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DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife Most 343-5634

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FEDERAL WILDLIFE AGENCY PROPOSES IMPORT CURBS ON CERTAIN HARMFUL BIRDS AND TROUT-LIKE FISH OR EGGS

Tighter curbs on importing three birds that damage cereal grains and citrus crops in their native lands, and on trout-like fish that could introduce diseases to native trout and salmon have been proposed by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The birds--Java finch, dioch, and red-whiskered bulbul--were added to a special category that could be imported only after investigation, and then only under permit for restricted purposes. The dioch and Java finch cause serious depredations of cereal grain crops in Africa and Southeast Asia, similar to crop damage by North American blackbirds, while the red-whiskered bulbul is a potential threat to citrus crops. This bird is native to India and Southeast Asia.

The proposal also calls for amending regulations on importing fish and shellfish to prohibit entry into the United States of live or dead fish or eggs of salmonids (trout and salmon) unless certified free of viral and bacterial diseases and parasitic infections by selected officials in either the country of origin or the United States.

Sport Fisheries and Wildlife officials believe this would help prevent the spread of protozoan-caused "whirling disease" and virus-caused "Egtved disease" among native trout and salmon.

The regulation would still permit importing salmonids or their eggs when smoked, canned, pickled or otherwise processed to destroy any disease-causing agents.

Notice of the proposed rule-making has been published in the Federal Register. Interested persons have 60 days to submit written comments to the Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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