



A Manifesto for Aviculture



Victorian child with Leadbeater's Cockatoo

A Manifesto f



*Charming, educational, but demanding.
Pet parrots live in forty million homes worldwide.*



Ancient 'Sultan' poultry.



*1745 engraving of an
Ornaie Lorikeet.*

Published by The World Parrot Trust on behalf of many millions of parrot aviculturists and pet owners worldwide and despatched to the appropriate authorities in every major country where parrots live in the wild or are kept as pets or breeding birds.

This manifesto will also be sent to relevant international bodies and institutions and to the media. Comments are invited from interested parties.

A Brief History of Aviculture

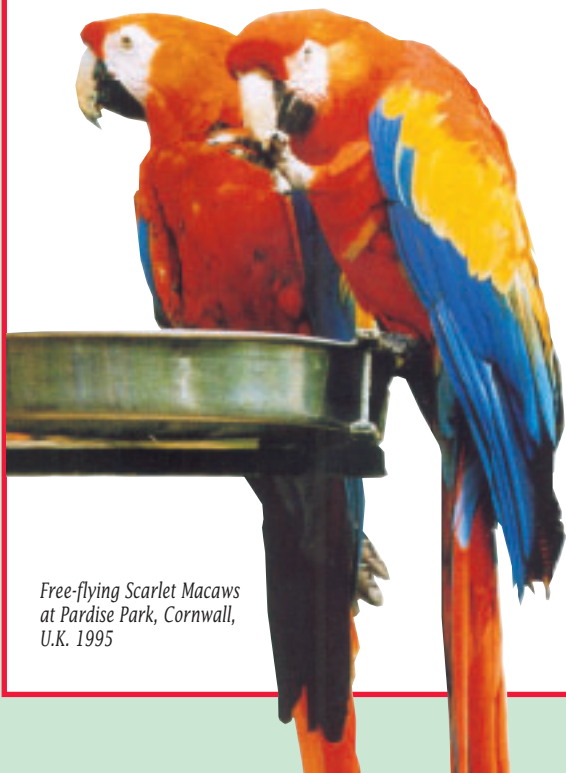
This activity is almost as old as mankind itself. We have confined poultry, pigeons and other birds for domestic and commercial reasons and kept songbirds and other caged birds in our homes. So the keeping of birds, often called 'aviculture', is by no means a modern development.

Until the last thirty years, the hobby of bird-keeping centred on low-cost birds such as canaries, fancy pigeons and domestic strains of budgerigar. What is comparatively new is the discovery that the successful breeding in captivity of some birds, primarily members of the parrot family, can provide a fascinating hobby that also brings a profit opportunity. This has caused a great expansion of interest in aviculture and an increasing demand for the importation of wild-caught parrots into many prosperous societies. With the ready availability of air transport, large numbers of parrots were removed from the wild, reaching a peak in the years 1970 to 1990.

Many species were put at risk and not surprisingly this traffic was opposed by concerned nations and conservation bodies. All but two common species of parrot are now covered by CITES, the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna. Together with national legislation and controls, this convention has gone some way to reduce this threat to the survival of parrots in the wild.

Aviculture Today

Every aviculturist is a lover of nature, captivated by the beauty and character of the birds he or she keeps. The well-being of the birds themselves lies at the heart of the hobby and the devotion of bird keepers to their charges is usually plain to see. To succeed in the captive breeding of exotic birds requires study, dedication, intelligence, persistence, a natural understanding for wildlife, financial investment and endless hard work. For the majority of aviculturists today, it remains an enthralling and decent special interest, one that can last a life-time and be shared with family, friends and fellow enthusiasts.



*Free-flying Scarlet Macaws
at Paradise Park, Cornwall,
U.K. 1995*

For Aviculture



International cooperation: at Paradise Park, UK, Rosa Elena from Peru helps to hand-rear a rare St. Vincent Parrot.



Spacious aviaries lead to breeding successes and awards.



Aviary-bred parrot chicks reduce the pressure on wild populations.

