

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

APRIL 1994

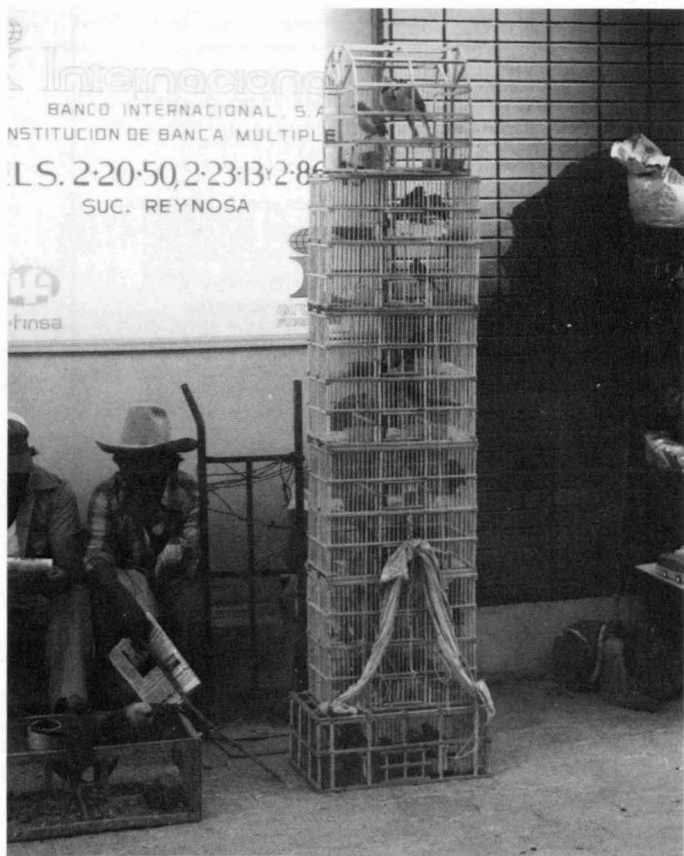
They're Back . . . Beware of Bargain Birds

On 23 February I traveled to Mission, Texas to attend an auction of confiscated birds. The selection being offered included Yellow-naped, Yellow-headed, White-fronted, Red-tailed and Lilac-crowned Amazon parrots as well as Half-moon and Green Conures. Most birds appeared rather young with some sporting attractive, dyed yellow heads, an often telltale sign of birds of questionable origin.

Despite Texas being within several hundred miles of Mexican parrot populations, species from northeastern Mexico were in the minority at the auction. Hopefully this is due to the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas's recent ban on internal commerce in their native parrots. The most abundant species being offered, with 50 or more next door for the next auction, was the Yellow-naped. This bird appears to be suffering heavily from illegal poaching in Guatemala and Honduras. It is certainly a species that needs to be bred in larger numbers and looked out for when the deal seems too good to be true. ●



Photos by Jack Clinton-Eitniew



Birds for sale in Mexican border town. These birds sometimes find their way north. Low prices are tantalizing. Quite a few have dyed head feathers in hopes of mis-representing them during the spring and summer months.



International Team Assembles To Save Siberian Crane

On January 8, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) will ship two endangered Siberian Cranes to India, as part of an international recovery effort for the species. Soon, these two birds will join two from Russia and two from the Jaipur Zoo in India, for release into the wild at India's Keoladeo National Park. Through this project, researchers from the U.S., India, Russia, and Japan will join forces in a concerted effort to save the flock of Siberian Cranes that winters in India. In the winter of 1992-93, only five birds remained in this flock. If the Indian birds disappear from the wild, they will lose the knowledge of their 5,000 mile migration route, which still remains unknown to scientists.

