encourage your consideration of alternatives to this present course of action; alternatives that will better serve your long-term interests as well as those of the industry and, not the least, the species in the wild.

I believe that it is time for you as aviculturists to expand your role as leaders in avian conservation and the commercial pet industry. Rather than having to defend yourselves from the attacks of others, it is time for you to set your own agenda for the future. This might include securing the availability of exotic avian species for use in aviculture and as pets, and reaffirming your commitment to species' survival in the wild.

To offset the declining availability of wild-caught birds, it is imperative that aviculturists, the import industry and the AFA embark on an aggressive campaign to increase captive breeding programs of the more common and commercially important species. In conjunction with this effort, it is critical that every attempt is made to conserve remaining wild populations, to ensure that some at least survive for the future. It makes no sense, economic or otherwise, to allow these species to be harvested to the point of commercial and biological extinction.

Rather than supporting unlimited trade, your interests would be better served by spear-heading a program to gradually reduce wild bird imports, except as needed for captive breeding and species' survival programs. By seizing the initiative regarding import controls, you would place yourselves at the forefront of any discussions and legislation regarding this issue. This would ensure your concerns receive primary attention. It would also limit the effectiveness of anyone who might continue to characterize you as self-interested hobbyists.

In fact, it is likely that much of your current opposition would be willing to compromise on the issue of wild-caught imports. If it were clear that you were sincere in your efforts to reduce dependence upon wild populations, opponents of the bird trade might be much less inclined to sponsor "ban the trade" legislation at the state and national level. They might even support your programs to increase captive breeding efforts if given the opportunity. It is even conceivable that once import controls and breeding programs were well established, governments now restricting exports of indigenous fauna would make limited numbers of birds available to aviculturists.

But as you know from your own experience, bringing about changes of this type would require a major commitment. Careful long-range planning and coordination among aviculturists would be central to your success.

First, an accurate assessment of current avicultural collections and captive breeding programs would be required. This information would be an essential component of any further planning. I realize that censuses have historically been met with frustratingly low response rates. I am convinced, however, that a means can be found to acquire this information without compromising the security of individual aviculturists.

Upon completing the initial fact-finding phase, your strategies for encouraging the captive representation and breeding of different species could be established. Priorities might take into

account the relative status of each species in the wild and captivity, and an assessment of market demands. Special attention could be given those species that are in danger of extinction.

With a new goal of minimal dependence upon wild avian populations, the primary objective for aviculturists and large-scale commercial breeders becomes the development and maintenance of sustainable, genetically viable captive populations. Accurate breeding records and husbandry practices would be critical in this regard preventing inbreeding, hybridization and/or inadvertent selection for specific traits. So would cooperation among aviculturists.

Establishing an information and breeding network of this type might prove to be your greatest challenge. From my experience, aviculturists are a fiercely independent lot. Unfortunately, the attitude of "I know what is best for my birds," while perhaps benefitting individual members of a species, will not ensure that species' long-term survival. Conservation is much more than coaxing your birds to produce healthy offspring.

It is therefore critical, both for the species and your own credibility, to establish a coordinated, cooperative program to maintain species integrity in captivity. This could require aviculturists to voluntarily sacrifice some of their autonomy. Any loss of personal freedom would, I suggest, be more than compensated for by aviculture's collective contribution to these species' survival. Further, a professional program to maintain exotic species in captivity would discourage interference from government or private agencies with the same goals.

I am not suggesting that every bird in aviculture must be recorded in a studbook or other record system. But I do believe that a subset of the total captive population must be managed to ensure each species' viability. Beyond that, a voluntary system could be established to document the history or "pedigree" of individual birds. A registry of this type, perhaps modeled on the American Kennel Club system, would provide participating breeders with a marketing tool that could be used to increase their profit margins.

Another important component of the coordinated breeding effort would be an identification system for individual birds. A permanent marking system would protect the birds in your collection while helping reduce the incidence of smuggling. This would be especially helpful in protecting the rarer birds in aviculture and in the wild. Furthermore, through techniques such as "genetic fingerprinting," the identity of captive-bred birds could be firmly established. This would remove any questions of origin, easing the way for exchange of captive-bred specimens across domestic and international borders.

