

Aviculture has a legitimate conservation management role to play when it provides a consumer market for birds that are legally captured — on a sustained-yield basis — from **SAFE POPULATIONS** in the wild.

If the capture of wild birds is equated to farming, then aviculturists can be likened to those members of the public who buy bread and beef in supermarkets — that is, to the people who purchase the 'products' of farming. And those domestic purchases make farming an economically viable land use practice.

In the avicultural context, birds represent just one of the many 'products of nature' that are, or can be, harvested from the wild for the benefit of man. And the purchase of legitimately procured wild birds by aviculturists, or by the pet industry, encourages those who are in the business of catching and selling wild birds to protect and maintain the birds' wild habitats, aim to manage wild bird population appropriately - and thereby to safeguard their livelihood.

BLONDES BIKING

Panting and perspiring, two blondes on a tandem bicycle at last got to the top of a steep hill.

"That was a steep climb," said the first blonde. "It certainly was," replied the second. "It's a good thing we kept the brake on so we wouldn't have slid backwards."

Page 12

M/s Barbara Devnie (Secretary) Associated Birdkeepers of Australia Inc,
Dear Barbara,
I would like to take this opportunity of behalf of all members of our club to thank you for your attendance at this year's 18th Northern Avian Conference held over Queens birthday weekend on 7/8th June at Charters Towers, 127kms (90 minutes) south-west of Townsville. Your association and yourself provide help and assistance to us Aviculturists in North Queensland. Barbara we appreciate your ongoing participation in our Conferences thus keeping everyone informed of EBAG news and important changes occurring within local governments.

You and the knowledge from members of the ABA are succeeding in making a difference to the future of our Aviculture. Please keep up your good work.

Yours in Aviculture
MARGARET CLARKE
SECRETARY for
FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND
BIRDBREEDERS CLUB INC.

Did you know ...

That the reason brightly coloured males of a number of bird species take no part in the rearing of the young is that their colours attract predators, so the less colourful and inconspicuous hens are left to do the dirty work on their own.

COMMUNICATOR

The voice of the Associated Birdkeepers of Australia Inc.

President

Norm Bennett
9524 5591



Secretary

Barbara Devnie
9824 7212



Treasurer

Kevin Devnie
9824 7212



FOR THE FRIDGE DOOR

General meetings

21 August AGM
followed by a
General Meeting

18 September

16 October

20 November
followed by
Christmas Party

*All meetings will
be held at —*

Auburn RSL Club,
33 Northumberland
Road, Auburn NSW



A word from the Secretary

As I have been sending bits and pieces to our Editor for the Communicator to be finished towards the end of the month, I received a call from Cowra and as I suspected the call was prefaced by the "Okay so where is it"? I hadn't really forgotten, just put it in the grey cells filed as 'Things to do later!' I was right.

So here I am fingers poised over the keyboard, now what to tell you about first, so here goes:-

My trip to Charters Towers to attend the Northern Avian Conference started in Cairns, John Griffiths was there to grab my case off the "merry go round" at 6pm on Thursday 5th June, from there to John's home in Gordonvale.

Friday morning, first visit, a "walk about" round John's many aviaries, commenting on the new birds plus the young newbie's. Then off to Tully, where we were to stop over night with Debbie and Peter Curry and their two boy's, they were coming with us plus their grandfather to the Conference.

Saturday morning our first stop was Woodstock QLD., to visit a very interesting aviculturist Aimon who breeds blue Gouldians and is a "wiz kid" on genetics then on to Double Barrel Creek, another aviary visit.

From there, straight to Charters Towers, three more interesting aviaries and then back to the Hall for "smoko" plus the Panel: - Sharon Leptig, Jim van Reyk, and Me.. I gave an update on the ABA Inc and EBAG etc. which raised a few interesting questions including one, what type of clubs were new members? And what numbers of individuals did we have? A new train of thought, we do need more members, so I am enclosing an application form and

Continued page 3

A budget is something we go without to stay within.