The two female cranes from ICF, named Gorby and Boris, were hatched last summer and raised by their parents in isolation from humans, so they are wild. ICF veterinarian Julie Langenberg will travel with the two cranes from Chicago to New Delhi, via Frankfurt, Germany. Lufthansa German Airlines is donating cargo space for the birds, and to ensure their safety and comfort during transit, is also donating a round-trip seat for the birds' veterinary escort. Lufthansa has used the crane in its corporate logo since its founding in 1926 — this stylized crane graces the tail of every Lufthansa aircraft.

According to Dr. Langenberg, "This experimental release is an important milestone in the conservation of endangered species and international cooperation. Releases of captive-reared endangered animals are still rare, so a project like this is significant to the whole conservation movement. Because so many countries are involved, it takes a big effort to organize this kind of project, including permits, quarantine of birds, transportation connections, visas for cooperating scientists, and coordination of care of the birds at widely separated facilities."

The goals of this winter's release are threefold: researchers hope to test winter release methods, they hope to bolster numbers of the flock with these six immature birds, and they hope to learn the migration route by using satellites to track the birds when they migrate north to Siberia in the spring. Dr. Hito Higuchi, a researcher with the Wild Bird Society of Japan, is providing special radio transmitters and data analysis. Once the migration route is known, conservation measures and hunter education programs can be started along the route.

The Siberian Crane is a majestic, snow-white bird standing about five feet tall, with a pink face and black wing tips. It breeds in the far north of Siberia and winters in southern China, central India and Iran. These three widely separated populations are all endangered. Only 10 to 11 birds winter along the Caspian lowlands of Iran. The central flock that winters in India has declined from more than 200 in the mid-1960s, to just five known birds in the winter of 1992-93. Perhaps as many as 3,000 cranes constitute the flock wintering in China; these birds all winter on the mudflats of Poyang Lake and Dongting Lake along the mid-Yangtze lowlands. Although the population of this eastern flock is stable for now, its fragile winter habitat is threatened by ongoing construction of the world's largest dam, upstream on the Yangtze at Three Gorges.

In the late winter of 1992-93, Finnish and Russian specialists joined Iranian colleagues in an effort to capture and place satellite radios on the cranes in Iran. Unfortunately, the cranes migrated before capture efforts had met with success.

During the past three summers, Russian, Indian, German, and American colleagues have collaborated to rear and release Siberian Cranes on the breeding grounds near the Kunovat River in western Siberia. In 1992, one crane migrated south

with Eurasian Cranes, and in 1993 two captive-reared juveniles joined a family of wild Siberian Cranes and apparently migrated. Hunting in Afghanistan and Pakistan are major problems facing this flock. Pakistani colleagues have established Lakki Crane Sanctuary along the Kurram River and are using captive Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes to attract wild cranes to the sanctuary and away from the crane hunters.

Serving as world center for the study and preservation of cranes, the ICF is located five miles north of Baraboo, Wisconsin. Dr. George Archibald of ICF is the overall project coordinator. Dr. Sasha Sorokin, of the All-Russian Research Institute of Nature Conservation and Reserves, is leader of the newly formed international recovery team for the Siberian Crane. He and field researcher Uri Markin will escort the two birds from Russia to Keoladeo National Park. The Indian project director is Arvinder Brar, Deputy Chief Wildlife Warden of Keoladeo National Park, and the Indian veterinarian is Dr. Pradeep Malik. For financial support, we wish to thank the Office of International Affairs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Government of India, and Lufthansa Airlines.

The birds will depart from ICF by van at 10:00 a.m. on January 8 for O'Hare Field. They leave from O'Hare at 5:00 p.m. aboard Lufthansa flight 431, arriving in Frankfurt at 8:15 a.m. local time on January 9. They depart for India aboard Lufthansa flight 760 at 1:10 p.m., and arrive at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi at 1:20 a.m. local time on January 10. They will be driven immediately to Keoladeo, where they will be held in quarantine for one week to allow them to adjust to the new environment.