The success of any effort to expand American aviculture will depend on providing aviculturists incentives to participate. It appears, from the lack of participation in studbooks and other programs to date, that doing something "for the good of the species" may not be sufficient. Threats that non-participation will spell aviculture's downfall seem similarly ineffective.

It is, therefore, up to you to determine what types of incentives will appeal to aviculturists. Perhaps the industries that serve aviculturists and pet owners could help in this regard. Their future depends on your success; unless captive breeding can fill the gap left by dwindling imports, the recent expansion of the pet bird market will collapse. Investments in aviculture's future could be provided in the form of grants, low- or no-interest loans, and/or material contributions to research and breeding programs.

Conservation and animal welfare organizations also have a stake in your future and might be willing to support your efforts. They could be encouraged to offer public recognition for your increased commitment to species survival. In addition, their public education campaigns regarding the benefits of buying captive-bred birds could be expanded to help increase your

markets. Zoos and humane societies, frequently contacted by people trying to find a home for their pet birds, could encourage them to donate those birds to breeding facilities.

While independence is a character trait admired among aviculturists and non-aviculturists alike, it does not serve the long-term interests of species survival. If, as is often claimed, aviaries are the arks that will sustain species for the future, you will not only have to work together, but also with the conservation community.

I realize that adopting a strategy such as the one I am suggesting would require an extraordinary effort. To convince your fellow aviculturists and the import industry that limiting imports would actually enhance their opportunities might prove difficult at first. To assess current captive breeding efforts and then expand them to meet your needs and those of the pet industry would require a tremendous investment. But the alternative, to delay taking actions of this magnitude until you are forced to do so, could place you in a much less advantageous position.

It is possible that your greatest fear, trade restrictions, could be your greatest asset. Because in the wake of reduced imports for the pet trade, captive-bred birds would have a greatly expanded market. Furthermore, breeders would no longer be forced to lower their prices in an effort to compete against the less expensive imported birds.

The challenges facing you are enormous, but certainly not without reward. Strategies to increase aviculture's role in species conservation and meeting the demand for exotic birds must be developed and implemented. At the same time, a perhaps somewhat skeptical public must be convinced that aviculture really is conservation, not just a hobby supported by the removal of birds from the wild. Achieving these, you will ensure a future for aviculture unrestrained by a lack of birds or unnecessary regulation.

* Teresa Mulliken, Research Assistant with TRAFFIC (USA), World Wildlife Fund, contributed to this address. ●

Message from the President

by Phyllis K. Martin



As the incoming president of the American Federation of Aviculture, I would like to address my remarks to you. Each of you are unique, a one of a kind. You have special talents which can be, and are, devoted to the betterment of avian life. As our year starts, I want to ask you to expend your energies toward making AFA a strong, viable organization. As an AFA'er, you do not have the time or the desire to promote destructive in-house controversy. So, let's become united and join together to promote our rights to keep exotic birds.

Our number one goal this year should be conservation. Many of you have heard the song, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" If we, mankind, continue on the road of wanton destruction of the rain forest and continue to inhabit the lands without regard to the continuation and survival of our feathered jewels, then we will be singing "Where Have All the Birds Gone?"

There is a deep sense of sadness in the definition of the word *extinct*: "not existing now, that which has ended or died out, no longer in use, obsolete, gone or vanished." These words are terrifying and depressing. However, if we look at the word *exterminate*: "to get rid of by destroying, destroy totally, eradicate, abolish, or eliminate," the mood turns dark and insane and we become angry.

There is documented proof of 42 species and 44 subspecies of birds which have become extinct in the past 280 years. At present there are approximately 83 species of birds found in small populations which are in danger of extinction if their habitat is disturbed. Are we going to allow this to happen? No!

