

Modern Miracle, Aviculturists United at April 6 USFWS Meeting

by Laurella Desborough
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Aviculture United!

For the first time in the history of aviculture in the United States, a coalition of avicultural groups stood before the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on April 6 and presented their position on government mandated marking and certification. This meeting was to address only Section 114 of the WBCA: programs in the private sector for marking, certification of facilities, and conservation projects. The presentations were specific in detail and clear in intent: there is no need for government required marking and certification. Many organizations and bird clubs sent letters to the USFWS and many sent representatives who spoke before an audience of 114 people, and presented their comments to the four representatives of USFWS in attendance: Dr. Susan Lieberman, Rosemarie Gnam, Mark

Phillips and Roddy Gabel. The meeting had to be moved from the original location due to the large number of people in attendance and therefore, started at 10:00 am and continued until 1:00 pm. Representatives from the following organizations spoke: African Lovebird Society, American Federation of Aviculture, American Lory Society, Bird Clubs of America, Canadian Parrot Association, Florida Federation of Avicultural Societies, International Avicultural Society, International Lory Society, International Parrotlet Society, Model Aviculture Program, National Cockatiel Society, National Finch and Softbill Society, and Society of Parrot Breeders and Exhibitors.

Representatives from local clubs and clubs across the U.S. made presentations: Arizona Avicultural Society, Arizona Avian Breeders, Arizona Seedcrackers Society, Avicultural Society of Tucson (AZ), Capitol City Bird Society (CA), Central Pennsylvania Cage Bird Club, Exotic Bird Breeders Association (CA), Federation of Pennsylvania Aviculturists, Kansas Avicultural Society, Kentuckiana Bird Society, Orange County Bird Breeders (CA), Parrot Breeders Association of Virginia, Philadelphia Avicultural Society, Raleigh-Durham Cage Bird Club (VA) and San Diego bird Breeders. Twenty states and 40 organizations were represented at this meeting. In addition, bird clubs from across the U.S. sent letters to the USFWS in support of the AFA position.

Representatives from other *concerned* organizations and the pet industry made presentations: Association of Avian Veterinarians was represented by Susan Clubb,

DVM; Association for Parrot Conservation was represented by Scott Derickson; Association of Zoos and Aquariums was represented by Don Bruning; Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council was represented by Marshall Meyer; Mark Hagen represented the Canadian Parrot Association; Sun Seed Company was represented by Jeff Clark; and World Wildlife Fund was represented by Ginette Hemley.

Suzie Sanders of the Humane Society of the United States and Ann Michaels of the Environmental Investigation Agency made presentations. Teresa Telecky of HSUS also attended. Laura Simons of the New Jersey Wild Bird Regulatory Division spoke for required marking of birds to control smuggling. This was the most controversial presentation as Ms. Simons indicated the New Jersey bird law was very successful. This is the most restrictive exotic bird law in the U.S.

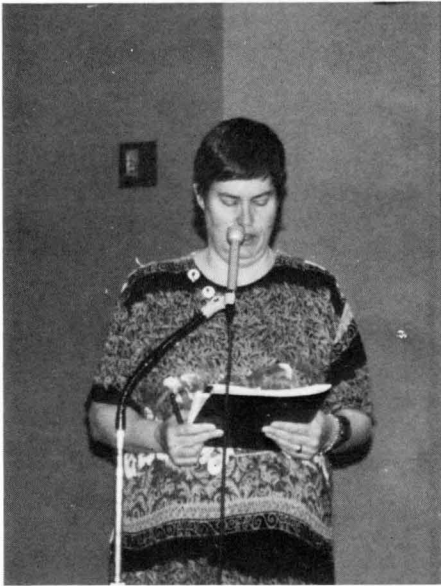
AFA Information Packet

The American Federation of Aviculture prepared and presented to USFWS a packet which included the AFA position paper on marking and certification which stated that no new regulations were needed because the private sector is quite effective in these two areas. The packet also contained information on past conservation projects funded by AFA, as well as the two major on-going projects: the AFA Red-fronted Macaw Project and the AFA Red Siskin Project. Most of the members of the AFA Board of Directors were present, including Gary Lilienthal, AFA Legal Counsel and Bob Berry, AFA Executive Director. Mr. Berry presented the AFA position to USFWS.

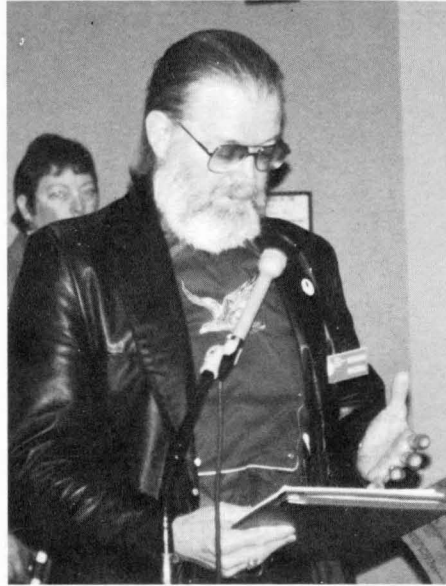
In addition to the above, many people interested in the WBCA and its effects attended both the aviculture unity meeting on Wednesday evening and the meeting held by USFWS on Thursday morning. The meeting was videotaped and audio-taped by the AFA for future reference.

The USFWS officials were cordial and indicated they were there to listen to us. Dr. Susan Lieber-

Presenting the breeder's side to the USFWS



Kelly Tucker
AFA Western Regional Vice President



Richard Hazell
AFA South Central Regional Vice President



Al McNabney
AFA Cites Committee Chairman



Janet Lilienthal
AFA Legislative Vice President



Martin Muschinske
AFA South California State Coordinator



Jeff Clark
Sun Seed Company

man chaired the meeting. Presenters were allowed four minutes. However, as the various individuals spoke, some aviculturists indicated a deep concern for Section 115 of the WBCA, which gives the government the authority to require marking. Dr. Susan Lieberman stated several times during the meeting that: "We have no intention of requiring marking."

Avoid Deterrence of Breeding

At the meeting USFWS was reminded of Section 115 (b) of the WBCA which was inserted in the law at the request of AFA Legislative Vice-President Janet Lilienthal: "The Secretary shall seek to ensure that regulations promulgated under this section will not have the effect of deterring captive breeding of exotic birds."

Congressional Staff in Attendance

At this USFWS meeting members of Congressional staff attended to see and hear first hand the concerns and fears of aviculturists about government interference with aviculture and conservation.

Visits to Congressmen

Many people who traveled from across the U.S. allowed extra time to visit their congressional representatives to express their concerns about the WBCA and its effects on aviculture. The AFA prepared an information packet for the Congressmen. Lines of communication were opened and contact persons were identified. Congressional aides stated the original intent of Congress was NOT to deter captive breeding in the U.S.

Preparing for Action

All of the above indicates that the aviculturists have come to recognize that the Wild Bird Conservation Act can indeed affect bird breeders and owners in the U.S. and that we must organize and work together for our common interests and our birds. LET'S DO IT! ➤