For more information, contact David Thompson or Bryant Tarr, (608) 356-9462. ●

Captive Management Committee Meets in Arizona

The AFA Captive Management Committee recently met in a special session in Phoenix, Arizona. The committee's new chair, Sharon Garcee, mapped out and received feedback from the committee members present. A number of the committee's slate of activities should be brought to the members' attention:

AFA Exotic Breeding Registry. The software and paperwork (certificates and pedigrees) for this effort are complete. Implementation within the AFA membership is targeted to begin during April-May. A very comprehensive promotional campaign is being planned with incentives for those who register more than five birds.

Club Consortium Development Handbook. A manual for those clubs wishing to establish consortiums is being planned. It will include choosing the right species for your club, how many birds are needed and sample contracts and breeding schemes.

Priority Species Education. Efforts will continue, mainly through *Watchbird*, to provide information to members as to species that require a significant amount of attention else they will disappear from aviculture in the years to come.

Additional Activities. Development of a small grants, likely of a matching type, program as well as becoming involved in aiding breeders locate birds as required to maximize genetic diversity were discussed and will undoubtedly be addressed more fully in future meetings.

Those desiring additional information on this committee are encouraged to contact either Sharon Garcee at 916-784-1314, or Gary Clifton at 602-830-4920. ●

Ornithological News — Little Known Species

Dr. Andrew Whittaker has located two very interesting and little-known species in Brazil. Last year, a pair of Chestnut-headed Nunlets (Bucconidae: *Nonnula amaurocephala*) was observed foraging during about five minutes on the north bank of the Unini River, in the extreme northern part of Jaú National Park (west of the Rio Negro, north of Manaus, Brazil). This is apparently the first record of this species since it was collected near Manacapuru in about 1921.

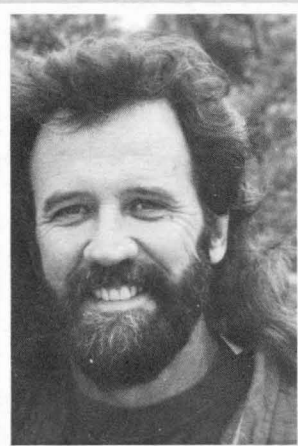
His most interesting news, though yet to be confirmed, is the probable re-discovery of a small flycatcher: *Hemitriccus inornatus*. It was found 45 km from Manaus on the east bank of the Rio Negro in an area of *campiña* vegetation. Its vocalization was recorded and later played back for Ted Parker a few months before his tragic death. Ted reconfirmed that it was a *Hemitriccus* but not one that he knew the call of. Two specimens were collected and it is hoped that comparison with the sole "type" skin (which was collected on the other side of the Rio Negro in 1831) will confirm this ID.

Source: *Bird Life International, Pan American News, Vol. 8, No. 3, Dec. 1993 issue.* ●

Southern California Mourns Aviculturist Butch Ahlers

10-3-50 to 2-5-94

by Nancy Vigran



Southern California aviculture reaped many benefits from a man it will now sorely miss. Butch Ahlers, age 43, taught and touched many bird and animal owners and breeders for many years as a pet and supply shop owner and as a friend.

His interest in animals started at an early age with homing pigeons and a pet squirrel monkey. He raised fancy pigeons and kept lizards in the garage.

In the '70s, with the help of neighbors, he trapped a pair of escaped parrots and that hooked him says his mother, Nora Ahlers.

He tried a stint with falconry and then went into the pet store business and started raising birds with his wife Sheila.

Known best as owner of Furs 'n Feathers pet shops in Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, Butch also went into partnership with Mike Omartian to open California Cageworks in 1990.

Butch loved Sun Conures, but also raised many species of macaws and cockatoos as well as boxers, pot-bellied pigs and Persian cats.

Butch was active in the West Valley Bird Society, serving as raffle chairman in 1982 and the Simi Valley and Ventura bird clubs as well. He spoke to many clubs in the western United States on rearing birds and building aviaries.