Each person within the sound of my voice can help. You must get our message across. Join AFA. Become a representative of AFA. Go out and promote membership to our organization; get active participation and support for AFA's conservation and research programs; urge bird keepers to share their knowledge in the keeping and breeding of birds by writing articles for *Watchbird*, or participating in our conventions and seminars.

We are the **Keepers of the Birds** and we play an important role in our duty to nature. Let's not be the villain. Conservation must become a worldwide project and you, as a member of AFA, must be committed. Your dedication to aviculture will, and can be, the salvation of bird life. ●

Fort Worth Bird Club

The Fort Worth Bird Club was organized in 1953 by 130 local breeders. The club remains the oldest active club in the southwest. In 1989 the club will present its 36th annual all bird show.

The club meets the second Thursday of each month at the Trinity Episcopal Church. Location is Bellaire Drive at Stadium Drive. The meeting consists of a brief business session, a door prize raffle, cake and goodies break, club raffle, and that night's program. Programs vary from breeding information to the latest medical information on aviculture.

The club publishes a monthly newsletter which recaps the past meeting. The newsletter also contains the latest avicultural news from around the country. The back page contains the Trading Post. This page is set aside for members who wish to buy or sell birds.

The club claims many distinguished members. Among them are American Budgerigar Society judges, National Cockatiel judges, American Cockatiel judges, National Finch judges, and National Canary judges. Two other clubs have their origin in the Fort Worth Bird Club: the Dallas/Fort Worth Budgerigar Club and the National Cockatiel Society. Both were formed from the local club.

The Fort Worth Bird Club's members vary from the pet owner to the large commercial breeder. Many of the members raise birds strictly for show. On an average, the Club's members tend to fare well in national competition. This has always allowed the Fort Worth area to remain a hot bed for aviculture.

If you would like any additional information on the Fort Worth Bird Club, please feel free to contact the following people: Sherry Bourne (817) 477-2882, Cindy Noey (817) 923-2897, Gerry Mayo (817) 838-9665, Jeanette Taylor (817) 498-2277. Regards,
Mike Rankin (817) 478-8320 ●

1989 — Year of the Condor

by Bill Toone, Curator/Ornithology
Zoological Society of San Diego, California

The hatching of four California Condor chicks this year brings new hope to a species that has hovered near extinction for decades. Of seven eggs laid this spring, four were found fertile — one from the Los Angeles Zoo and three at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. The successful hatching of the chicks brings the total population of 32 California Condors to a 20-year high.

The first chick to poke through its shell this year was Mandan, named for a North Dakota Indian tribe. Then Towasinah ("friend") from the Los Angeles Zoo made its debut, followed by Kaduku ("strong"). The breeding season concluded when Shasta emerged in early June. The hatchlings, who are all in good health, feast regularly on a diet of chopped mice and egg yolk. In a few months blood tests will be administered to determine the sex of the chicks.

Pre-season Preparation

This year we expanded our behavior observation and data collection to encompass five adult pairs. Time-lapse videotape recordings of all breeding-age birds focused on courtship and nest box activity. We closely monitored the behavior of our most prolific pair, AC4 and UN1, and found that their interaction each year is becoming less aggressive and more affiliative. This year the couple produced Mandan and Shasta. Last year, they parented Molloko, the first California Condor ever bred and hatched in captivity.

Time-lapse video recordings of Molloko gave us a good indication of what to expect from this year's chicks. Remote cameras followed sleep and activity cycles and other behaviors of early development. We confirmed the effectiveness of puppet-rearing and are encouraged by Molloko's interaction with other condors.

In cooperation with the Zoological Society's Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species (CRES), the DNA fingerprinting technique was applied last year to determine the degree of relatedness of the California Condors. The results revealed which individuals with previously unknown pedigrees are sufficiently unrelated to other condors to be recommended as mates. This information was used in pairing condors in advance of the 1989 breeding season.

Back to the Wild

There's a mood of optimism now about efforts to save the California Condor from extinction. As more birds mature, there will be a geometric progression in the number of eggs and chicks produced. It's possible that ten chicks may hatch next year. The most optimistic timetable calls for release of California Condors into the wild in two years.