BARKING OR BIRD-EATING SPIDERS

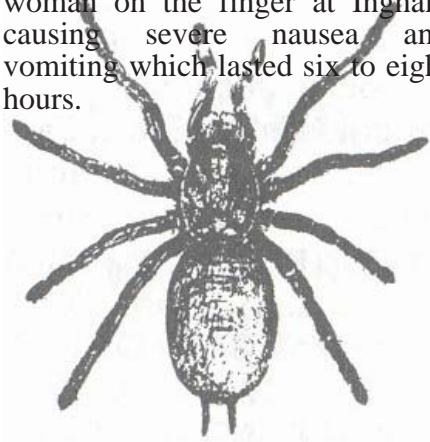
(*Selenocosmia spp.*)

These are the largest spiders in Australia but are generally not aggressive compared to some other mygalomorph spiders. They are powerful spiders, with long, strong legs, and wander away from their burrows in search of food at night. The burrow is deep, has no door, although the entrance is sometimes sealed with silk, this usually being an indication that the spider is moulting or has an egg-sac if a female. Food consists of frogs, small birds, beetles and a wide range of other insects.

There are two common species, *S. crassipes*, tropical distribution, often very large with carapace up to 18mm, dark chocolate brown, with reddish sternum. First legs with long bushy hairs, and longer and stouter than fourth pair. *S. stirlingi*, dry inland distribution, is

a uniform light dusty brown, first and fourth legs of equal length and stoutness, and the first legs without bushy hairs.

These spiders are capable of killing small birds in two minutes and must be considered as deadly. No human deaths are recorded for these spiders. A male spider bit a woman on the finger at Ingham causing severe nausea and vomiting which lasted six to eight hours.



Barbara Devnie
Sec. ABA Inc.

Dear Barbara,

Just a short note to thank you for attending our Annual Poultry Show in June, it was much appreciated by all.

Your involvement on behalf of the ABA and as Patron of our Club in setting-up and cleaning-up as well as on the day was very much valued.

Your donation (and Kevin's) of a perpetual trophy for the "most outstanding" junior exhibitor was very much prized especially by the youthful recipient, Danial Day.

Once again thank you for your involvement in our special day.

Kind regards

Bob Sergeant

Secretary, Cowra Poultry Club Inc.

Continued from page 3.

Qld, native birds, including breeding lorikeets. My turn, I spoke on a mixture of the past and the future of Aviculture and the varied problems associated with people, governments, councils etc. Closing on the future of aviculture and what we have to do as aviculturists. Ida Van Der Togt explained about her Alexandrines and associated problems which she was coping with, very interesting all about breeding and what to put with what, and the various outcomes. A farewell to all the Charters Towers flock! And as usual I left Cairns and all my "mates" with lots of ideas plus their good wishes to all ABA members down south. Very special thanks to Pam and Colin List for organising the weekend it was FANTASTIC.

The night of our 19th June meeting, I left with Kevin early, in order to have some sleep before leaving at 6.30am for Cowra. Prior to leaving the meeting I left the sec's report and the treasurers' report for the President. As it turned out when we left, there were insufficient numbers to form a quorum. We will seriously have to rectify this situation, as we already have had three meetings aborted because of the members decision to keep the numbers at 10 members must always be present.

Very cold when I arrived in Cowra on the Friday and it stayed cold over the next three days, I was there as patron of the

Cowra Poultry Club and on behalf of the ABA Inc, for their first Poultry Show back in the Pavilion after weeks of letters to and fro from us, to the Trustees of the Cowra Showground

On the Sunday, early start, 6am and freezing, good turn out of people and poultry even though it was still very cold. Doors opened at 7am to 9am when the judging started

The main outcome from my point of view was the presence of so many young poultry keepers and as Kevin and I had previously organised a special perpetual trophy for one of the young exhibitors, it was great to see the face of the first recipient when I presented him with the Trophy.

I really am learning a lot about poultry and seriously thinking that as Kevin also likes them, we should obtain a pair of black silkies. We have an area where our fruit trees are?? at the side of the house, Who knows what might transpire!