When the Ahlers moved to their Moorpark ranch, Butch was often found in his citrus groves. He enjoyed "having the trees grow and work for me 24 hours a day," he used to say.

Butch also enjoyed restoring antique cars, a hobby he shared with his brother-in-law. His first was a '47 Chevy; then he spruced up a '34 Buick and a '58 Cadillac.

The father of one son, Butch also had a stepdaughter and two grandchildren. His wife Sheila continues to carry on the legacy they founded together in handrearing birds and raising other animals. ●

Board Meets in New Orleans

Just prior to the New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration, the AFA Board met for their winter meeting in festive New Orleans. While some of the board members were draped with colorful feathers and beads, most retained their senses and contributed significantly to what should be considered a productive meeting. Some of the motions passed include the following. Complete minutes will be sent to delegates and are available to the general membership by requesting, in writing, such with the business office.

- A number of new State Coordinators were approved including: Gloria Scholbe, Wisconsin; Jeanne Murphy, Louisiana; and Ray Vander Lust, Colorado.

- The AFA pledged its support of the newly created Disaster Relief Response Plan drafted by the Florida Federation of Avian Societies (FFAS).

- Due to its size and number of aviculturists, a third State Coordinator position was approved for the State of Florida.

- Approval was given for the development of a Legislative Resource Library.

- Various meeting motions approved include conducting both the Spring and Fall (1994) board meetings in Phoenix, Arizona and the 1995 Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

- The next meeting of the AFA Board of Directors will be in Phoenix, Arizona from 6 - 8 May 1994. ●

Positive Effects of Hurricane Hugo:

Record Years for Puerto Rican Parrots Nesting in the Wild

by J. Michael Meyers, Francisco J. Vilella and Wylie C. Barrow, Jr.

*Editor's note: When Hurricane Hugo struck in 1989, it had serious impacts on some species of wildlife as well as on people. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Picoides borealis*) in South Carolina, for example, were hit particularly hard. (See *Bulletin Vol. XIV, No. 9-10.*) But the following account shows that, for at least one species, the storm may have had a silver lining.*

In September 1989, Hurricane Hugo passed over the Luquillo Mountains of Puerto Rico. The rain forest in these mountains is the last refuge of the critically endangered Puerto Rican parrot (*Amazona vittata*). As expected, fewer parrots were counted in this part of the Caribbean National Forest in 1990, but over the next two years the wild flock produced a record number of young. Environmental changes caused by Hurricane Hugo may have played a part in these increases.

Since the arrival of Europeans in the Caribbean 500 years ago, many of the unique wildlife species of these islands have declined or become extinct. The Puerto Rican parrot was once abundant and widespread, but by the early 1970's deforestation, hunting, and nest robbing had reduced its population to 13 individuals. Fortunately, a cooperative effort of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Forest Service (FS), and Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources has prevented the extinction of this bird, the only endemic parrot species remaining in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. From 1971 to 1989, the number of Puerto Rican parrots grew from fewer

than 20 to more than 88.

Post-hurricane Population Increases

In August 1989, one month before Hurricane Hugo, 47 Puerto Rican parrots were counted in the wild. Three months after the storm, only 20 to 22 parrots were seen, and only three breeding pairs were known to have survived. Traditional foraging areas may have been devoid of food after the hurricane, which struck before the parrots' winter breeding season. In 1990, breeding activity was low; three pairs nested, but only one pair successfully fledged young.

In both 1991 and 1992, however, the wild flock of Puerto Rican parrots produced a record six successful nests each year, the highest number since the 1950's¹. In 1991, six pairs nested in the wild and produced 20 eggs, ten of which hatched. Of the ten nestlings, two were poorly developed and died. All but one of the eight surviving nestlings fledged successfully in 1991. The one unsuccessful fledging occurred at a PVC nest; after falling from the nest twice in premature fledging attempts, the nestling was placed in the FWS aviary at Luquillo. Production of seven fledged parrots in 1991, however, was above the average for fledging prior to the hurricane. From 1987 through 1989, an average of five parrots fledged in the wild each year.