Field biologists of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game continue to observe the Andean Condors that were released as surrogates into the California Condor's native habitat in December. And at the Wild Animal Park's Condorminium, a facility expansion project is under way, thanks to monies from the California Environmental License Plate Fund and donations from hundreds of concerned individuals. Four new enclosures and a two-story nesting observation area are scheduled for completion in October, well in advance of the 1990 breeding season. ●

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Thick-billed Parrot Release Project: Progress Report of May 22, 1989

by Terry B. Johnson (Endangered Species Coordinator) and
Noel F.R. Snyder (Non-game Biologist), Non-game Branch, Wildlife
Management Division, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Winter and Spring. Since the last update (December 1988), the wild thick-billed parrots in Arizona have been observed most regularly in the Chiricahua Mountains of Cochise Valley. Reports there have varied from 8 to 13 birds, with frequent splintering of pairs. One of the wild fledglings of 1988 is still with the flock, but the other disappeared in late January. Also, several other birds are still reported periodically from central and eastern Arizona (and there is now a fairly credible, if unsubstantiated, report from extreme western New Mexico).

The Chiricahua birds have been seen most consistently around their primary roost area, above 8,000 feet near Rustler Park. Birdwatchers and hikers rambling the crest trails there have enjoyed excellent views of the parrots, which apparently are becoming *the* avian attraction in southeastern Arizona. A reasonably successful sighting tactic has been to sit in the late afternoon on an outcrop that has a commanding view of the east and southeast slopes of the mountains. And listen. Even if you don't hear or see parrots, this is truly a magnificent, relaxing way to spend time!

The flock has shown some very different behavior this spring. Pairs and small groups have often spent days, even weeks, at a time in canyons away from the primary roost. The rugged terrain and dwindling radio signals have at times made it difficult to track them. A bird from the San Diego Zoo was released in early February to provide another strong radio signal.

Recently, though, the birds' activities became rather confusing. The unusually warm, dry spring seems to have affected them as much as it has many other kinds of wildlife. For a week, one pair, and to a lesser extent a second one, spent several hours each day investigating and enlarging cavities in tall snags along ridgetops. These actions were consistent with typical nesting behavior, but the timing was all wrong. This was mid-April, not summer. However, as quickly as it began, the behavior was abandoned.

Then, over the past two weeks, the birds turned serious again. Several hours have been spent each day *apparently* preparing cavities for nesting efforts. Will some birds linger in the Chiricahuas to nest? Or will they all again head back to the Tonto Basin in central Arizona, as they have the last two years? Their departure dates in 1987 and 1988 were from June 11 to June 14, so we may have an answer very soon.

Release of captive-reared birds. We will increasingly be using captive-reared thick-bills for releases this year. Every effort is being made to rear them as wild birds, but even so we may see somewhat greater mortality rates again until they integrate fully into the flock after release. Direct releases into the flock, using transport boxes that are hiked into the area in which the flock is active, should help reduce this risk a bit though.

Captive breeding efforts for releasable birds are underway at several facilities across the country and at the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust in England. Among the cooperators in the United States are the San Diego Zoo, Los Angeles Zoo, Sacramento Zoo, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Phoenix Zoo, Gladys Porter Zoo, Tracey Aviary and The Tyson Research Center.

Tyson is the only cooperator that is really equipped and willing to handle significant numbers of birds of questionable health

Continued on page 54

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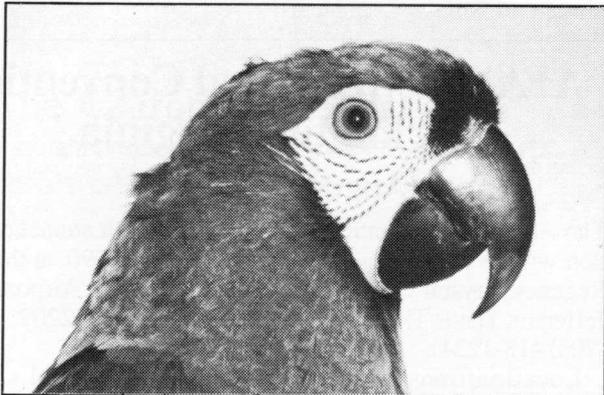
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status. This is an important asset since psittacosis, salmonella, Pacheco's disease and parrot wasting fever have been rampant in some confiscated birds even *after* they have cleared U.S. Department of Agriculture quarantine. While at Tyson in long-term quarantine, the birds will also be used for captive breeding, their progeny (if certified as disease free) being dedicated to the release project. Tyson is willing to handle up to 60 breeding birds for us. Several birds seized by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents last year and which have been exposed to various diseases are now headed there.

