

OPINIONS

compiled by Sheldon Dingle
Los Angeles, California

■ What's a Breeder to Do?

I and my family had hoped to enhance the survival of several species of birds which, without help, would most likely appear in a future book under "extinct." This effort was to be our "offering" as it were — our giving something back to nature.

We fell in love with the Golden Conure and there our troubles began. We eventually found some in another state that were available. The breeder said we'd have to get permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to move these CITES Appendix I birds across a state line. When I called Washington, D.C. about a permit, I was shocked at the amount of information requested — photos and drawings of my aviaries, *why* I want the birds, details of my bird breeding activities, what birds I currently hold and breed, deaths of any birds during the past six months, etc.

Why all the details, I asked. The polite but cool voice explained the information was necessary to control the transportation issues and to determine if the applicant is qualified to have the birds. The government wants to know *who* has the birds and *why*. I received the impression over the phone that hell would freeze over before I received a permit to get the Golden Conures.

I was shocked at the amount of governmental control. As the endangered species list grows, will additional species become more difficult to propagate — or even to own?

A policy *must* be issued by the AFA on the subject, and guidelines must be established so we in the avian community can police our own affairs — not the federal government. Maybe all the information the federal government requires could be covered by the MAP program through the AFA.

Soon the only birds we may have will be the pictures in our avian books.

Michael H. Gilbert
Prosser, Washington

MAP is an independent voluntary program for the certification of aviculturists through a system of inspection by avian veterinarians. For more information, contact MAP, P.O. Box 1657, Martinez, CA 94553.

The AFA Exotic Bird Registry is a program available through the AFA whereby you can log your quality birds in a computerized registry system somewhat akin to the AKC-type registry for dogs. These programs do not overlap and all aviculturists are encouraged to participate in both. Contact the AFA Home Office at 1-800-BIRDCALL for more information. Ed.

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■ Where's the *Brotogeris*?

The May/June 1994 edition of *AFA Watchbird* front cover reads "Conures, Forpus and *Brotogeris*." Great! I raise those little guys; it's about time someone wrote a few things; maybe I can learn a little bit.

I cannot well enough express my concern that any well-known *Brotogeris* breeders could not take the time to contribute an article to your magazine. I don't wish to call it a "magazine" because it is more a compendium of information, uncluttered by excessive commercial advertisements.

The reason for this letter is the lack of any reasonable article in an issue that advertised *Brotogeris* on the front

cover. Inside I found only a short article written by Jose Aleman that, in addition to being out of date, indicated he no longer raises Grey-cheeked Parakeets. I really feel that you should have left off the reference to *Brotogeris* on the front cover, having only that one short article.

Tom Wettlaufer
CTW Aviary
Lake Mary, Florida

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■ Saving the Planet?

I have just finished reading E.O. Wilson's *The Diversity of Life*, and it helped me collect some ideas I had about conservation issues. I tried to articulate the discomfort I have felt among aviculturists in relation to the politically correct positions about trade regulation bills, captive breeding programs and other environmental issues.

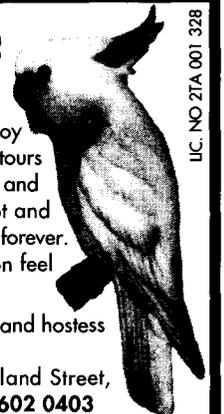
While I have pet birds and couldn't live without them, I would never knowingly support an environmentally or ecologically unethical practice. I know most of my bird club acquaintances feel the same way. It is always difficult to evaluate the full environmental impact of any action, because the issues are so complex. However, I have felt disturbed by the simplistic position that some articles [in avicultural magazines] take about conservation. Some groups seem to want us to believe that as long as we breed parrots we are saving the planet. I wish this were more true. There is a lot of misinformation and confusion about parrot conservation among aviculturists.

Delia Berlin
Bolton, Connecticut ●

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