In 1992, six pairs of parrots in the wild produced 18 eggs. The 15 eggs that hatched and the ten nestlings that fledged were records. The average number of wild parrots fledged in 1991 and 1992 was 8.5, about 33 percent more than the average 1975-1989 fledging rate.

Expansion of the parrots' breeding range also occurred after Hurricane Hugo. For the first time in recent record, a nest was found in the lower transitional forest of the Luquillo Mountains. All previously recorded parrot nest sites had been in the palo colorado (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) life zone, a forest of higher elevation². Moreover, also for the first time in recent record, a natural cavity nest was discovered in a large tabonuco tree (*Dacryodes excelsa*). The tabonuco tree was once an abundant, dominant overstory tree of lower Cordillera and moist limestone forests of northern Puerto Rico.

Possible Benefits of Habitat Disturbance

Why did these increases occur during the past two nesting seasons? A decline in parrot reproduction would be expected in years following a major hurricane. Such storms, however, may have positive long-range effects on the rain forest. The forests of the Caribbean have evolved with hurricanes, and their habitat characteristics have been shaped in part by the disturbances resulting from violent storms every 25 to 50 years.

In the Luquillo Mountains, most of the rain forests where the Puerto Rican parrot currently nests and forages have been relatively undisturbed for 50 years. But this mountainous habitat may not be best for the parrots. Soil fertility is low on the steep mountain slopes, and the area is probably too wet for good parrot nesting. The rich coastal plain forests, destroyed by agriculture earlier this century, may have been better nesting habitat.

Older, undisturbed forests, such as those that provide the last refuge for the Puerto Rican parrot, are not highly productive. Ecologically, these forests are approaching a maintenance stage — less energy is put into reproduction and growth than is put into maintenance of the plants. Consequently, fruit, seeds, and buds, which are necessary food resources for the parrots, may not be abundant throughout the year. When forests are disturbed by storms, however, more energy flows into reproduction and growth. Hurricane Hugo may have stimulated

such activity in the parrots' current forest habitat. Thus, increases in clutch sizes and numbers of nests may result from the parrots' feeding on new growth that is high in the nutrients necessary for breeding — new growth stimulated by the hurricane's disturbance. Another possible reason for the increase in parrot productivity is that the hurricane forced parrots to disperse into the lowlands in search of food, which ultimately may have led them to discover new nesting sites.

Important Management Efforts

Because of its seriously reduced numbers and range, intensive management of the Puerto Rican parrot is necessary to prevent its extinction. Since 1968, biologists have worked cooperatively to solve problems at nesting sites. Predation on nestlings or adult parrots by rats, raptors, and snakes; nest parasitism by Pearly-eyed Thrashers (*Margarops fuscatus*); and parasitism of parrot nestlings by warble flies and soldier flies have been monitored and reduced. In cooperation with the National Audubon Society, the FWS initiated a nest guarding program to monitor breeding pair behavior, chick development, and nest cavity conditions. (See *Bulletin* Vol. XII, No. 7.) The program also fostered and transferred chicks as a means of increasing productivity. In addition, FS personnel, in cooperation with FWS biologists, expanded their management efforts by creating nesting cavities at locations adjacent to traditional nesting areas. Although these measures increased productivity, recovery has still been slow. Before Hurricane Hugo, the wild population was increasing by only slightly more than two birds per year.

Captive Propagation

Another tool in the parrots' recovery has been the establishment of a captive breeding flock at the FWS Luquillo Aviary in the rain forest. The captive flock suffered no losses during the hurricane. Although facilities were severely damaged, production the year following the hurricane was normal; 37 eggs were produced and 5 young fledged. In 1992, 38 eggs were produced and 2 hatched. One of the 1992 hatchlings was taken from the aviary and successfully fledged in the wild, the first such event since the mid-1980's. Unfortunately, the other 1992 hatchling died.