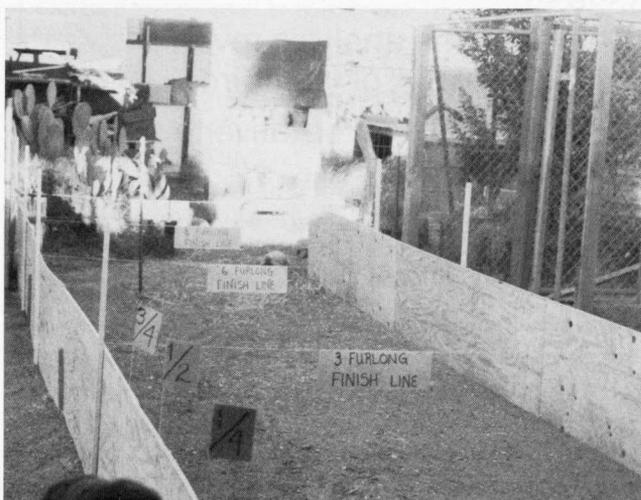
Unexpected benefits. The Arizona thick-billed effort has also caught the attention of several countries with psittacine problems of their own. Some recovery programs are already making use of what we have learned to develop or improve their own parrot release projects. It has been particularly heartening to see Mexico begin to take an interest in the project. We are now beginning to explore possibilities of releases and surveys in the Sierra Madre.

Contributions. Private individuals and organizations have helped make the Thick-billed Parrot Reintroduction Project possible by matching funds contributed by federal agencies and by Arizona's Non-game Wildlife Income Tax Checkoff. The Checkoff provides a funding base for the non-game and endangered wildlife efforts of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. If you would like to make a *tax-deductible* contribution to this project, please send it to: Thick-billed Parrot Project, c/o Terry B. Johnson, Arizona Game and Fish Department, 2222 West Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85023-4399. ●

Turtle Races

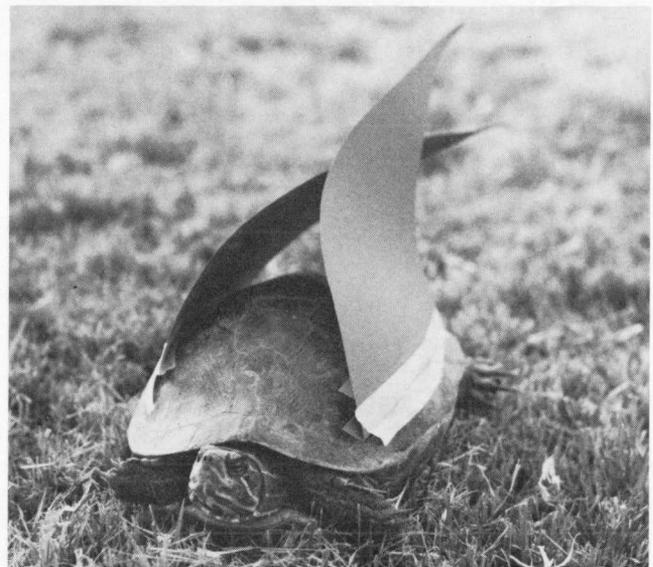
L.O.O.N.Y. Central and Turkey Flat L.O.O.N.Y. recently sponsored a "Day at Surf Paradise" in Phoenix, Arizona to raise funds for AFA. Such infamous names in turtle racing as Swift Sue, Kissitgoodbye, Dashing Diana, Turtlenni, Bill's Bullett and many more were assembled from around the world to compete in six races. A new track record was set in the 3-yard race by Rockabye Red Ear (occasionally streaking down the lane) who turned in a blistering time of 17:43.88.

