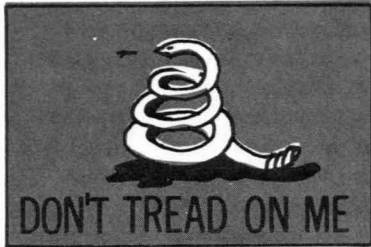


DON'T TREAD ON ME

by Joseph Griffith



The symbol that leads this article was used by the colonists to warn the British that they intended to stick together in their fight for independence. It is this unity that won them the day, and it is the need for a similar unity that prompts this article.

No one can deny that there are good reasons for some of the infighting that goes on between many factions of those who keep animals of one kind or another. There is no reason why legitimate arguments of this kind should not continue; they sometimes do some good.

But there is another way of looking at it. EVERY PERSON WHO DEALS WITH ANIMALS, IN WHATEVER CAPACITY, HAS A COMMON INTEREST WITH EVERYONE ELSE WHO DOES SO. The USDI has been working very diligently to separate the various interests of persons interested in animals in an effort to be able to deal with us piecemeal. Unfortunately it has had some success. Zoos don't like the pet industry, hobbyists don't like commercial interests, researchers want everyone else put down except themselves. The result is that each of us is losing. The ultimate intent of the Injurious Species Proposal is to halt the importa-

tion of ALL animals and unless we stand together, this will happen.

If a total ban is successfully instituted, the next step will be to ban possession. What will you do then? Hobbyists will lose the animals that they enjoy so much, zoos will slowly fade out, researchers will be unable to work, and several thousand people will be out of jobs.

On April 16, I went to Washington on behalf of PIJAC. The meeting was held at the offices of Marshall Meyers, attorney of record for PIJAC, and was in the nature of a council of war. I spent four days there and brought home a stack of materials concerning birds that will have to be worked on in the 30 day period following the meeting. (Long before this appears in print.)

Here are some of the things that I learned.

Mr. Meyers is not only working on behalf of the pet industry and hobbyists, but he is also working very closely with the attorneys for ZOOACT (Zoological Action Committee). This group should not be confused with the AAZPA (American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria) which is an older and very entrenched organization that refuses to see the writing on the wall and would like to see the pet industry and hobbyists put down.

The Lacey Act is a criminal statute. In such a case, the burden of proof lies with the accuser (the USDI). Legally and ethically the USDI is constrained to prove that each and every animal is injurious. This is a point that should be pushed for most strongly.

The USDI has failed to publish criteria for injuriousness. The only document available is an inter-departmental memo entitled, Provisional Criteria for Injurious Wildlife. This has no legal standing. It is interesting to note that several persons at the Smithsonian Institute are of the opinion that there is no way in which the USDI can apply these provisional criteria to any animals.

PIJAC is going for a Dirty List. In the event that this cannot be made to stand alone, a tripartite list will be sought. Such a list is similar to that described by me in a former article in this magazine.

A. Injurious. Entry under permit only and with severe controls.

B. Not Proved. This would be all wildlife not mentioned on the A or C lists. A modest permit would be required. Records would be kept of all wildlife sold, traded or given away. Transfer of animals would only be to holders of similar permits, but acquisition of permits would be so easy that it would not be a problem. Reports of transfer or death of animals in this category would probably be made yearly.

C. Unrestricted. No permit required. PIJAC is asking for a hearing before the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. This committee held a hearing on December 12, 1974, but they only listened to the USDI. The committee has a new chairman and there is now a chance that the other side of the story will be heard.

The USDI hopes to have the proposal finalized and in effect in July of this year. As soon as possible thereafter, Marshall Meyers will file a complaint before the court. This will force the USDI to prove its case before the court. There's not much likelihood that it can.

All of this takes funds and anyone who wishes to make a contribution is certainly welcome to do so. But, more important is a unified stand. PIJAC, ZOOACT and AFA are gathering experts in every biological specialty to testify before the congressional committee and the court.

PIJAC and ZOOACT intend to have a bill introduced before the congress that would create a new agency that would have sole authority over all animals and animal products not imported as processed foods. One of the stipulations of this bill would be that it maintain an advisory council composed of all of the various groups concerned.

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At this point, every agency that has anything to do with animals is issuing new regulations, many of which are either redundant or conflicting. Furthermore, a single agency with an advisory council would be less likely to leap before it looks.

This is the most severe threat that we have faced to date, but let it be a lesson to you. No matter in what capacity you deal with animals, this is not the end. Remember the common interests of others and be prepared to act. Federal and local governments are becoming increasingly restrictive and only through unity can we prevent future threats, or at least modify them so that they are livable.

Mr. Meyers pointed out to me that one of the most powerful groups in the country is the National Rifleman's Association. They have enormous political clout. He is of the opinion that if all of the animal hobbyists of this country join together, we would have as much clout. It's pretty exciting to think that no agency of the government would ever dare to do this kind of thing again without consulting (and listening to) the hobbyists. Let's face it, not everyone has a gun, but almost everyone has some kind of animal.

Our government is designed to listen to us, but it is unfortunately true that we often have to shout in its ear. So raise the flag and keep reminding them that it is a dangerous thing to "TREAD ON ME" ■

Fledgling's Corner

by Judy Jennings



EGG DECORATING

Many countries of the world decorate eggs for the sheer pleasure of creating an intricate and interesting art piece. Romanians are among the most famous egg painters.



You can do it, too! And its even more fun for a family that raises birds, as they have different kinds of eggs available.

You need only fine-tipped marking pens or watercolors and a fine brush, water (vinegar optional), and some paper towels.

1. Carefully clean the egg's surface.
2. Puncture the top and bottom with a pin. Enlarge the lower hole to about 1/4-inch, then blow through the smaller hole on top. This will force out the contents.
3. Carefully draw the outline of the design on the side of the eggshell, erasing any extra marks.
4. Add color!
5. (Optional) Spray with clear plastic to protect water-base paint from moisture in the air or on the hands.

Patience is a virtue with this project, but the finished product is well worth the time and effort. Painted eggs portray a variety of subjects. Geometric patterns lend themselves well. Many are of beautiful birds. You might do your favorite ■

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