***"Parrots are amusing and never die.
You wish they did"***
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



It is unfortunate that within this community, as in any other group, there are a few individuals whose activities tarnish the reputation of the many. In the avicultural world there are some who are not genuinely concerned about the welfare of birds and who are prepared to act illegally, either for profit or to satisfy the 'collecting mania' that can sometimes be seen. These are the smugglers, many of whom have recently been brought to justice.

Aviculture disclaims these people. They are not representative of our community. We also reject those who fail to give adequate care to their birds, or who treat their fellow hobbyists unfairly.

In recent years much progress has been made in the science of aviculture and in particular the veterinary care of birds. Most aviculturists have the help of an expert avian vet and there is a wealth of publications on every aspect of the hobby.

What is more, many avicultural organisations now fund conservation projects for parrots in the wild and these contributions will undoubtedly increase.

When The World Parrot Trust was launched in 1989, one of its stated aims was to see the importation of wild-caught parrots for the pet trade replaced by aviary-bred birds. This aim was derided by some and strongly opposed by some commercial elements. Now, however, virtually every individual and organisation in our field has accepted the correctness of that aim. Attitudes are changing fast and illegality or excessive exploitation hold little attraction for aviculturists in general.

Responsible Aviculture

The concept of 'responsible aviculture', conceived and promoted by The World Parrot Trust, is gaining ground, encouraging high standards in avicultural practice and the need to accept a degree of responsibility for the conservation of wild populations, from which all captive birds have sprung.

With our support groups in eleven countries around the world, we are able to detect a growing understanding of the need to improve the way aviculture is perceived, both by the general public and by regulatory authorities.

In our opinion, this is a time for restraint in imposing further restrictions on 'responsible aviculture'.



A glove puppet is used to rear Echo Parakeet chicks in Mauritius. Advanced avicultural expertise and support from the Mauritius Wildlife Fund, Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust and The World Parrot Trust has helped increase the population of this critically endangered species from about fifteen to seventy-five in four years.



This painting of Hyacinth Macaws in the wild fully expresses the spirit and beauty of these superb parrots. Let us work together to keep every parrot species flying free, to be enjoyed by future generations.



Please address all comments and enquiries to:-

**The World Parrot Trust,
Glanmor House, Hayle,
Cornwall, TR27 4HB, UK.**

Tel: (44) 1736 751026

Fax: (44) 1736 751028

Email: uk@worldparrottrust.org

Website: www.worldparrottrust.org

*Promoting excellence in parrot
conservation, aviculture and welfare.*

Some Proposals

We fully accept that the international community and every individual country has the right to regulate the movement and keeping of wildlife, in the interests of human health, avian welfare and conservation. Like all citizens, aviculturists simply ask that regulations be reasonable, easy to understand and comply with and operated with speed and consistency. We therefore propose the following:-

1. Enforce CITES effectively in every country.

Some countries have yet to join the convention, while others have signed up to CITES but do not implement it effectively.

2. Use CITES to stop the mass importation of birds into developed countries.

Large numbers of parrots are still being exported from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

3. Ensure that legal trade is sustainable and has regard for avian welfare.

Some countries still allow export quotas that lack scientific justification.

4. Ensure that departments responsible for wildlife regulation act efficiently.

In some countries unreasonable delays occur in processing documents.

5. Do not create new difficulties for aviculture.

Most aviculturists are simple hobbyists, not major entrepreneurs. Do not burden them with unnecessary paperwork. Recognise and reward their contribution to parrot conservation, as continuing success in aviary-breeding reduces the demand for wild-caught birds.

6. Continue efforts to combat illegal activities.

No responsible aviculturist condones illegal activities of any kind, or examples of cruelty or incompetence in the keeping of birds.

7. Please consult.

Aviculturists are very approachable people and there are a number of organisations that represent them well. Please consult with them and arrive at practical solutions that will ensure the long-term health of this commendable hobby.

Summary:

Aviculture is an ancient and natural human pastime which gives pleasure to millions of people.

This fulfilling hobby has been compromised by the actions of a small minority.

Attitudes in aviculture are changing, will lead to the correction of past errors and the further development of 'responsible aviculture'.

Authorities should recognise the legitimate aspirations of legitimate aviculturists and should work with them to arrive at mutually acceptable regulations.