Photos by Davis Koffron, AZ



"Surf Paradise" race track, the fastest track in the west!

Slightly over \$230 was raised for AFA in one evening from a group of 17 people. Special thanks go to Ruth, Steve and Diana McNabb for hosting "Surf Paradise" (building the track and providing the turtles and some nice snacks); Davis Koffron for supplying the racing forms and calling the races; Bill Kelly for providing the sound system and special effects; and Sunny



Infamous racing tortoise, "Kissitgoodbye" in pre-race warm-up exercises... nope, the paste-on wings didn't help!

Clarkson and Barb Koffron for running the betting windows. Other L.O.O.N.Y. members and guests who participated and gave financial support include Gary and Elise Birkhimer, Mark Clarkson, Gary and Debbie Clifton, Ken Graham, Sue Jordan, Trudy Kelly, Connie Stone and Charlie Shepard.

L.O.O.N.Y. Bins were founded on the principle that small groups could get together and have fun while raising money to help support AFA. One of the requirements for membership in L.O.O.N.Y. is being an AFA member, the other requirement is to not get overly serious. For more information about L.O.O.N.Y., contact L.O.O.N.Y. Central, Minister of Propaganda, 307 W. Siesta Way, Phoenix, AZ 85041. ●

AFA'S 16th Annual Convention Arlington, Virginia

August 7-12, 1990

The American Federation of Aviculture's 16th annual convention will be held from August 7 through 12, 1990, at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Washington National Airport, 2799 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202, (phone (703) 418-1234).

Location/transportation facts — Airport hotel situated adjacent to Washington National Airport; complimentary airport limo pickup. Forty minutes from Dulles International Airport. Few blocks from metro and five minutes from Old Town Alexandria. Two miles from Washington, D.C.

Begin your sojourn into luxury and excitement as one of three glass elevators whisks you almost silently skyward to one of the hotel's 685 guest rooms. Your dining expectations are met by two different restaurants. Try Cinnabar, the delightful full-service restaurant overlooking the atrium lobby, for informal breakfasts, lunches and dinners. For a spectacular view that's surpassed only by the cuisine and attentive service, visit Tidewater. This rooftop, seafood restaurant comes complete with a panoramic view that many say is the best in Washington. It's perfect for lunch, dinner or cocktails.

Leisure-time activities are equally diverse. Work out in the health club with outdoor pool and spa, or jog along the riverside running trail.

If shopping is the activity of your choice, take the complimentary shuttle to the multi-level Crystal City mall and arcade, with over 125 shops — including restaurants and theaters.

Also close by are the shops and sights of Old Towne, Alexandria and Georgetown. Take your pick of attractions as well. The Capitol Building, Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Institution, and Air and Space Museum are just ten minutes from the hotel.

AFA convention guest rooms rates are \$63 single or double occupancy; \$73 triple occupancy plus appropriate state and local taxes. The hotel check-in time is 3 p.m. Room assignment prior to that time is on an availability basis. Check-out time is 12 noon. Any deviation must be communicated through the front office. Confirmation of late check-out is based on expected occupancy for that day.

An indoor garage provides parking for 362 cars. The Hyatt is offering AFA registered guests 50% off the prevailing daily rate.

For more information contact AFA, P.O. Box 56218, Phoenix, Arizona 85079-6218 or call (602) 484-0931. ●

Watchbird Magazines Donated To Central American Zoos

Central American zoos, while typically underfunded and staffed, have recently united to form the Mesoamerican Zoological Association (Asociacion Mesoamericana de Zoologicos). In support of this much needed organization, the American Federation of Aviculture recently donated an annual subscription to the various members of the association. Additional acknowledgement should be given to Morgon Knox and the Exotic Bird Club of Florida for contributing funds to offset postage costs. ●

Contributions Received For Conservation/Research

edited by Jack Clinton-Eitniear

The following individuals made financial donations in the months of June/July/August to the Conservation and/or Research Funds. A special thanks is given for your generosity.