The ABA Inc is now being recognised by a far wider range and numbers of birdkeepers, who accept that we ALL have to make sure that we keep our standards of Birdkeeping beyond reproach from the general public's point of view.

Hopefully, as we spread our wings and fly to places where we are not very well known, your assistance through donations, allows us to travel and expand our horizons, meeting and spreading the word.

Do the Right Thing

Children and Parrots

Large parrots can represent a very real danger for babies and very young children. When there is a new baby in the family, a parrot that has been the center of attention up to now can create scenes of jealousy and bite the baby.

This is no reason to give the bird away, however. If you take care not to neglect the parrot, it will in time get used to the new family member. Still, you should make it an absolute rule never to leave a baby alone in the same room with a large, uncaged parrot.

The same goes for young children. A parrot may inflict painful wounds on a small child because the child doesn't anticipate the sudden jabs of the parrot's bill and therefore can't get out of the way quickly enough.

School-age children usually have no problem getting along with a large parrot. They quickly get to know the bird's habits and peculiarities, and it doesn't take them long to learn to read its moods.



Bird flu vaccine cleared

A VACCINE that will protect Australians from the deadly bird flu has been approved as safe and ready for use.

However Australians will only get access to the vaccine if the World Health Organisation declares it is in the grip of bird flu pandemic.

Panvax, produced by Australian manufacturer CSL, received approval from the drug regulator yesterday after trials showed it produced immunity to H5N1 avian influenza.

More than 372 human cases of avian influenza have been reported since 2003 and 235 people have died from the virus. But as yet there has not been a case of human-to-human transmission.

CSL has manufactured different types of the vaccine to protect against several strains of avian influenza.

It said if a new form of the virus emerged it would take just weeks to produce a vaccine specific to that strain.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon paid tribute to the work of an Australian firm in producing the vaccine. And she said access to an Australian made vaccine meant citizens would be well protected in the event of a worldwide pandemic.

It means that Australians won't have to wait for an overseas manufacturer to fill orders made by other countries before it supplies us with a vaccine.

Experts: Bird flu may worsen global food crisis

Thursday, 26 June 2008

The worst of the bird flu threat is over but the fight to eliminate the disease from poultry is weak — a situation that could worsen the global food crisis, health experts warned.

"The peak is over, but we still are dealing with many outbreaks, small outbreaks," Juan Lubroth, a senior official with the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization, said at an international medical conference.

"It's like a boiling pot, and we need to keep the lid on that before it gets worse," Lubroth said at the 13th International Congress on Infectious Diseases, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Bird flu is still active in 10 countries, down from 60 that have been affected since 2003. Hot spots include China, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Vietnam.

He said death of poultry especially affects the poor, 80% of whom own livestock for their livelihood worldwide.

Lubroth said poultry is an important, inexpensive protein source for people who wonder every day, "What are we going to have for dinner tonight, or what will be available for tomorrow?"

Continued from page 1.

will make sure that further copies can be made and also obtained from the web site.

After dinner, John Griffith gave an excellent talk on Northern King Parrots, the how's, why's and wherefore's.

Sunday morning 10am we had a brief Northern Avian Societies meeting. Then off to visit two more aviaries, some of the ideas I pick up, prove to be very useful in our aviaries. Back for lunch then the panel of Aimon Murdock, John Davies-Griffiths and Rob Marshall answered questions from the floor.

A quick cuppa, then off for the last aviary visit. We all set off and followed the instructions given, only to find that we all got lost. (Thank goodness for Mobiles) Reason, the name of the Rd was Bus Rd and there were numerous signs but not leading to where we supposed to be. A quick call to base only to find that most of us had the same problem. Turned out to be loop road and the signs were in the wrong place!!! We did get back, eventually, but we were running an hour late, which put the schedule behind, Dr Rob, gave a talk on products he sells and explained how he deals with peoples' problems via mail and phone.