Management and research will continue to improve the situation for the Puerto Rican parrot. However, on densely populated islands such as Puerto Rico, the key to the survival of an endangered species may be in its ability to adapt to human-dominated habitats (e.g., suburban habitat or second-growth forests). Restoration of other birds, such as the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), has been successful in habitats modified by people. Indications are that this may also be the case for parrots.

Acknowledgements

J.M. Meyers and W.C. Barrow, Jr., are with the FWS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Puerto Rico Research Group, P.O. Box N, Palmer, PR 00721. F.J. Vilella is with the FWS Puerto Rican Parrot Field Office, P.O. Box 488, Palmer, PR 00721.

References

1. Rodriguez-Vidal, J.A. 1959. Puerto Rican parrot study. Monograph. Department of Agriculture, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. No. 1.
2. Snyder, N.F.R., Wiley, J.W., and Kepler, C.B. 1987. The parrots of Luquillo: Natural history and conservation of the Puerto Rican parrot. Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Los Angeles, California. 384 pp. ●

Reprinted from the Jan/Feb 1993 issue of "Endangered Species" Technical Bulletin, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, by the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service.

CITES Captive Breeding Update

At the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Kyoto, Japan (1992), member nations adopted Resolution Conf. 8.15, which provides for trade exemptions for qualified operations breeding Appendix I species. The new guidelines establish a procedure to register and monitor operations breeding Appendix I animal species for commercial purposes. Parties interested in entering their operations in the register under the new requirements are invited to submit information to the Secretariat. The "Register of Operations which Breed Specimens Included in Appendix I in Captivity for Commercial Purposes" is available from the CITES Secretariat.

The management authority of Chile recently approved an application for a captive-breeding operation for two Appendix I species: the Chilean Pudu (*Pudu pudu*) and Darwin's Rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata pennata*). Similarly, the Malaysian management authority has approved the application for a captive-breeding operation for the Appendix I-listed Asian Arowana (*Scleropages formosus*). In accordance with CITES Resolution Conf. 8.15, both countries have applied to the CITES Secretariat for the registration of these operations in the official CITES Appendix I commercial breeding registry. The Secretariat has referred the applications to experts for advice on their suitability.

The CITES Secretariat has informed the Parties that Germany's management authority has requested the removal of an operation (Ursula Wilmering, Holzhausen 55a, D-2848 VECHTA) from the register.

(CITES Notification No. 753, 14 June 1993; No. 754, 14 June 1993; No. 769, 31 August 1993.)

Source: *Traffic Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 1., January '94 issue. ●

Parrot Possession Punished

On 23 July 1993, Clement Edward Solano entered a guilty plea to possessing Appendix II Australian Red-tailed Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*) that had been illegally imported into the United States. In late December 1992, Special Agent Jorge Picon, acting under cover, negotiated with Solano to purchase Red-tailed Cockatoos that Solano possessed. Picon verified that Solano did not possess the permits required to lawfully import and possess Red-tailed Cockatoos in the United States. Clement Solano faces a maximum sentence of one year in prison, a \$100,000 fine, or both, and up to one year of supervised release. Solano was prosecuted by Douglas N. Frazier, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida.

(U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida, 23 July 1993.)

Source: *Traffic Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January '94. ●

U.S. Parrot Smugglers Caught

On 2 August 1993, Richard Furzer pled guilty to smuggling up to \$1.4 million worth of African Grey Parrots, a CITES Appendix II species, into the United States over a two-year period. According to the Miami indictment, between September 1988 and October 1990 Furzer conspired to import 1,478 "Congo" parrots (*Psittacus e. erithacus*) illegally taken from their wild habitat in Zaire, where commercial trade in grey parrots was banned under national law. The parrots were smuggled from Zaire to Senegal, where African suppliers obtained false CITES export documents to accompany the shipments to the United States. The CITES export documents

falsely stated that the parrots originated in Guinea or the Ivory Coast, where the "Congo" African Grey Parrot does not occur. Furzer, who faces four additional counts of parrot smuggling in Los Angeles, California, was scheduled to be sentenced on 22 November 1993, but a plea bargain is apparently being worked out. The African Grey Parrot, a popular pet bird because of its unique talking ability, commands as much as \$600 to \$1,000 per bird on the U.S. market.

