



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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LEGISLATION SIGNED TO SAVE EXOTIC BIRD SPECIES

The hope for survival of some of the world's most beautiful and threatened exotic birds grew stronger today as President Bush signed into law the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992.

The law is designed to restrict the import of wild-caught birds, primarily parrots and parrot-like species, as pets. The United States is the world's largest importer of these birds, with imports totaling nearly a half million each year.

"The Administration is very concerned about the conservation of exotic bird species and the depletion of wild populations due to trade," said Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan. "I am gratified by the broad-based support this legislation received."

Mike Hayden, Assistant Interior Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, said, "President Bush's signing of the Wild Bird Conservation Act shows that this country is determined not to contribute to the loss of the native wild birds of other countries."

The Act imposes an immediate moratorium on the import of eight species of wild birds thought to be particularly at risk due to trade. Already listed as threatened under the 116 nation

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Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), these species include the Fisher's lovebird and the blue-fronted Amazon parrot.

Other bird species can continue to be imported for 1 year, after which imports of all CITES-listed birds will be prohibited unless the species is on an approved list published by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In considering a species for this list, the Service will use the best available scientific and management information and ascertain whether or not regulatory and enforcement measures in the country of origin are adequate.

The Act also gives the Interior Department authority to ban the import of any non-CITES bird species if the exporting country does not meet specific criteria established by the Act.

In addition, the Service is to determine the status and management, if any, of wild or captive-bred species entered into international commerce. Captive-breeding facilities must meet criteria described in the Act which are designed to ensure that trade is not detrimental to wild birds. For wild-caught CITES-listed birds, the Service must determine that CITES is being effectively implemented for the species in its country of origin.

The new law also seeks to ensure humane treatment of birds. The methods of capture, transport, and maintenance en route must minimize the risk of injury or damage to health.

Another provision of the Act establishes the Exotic Bird Conservation Fund. This fund will use monies collected from penalties, fines, donations, and any additional appropriations for projects to conserve exotic birds in their native countries. Many of the countries where these birds are found do not have funds available to conduct conservation activities, or develop acceptable management plans.

"The law will help assure American consumers that they can safely purchase pet birds knowing that they are not harming populations in the wild or contributing to inhumane treatment," said John Turner, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Under the requirements of the Act, the Service is to publish a call for information, in the Federal Register and through the United States Department of State, on the wild bird conservation programs in all exporting countries.