After a welcome BBQ dinner, the first speaker for the evening, Jim van Reyk spoke about legislation in

Continued page 11

Parrot Behavior

Pecking fights

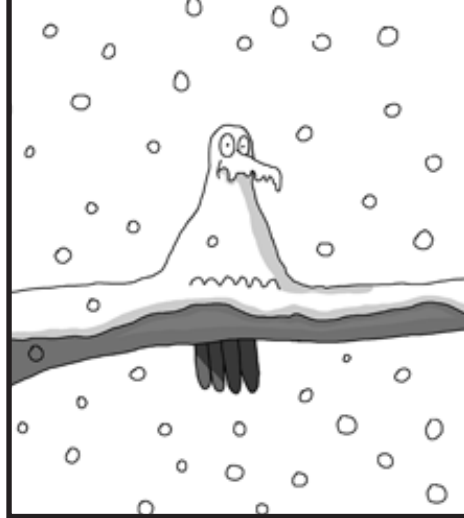


Sometimes the two threatening gestures just described lead to a pecking fight. The beak of the attacking bird is aimed at the head, shoulders, and beak of the opponent, which responds by trying to parry the attacks and defend its position.

However, an innate inhibition against biting is clearly evident here - as in the open beak, threatening gesture because both parties consistently pass up chances to hack at vulnerable parts of the opponent's body.

In the end they refrain from biting even though there is no lack of opportunity.

FROSTY THE SNOWBIRD



Being Australian is about driving in a German car to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, and then travelling home, grabbing an Indian curry or a Turkish kebab on the way, to sit on Swedish furniture and watch American shows on a Japanese TV.



Dear exotic bird keeping stakeholders

The United Bird Societies of South Australia Inc. has sought clarification about the media statement that was released on 16 June 2008 relating to linking birds/eggs to lawful importation.

The media statement recommends participation in the record keeping scheme. The Compliance guide for exotic birds in Australia clearly states that:

"Bird keepers who have birds that were recorded under the former National Exotic Bird Registration Scheme (NEBRS) can prove the legal origin of these birds if they can provide a record trail to prove their specimens were recorded under NEBRS, or can be traced as the progeny of specimens recorded under NEBRS".

The primary and supporting documentation described in A guide to record keeping for exotic birds outlines the type of information that would be useful for bird keepers to keep.

Participation in the record keeping scheme is in the best interests of birdkeepers

We apologise for any misunderstanding.

Nick Gascoigne, Director, Exotic Species Regulation Section Wildlife Branch, DEWHA

BIRD FORFEITURE SERVES AS REMINDER

A recent forfeiture of exotic birds to the Commonwealth is a firm reminder that owners of exotic birds must keep records to prove their birds have been lawfully acquired.

An investigation in late 2005 by the then Department of the Environment and Heritage led to the seizure of the birds on suspicion they had been illegally imported into Australia, or were bred from illegally imported birds.

Illegal possession of exotic birds is an offence under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act).

Under the Act, owners of seized birds can seek the return of their specimens directly from the department or through court action. Either way, documentation to support the origin of the birds/eggs would be needed.

In this particular case, the owners took court action, however chose to discontinue legal proceedings prior to the case being heard.

It is important for exotic bird keepers to remember that any individual or commercial business that trades in, or keeps exotic birds is responsible for proving that their specimens and eggs have been lawfully obtained.

This is emphasised as buyer beware. The onus is on bird keepers to show that their specimens have been lawfully imported or came from lawfully imported specimens.

Basically, if you buy an illegal bird, it becomes **your** illegal bird.

M/S BARBARA DEVNIE,
SECRETARY / ABA

Dear Barbara ,
I thought I would share with you a discussion our members had at our last meeting on Sunday 13th July, regarding EBAG and the Exotic Bird scheme:-

★Please be advised all members of FNQ/Land Bird Breeders Club totally supports EBAG with all their decisions with the Exotic Species Regulations.

★If sellers are genuine they should have no difficulties adapting to this scheme. If they can't or won't well we then know why. LETS STAMP THEM OUT!!