In a similar case, on 16 November 1993, Elias K. Mantas, a.k.a. Louie Mantas, operating under the name of Pan American Bird Imports, Inc., was indicted on five counts of smuggling 1,992 African Grey Parrots into the United States from Zaire between January 1988 and April 1990.

Both Furzer and Mantas were charged with filing false CITES import/export documents, conspiracy, and violations of the Lacey Act and federal smuggling statutes. They face maximum penalties of five years in jail and up to \$250,000 in fines for each count. In spite of similarities in the cases, there is no direct link between the smuggling attempts.

Both cases were handled by Lauren J. Preigues, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, with the help of John T. Webb of the Wildlife and Marine Resources Section, U.S. Department of Justice. Preigues is one of five attorneys in the Environmental Crimes Section, the first federal regional office established solely for the prosecution of environmental crimes.

(U.S. Department of Justice news releases, 2 August and 7 December 1993.)

Source: *Traffic Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January '94. ●

Kevin Gorman, Red Siskin Project Director Honored

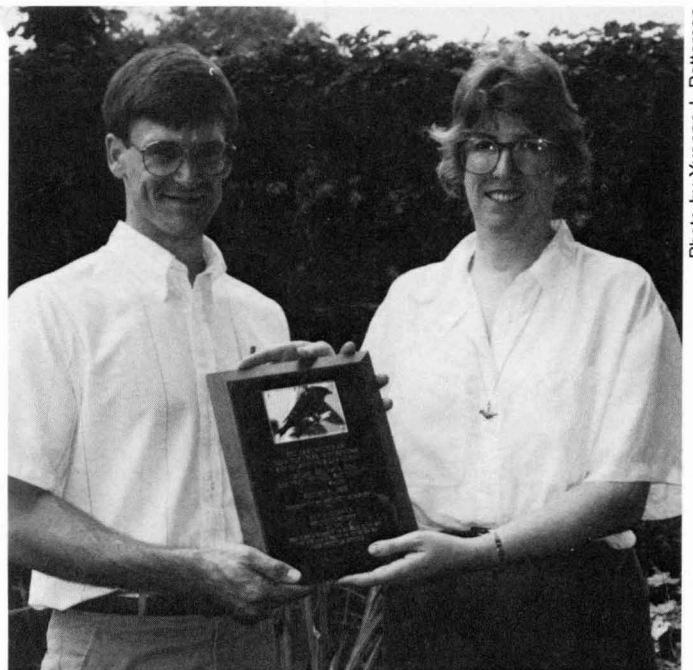


Photo by Yvonne I. Patterson

Gail Gatewood-Colwell, Ph.D., Red Siskin Project Breeder, presents an award to Red Siskin Project Director Kevin Gorman. The plaque reads, "You have helped us turn our ideas into actions and to meet this challenge. '...Nature, she hath done her part, do thou but thine'...Milton. Presented to Kevin Gorman, at the 1993 Siskin Summit in Kansas City, Mo., for his leadership in preserving this species."

Agents Clip Wings of Parrots Smuggler

On Thursday, February 17, Jesus Natividad Maldonado of Sandia, Texas, was convicted of the possession, transportation, and attempted sale of exotic parrots smuggled into the United States from Mexico in Federal Court in Austin, Texas.