Marcia L. Bernard
Mary Elaine Radford
Duane Dawson
Hugh S. Bower
Ellen Tannehill
Karl Heinz Wallburg
James Perry
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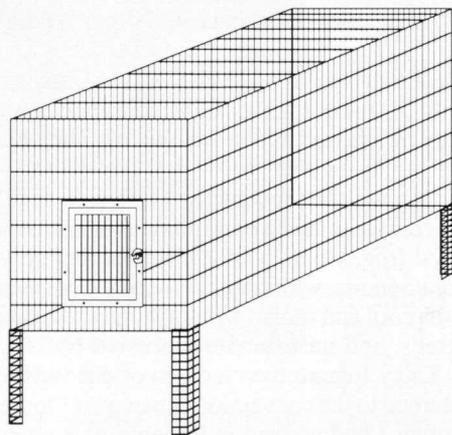
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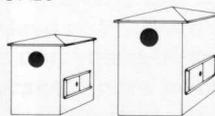


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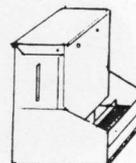
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Along the Arizona Trail: The AFA Convention Tours

A New Yorker's 1st AFA Convention

by Nora Stanley
Brooklyn, New York

I first learned about the 15th Annual Convention of the AFA from *Bird Talk* magazine. I was eager to hear the presentations by authors I'd been reading for years, such as Joseph Forshaw and John Stoodley, as well as learning other aspects of aviculture. Besides the convention in Phoenix, Arizona, there were also tours offered through the state. In New York City aviculturists are few and far between, and I knew these tours would bring me in closer contact with other "bird people."

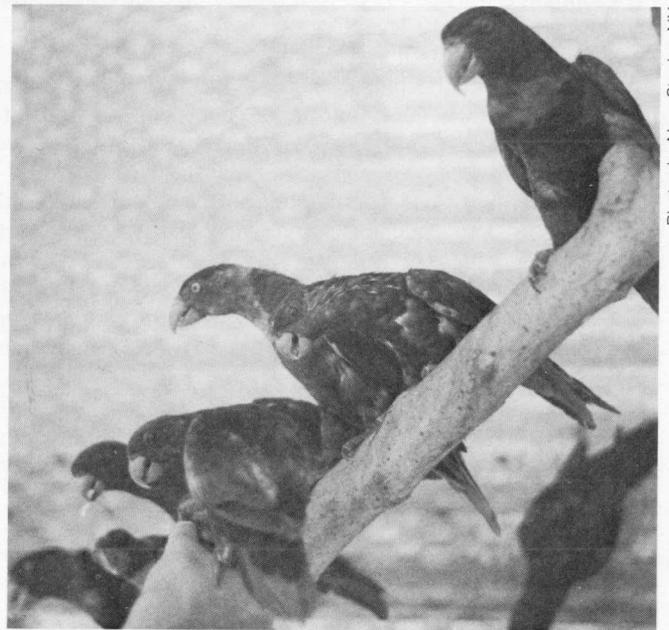
The tours encompassed everything, from nature preserves, the Grand Canyon, aviaries, even shopping in Mexico. Just about all of Arizona's environment was encountered, from the searing aridity of the Sonoran Desert to the muddy, verdant Patagonia-Senoita Preserve. And as the buses rolled along, one could observe raptors and road runners beside the highways.

Although I enrolled in the convention activities rather late, I was still able to register for all the events. The morning after I arrived, I strolled through orange groves, saw jack rabbits and road runners, and then arrived to meet the tour bus to the Sonoran Desert Museum. In an area of Arizona (which is federally protected) were multileveled indoor and outdoor exhibits where visitors could watch a sleeping jaguarundi in its den, handle a snake, or walk into aviaries of hummingbirds and other birds. There was even a small cave to traverse. The grounds were planted with saguaro, wild gourd, cholla, and other native plants which encouraged wild lizards and ground squirrels to approach readily.