★For Buyers to be able to check with Sellers for supporting documentation helps to verify the source of the bird before the purchase is made, it is our responsibility and in our interest for the future of our Aviculture in Australia .

★Our members have asked that I pass on this information to yourself so you can keep up the good work and push for this Exotic Birds Scheme by making sure all has been implemented and all are complying with the set Regulations.

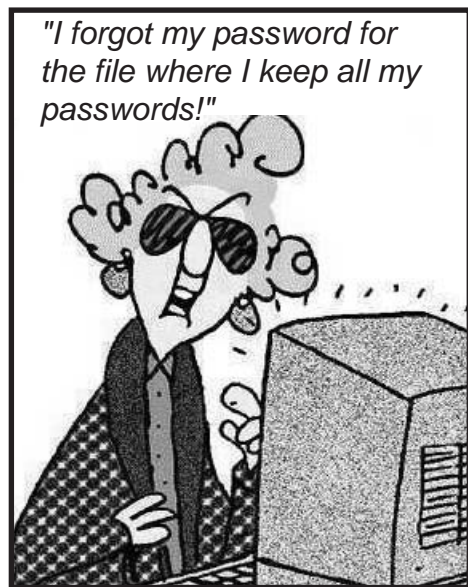
Yours sincerely
Margaret Clarke (Secretary)
FNQ/Land Bird Breeders Club Inc.

Chip That Cock!

One Rooster Per Household.

In an affront to chicken lovers everywhere, the City of LA is considering two motions next week that may limit the rights of our roosters to cock-a-doodle at will while also limiting the rights of homeowners to enjoy the company of more than one rooster.

The motions were introduced under the guise of fighting blight, protecting property values, stopping the bird flu and cock fighting — which can also result in prostitution, gambling, gang activity, human trafficking, drugs, and weapon sales. Evil, filthy birds! The motions also require that pet roosters be microchipped and that a "mechanism" be established to respond to complaints of noisy roosters.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

ALLOPREENING: The preening of another bird, usually same species or its mate.

BELL Y: The lower underside of the bird.

CALAMUS: The hollow part of the feather.

ECLIPSE PLUMAGE: The transition plumage from the breeding plumage to the winter plumage.

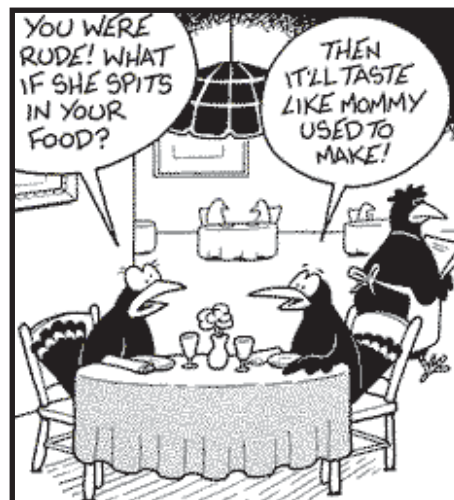
HYBRID: A cross of individuals of unlike genetic make-up.

INSTINCT: Innate forms of behaviour, not learnt.

MONOTYPE: A genus with one species or a species with no subspecies.

NIDIFUGOUS: The young are able to leave the nest almost immediately.

PIN FEATHER: A growing feather still in its sheath.



A baby sitter is a teenager acting like an adult while the adults are out acting like teenagers.

Finch Census

At the recent Finches 08 Convention, the National Finch and Softbill Association had a meeting where we further discussed our plans for possible legal importation of exotic finches. One of the initial steps agreed at the meeting was to conduct a census of the numbers of exotic finches currently held in Australia. The agreed plan was that each member club or society in NFSA would conduct an anonymous census of its members.

To help stimulate members of our affiliates to participate in a census, Mike Fidler has penned an article to be used in society and club magazines and in the wider avicultural literature in an effort to get a substantial response.

We have also sent all our members a census form.