The seven-woman, five-man jury found Maldonado guilty of all three counts in the indictment which charged him with violations of the Federal Smuggling Statute, the Endangered Species Act, and the Lacey Act. The defendant was ordered taken into custody by U.S. District Judge James R. Nowlin pending his sentencing later this spring. This case was jointly investigated by agents with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Customs Service. The case was prosecuted by Kevin M. Plunkett, a trial attorney with the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division, and Gerald C. Carruth, an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Austin.

Maldonado was apprehended during a February 1992 traffic stop in Austin by the Austin Police Department. The arresting officer discovered 70 baby Yellow-naped Amazon Parrots concealed in the rear of the defendant's vehicle. The defendant and his cousin, Teodoro Maldonado Garcia, the driver, claimed the parrots, worth \$1000 each on the retail market, had been bred in captivity at Maldonado's aviary in Sandia, Texas. During the trial, Garcia testified Maldonado had never bred any Yellow-napes, and used his aviary only as a front to mislead agents. Garcia pled guilty to a charge of possession of smuggled parrots in July of 1993.

Follow-up investigation showed the parrots were actually smuggled into the U.S. The international and highly profitable illicit trade in exotic birds spans several continents. As a result of several hundred interviews as well as undercover meetings, and the service of search warrants, Fish and Wildlife Service and Customs agents documented the Maldonado organization smuggling over 300 Yellow-naped Parrots during 1992 alone. Expert breeders testified during the trial that Yellow-naped Parrots are difficult to breed in captivity. During March of 1992, agents executed a search warrant at Maldonado's aviary. Blood samples were obtained from his "breeder" birds which, when analyzed, showed only 7 of the 11 "pairs" of breeders were opposite sex.

Birds and feathers may not be imported into the U.S., except under certain conditions. The survival of many wild bird species such as parrots is threatened by the illegal pet trade as well as destruction of their habitats. Alarming percentages of birds die during capture, transit, and the required 30-day quarantine period (for some species, as high as 70%). Birds frequently are taken from countries that ban their export to neighboring countries where falsified documents can be obtained. People interested in buying pets should be aware of the protected status of any wild bird before attempting to bring it into this country.

Sentencing has been scheduled for March 1994. The defendant faces a statutory maximum of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

This investigation will now focus on prosecuting the illegal activities surrounding the Maldonado organization in the southern district of Texas in Corpus Christi. ●

AFA Well Represented at the National Cage Bird Show, Nov. 12, 1993, Houston, Texas



Photo by Jeanne Murphy

E.J. Nagel, Jr., president of Gulf South Bird Club, Inc., does booth duty at the Houston "National Cage Bird Show." A new member signs up! Others who worked in the AFA booth are Virginia Baker, Peggy Patrick, Richard Bewley and wife, Paul Hollzy, Diana Holloway and Daunice Parker.

New Non-profit Society Forms: Asiatic Parrot Society of the Americas

You are invited to join the Asiatic Parrot Society of the Americas, whose aim is to share in the global, collective, circle of discovery in which we all have a part. Asiatics include the Indian Ringnecked (and its mutations), African Rose-ringed, Plum- and Blossom-headed, Moustached, Derbyan, Alexandrine, Slaty-headed, Long-tailed, Emerald-collared, Malabar, Newton's, Blyth's and Echo Parakeets. We will print much heretofore unpublished fact and fallacy, and share many secrets to foster successful psittacula breeding and birdkeeping. For our Quarterly Psittaculid Review, member-owners of Asiatic parrots are encouraged to write articles and letters and to respond to surveys. Members' personal ads are free in the Q.P.R. *International aviculturists are welcome!* Membership is \$20/year in the U.S.A., or US \$25/year to international members. When you write, give your aviary name, and list the psittaculids you keep. Make your check or money order payable to "Mariette Rogers/APSA". Mail to Asiatic Parrot Society of the Americas (APSA), attn: Mariette Rogers, director, 4009 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 567, Torrance, CA 90505 U.S.A. ●