The next day our tour headed out to the Grand Canyon. We left behind saguaro and desert scrub as the bus reached higher elevations; the cooler, moister air supported pine and oak forests. At the first stop, I was awed at the size of the Grand Canyon as the clouds played along different layers of the rim. At the next stop, cold droplets of rain pierced our clothes as the winds buffeted us. Lightning flashed dramatically on the far rim as thunder rolled over us. Our last stop that day was in Cameron to shop for native American crafts.

Wednesday was a shopping tour to Nogales, Mexico. I arrived with an empty duffel bag and returned to the tour bus with a full bag and empty pockets after having a great time haggling for goodies.

For the next three days I attended over two-thirds of the scheduled lectures. If I wasn't interested in a topic, I browsed in the Exhibition Hall, and on one afternoon visited the Phoenix Zoo with another AFA member. I also had a great time at the evening events, the cowboy cookout on Friday, and the banquet on



Photos by Nora Stanley, NY

Lories in abundance at feeding time, Wildlife World Zoo, Litchfield Park, Arizona, Sunday, August 13th AFA tour.

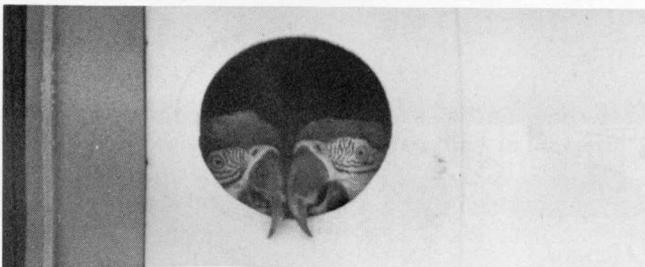
Saturday.

On Sunday, we toured four aviaries in Phoenix. The buses headed in different directions so that no one place would be too crowded. Our first stop was to Roer's Bird Ranch, which has had an impressive breeding record for over 40 years. The next stop was at Crosser's Aviaries where cages were very modern and well constructed; they were also quite hot, with a thermometer reading 102° in the shade. The Crossers are looking into misting systems for cooling, while Roer's is heavily planted with trees and shrubs which shade the cages. Crosser's Aviaries feature mostly psittacines, with a wonderful pair of Hyacinth Macaws; while Roer's also has unusual softbills and gamebirds.

Our third stop was the Wildlife World Zoo, a sprawling 40-acre park opened to the public in 1984 after the success of its breeding programs. Many endangered species have bred there such as the Andean Condor. One highlight was the lory feeding cage, where a rainbow of tame lories will readily eat apple chunks while perched on visitors' arms. Besides birds, hoofed animals, kangaroos, large cats, and other wildlife were also on display.

The last tour was to Mile Hi/Ramsey Canyon. This tour was limited to 29 participants, riding in three vans, so the wildlife would not be stressed. Upon arriving, we immediately saw many types of hummingbirds swarming around the feeders. As we walked through the preserve we were able to approach deer, a hummingbird nest, and a pond containing a protected subspecies of leopard frog. We then headed to another conservation park, Patagonia/Senoita, which was close to the Mexican border. Patagonia was cool and moist, with lush, green foliage, giant cottonwood trees, and unfortunately elusive birds, startled by our arrival. Kathy Ingram then led two of our vans to another park, but I returned to the convention center a bit "toured out."

Although I had arrived in Phoenix as a stranger, and a new member of the AFA, I had no problem talking to the other tour members about birds. I learned a lot during the convention talks, of course, but I felt that the real knowledge came from conversations on the tour buses with other AFA members. I now have cross-country friends I can call up to "talk birds" with. And, if I hadn't toured Ramsey Canyon with Ruth McNabb, I would not have a very special Rainbow Lorikeet to remind me about this wonderful trip! ●



Safe in their nest barrel, a pair of Crosser's Blue and Gold Macaws keep a watchful eye on the invasion of AFA'ers on tour through their aviary.