In the spirit of our MOU we thought that ABA Inc. may also be willing to stimulate its members to participate in an anonymous census like this. *Note that we don't want any names or locations, just the number of birds.* The more responses we have the more valid will be the results in showing relative numbers of exotic species. We would be happy for you to use the article and census form or a modified version if you wish.

See also pages six and seven.

RED ALERT

Mike Fidler, NSW NFSA Committee

A recent survey conducted by the National Finch & Softbill Association (NFSA) revealed that the Red Faced Parrot Finch faces extinction in Australian aviculture.

It is believed that this was due to a compounding of circumstances:

1. Following a glut of RFPFs being bred it became difficult to sell the surplus and so the price per pair dropped dramatically. Subsequently many breeders sold out completely and moved on to other more popular species which sold for higher prices.

2. A large number of the remaining RFPFs were bought up to fulfil export orders. It is believed that large consignments went to the USA and to Europe.

3. The above two circumstances meant only a small number remained in the country creating a very limited gene pool. As a result breeders still holding stock are experiencing progressive infertility. Without an infusion of new blood, obtained by the government sanctioning an importation, it is believed there may be no remaining RFPFs in Australia within 7 to 10 years.

We are sad to announce that the attempt by the NFSA to obtain a licence to import a number of species of finches which were badly needed to infuse new blood into Australian stock has been abandoned for the following reasons:

1. The inability of the potential participants in the importation to agree to a common protocol.

2. Potential participants were unwilling to commit finance to a project which had no guarantee of success.

3. Nobody could agree on what species should be imported

4. Nobody could agree who should receive the birds which were imported and what was to happen to any birds which were bred from this new stock.

5. The leader of the importation exercise resigned his position in the face of much personal criticism, backbiting and wholesale squabbling.

Rather than risk our hobby being split into warring parties, in the face of all the criticism and general argument the NFSA felt it wiser to drop any future attempt at the importation of finches.

ALL RIGHT. NONE OF THE ABOVE IS TRUE. BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN!! And it might happen if we do not get our act together.

I was shocked quite recently when I tried to obtain some RFPFs for the research programme. I thought it would be easy but, to my surprise, only one person in the Hunter Valley still had them. There are whispers that Cuban Finches are being bought up and sent off to the USA.

Red Alert continued

As a precursor to this national survey, NFSA member Mark Jolly from the Hunter Valley conducted an impromptu survey of finch breeders present at the recent Finches 08 Convention in Brisbane.

Data was gathered from 36 of the hundred or so present. Results from this small survey reveals the wide range in numbers of species kept, with a long tail of species with only very small numbers. We know that some of these species have problems with reliable breeding and need help.

However, this was just a snapshot of a particular sector of the finch breeding world. We need a much wider census to identify those species truly at risk and where we need volunteers to set up groups of breeders who will cooperate with each other and exchange birds to help manage the available gene pool.

This exercise of establishing dedicated and cooperative focal groups to start working with particular species need not be highly formal but each group will need a team leader who will ensure communication and will provide an annual report on the group's activity.

Birdkeepers always knew they were special

Birdkeeping has a long and rich history dating back many thousands of years.

Companion birds have been held as prize possessions since as early as the 15th century B.C. in Egypt and quite possibly even before that in China. Some Chinese artifacts depict birds that date from as far back as 4000 B.C. However, the Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut collected falcons and hawks in her royal zoo during the 1500's B.C. making it the first solid record of bird keeping.

Second only to the cat, birds are the most widely represented image in Egyptian art.

At the start of the 1990's it was predicted that the pet of choice for the next decade or two would be birds.

Based on studies of pet food manufacturers and pet shop sales it seemed that their predictions were coming true. However, the large numbers of imported birds were decimating bird populations in the wild.

Because demand for companion birds remained high, many people who formerly bred birds for a hobby decided to increase their involvement to ensure the promulgation of certain species and provide birds for the pet trade as well.

Most feathers — In a special "feather count" a whistling swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) was found to have 25,216 feathers.