

# *The Py Press* Fall/Winter 2005



**PYRRHURA BREEDERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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## President's Message

We're in the dead of winter in Texas, and it's in the 60's and 70's, sunny, and dry (drought conditions)—and my birds think it's spring. California has gotten deluges, and some of the northern states have gotten lots of snow. Think Mother Nature is riled about something?

Animal-related and, in many cases, anti-breeding legislation is continuing to be pushed by special interest groups—in the U.S. and in other countries. It is more important than ever for aviculturists and other animal-interest groups to work together and not allow the "divide and conquer" strategy to work. We must

- Ø Continue to work against legislation, such the infamous PAWS bill in the U.S.
- Ø Investigate ways to mitigate the negative effects of the U.S.D.A.'s NAIS program, which has been picked up by several states now.
- Ø Be vigilant and ready to counter local and state AR-based ordinances.

No matter where in the world we call home, as aviculturists, we cannot live in our own worlds and think if we keep a low profile, no one will notice us. If onerous legislation passes, you can be sure that there will be animal activist groups somewhere that will be looking for easy targets to "pick off."

- Ø Let one of us have a personal tragedy or get ill and slip temporarily on maintenance, and there will be someone saying we are abusing or neglecting our birds.
- Ø Let one of us be outspoken against AR-type actions, and there will be someone setting us up or looking for a legal loophole to go after us.
- Ø Let one of us alienate an AR-leaning person who has some legal clout, and we will be a target.

Our focus in the PBA is to promote our wonderful Pyrrhura conures so that others will have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with these unique creatures. We must educate the public and help each other continue to enjoy the wonderful relationships we have with our birds and other animals!

**Marcy Covault**

## PBA Officers

The PBA Officers are here to serve the needs of the organization. If you have questions, concerns, ideas, or suggestions, please bring them to the list or to us for discussion. We value

every member's expertise and input, and we want to encourage teamwork and networking to further educating about and promoting the feathered jewels that are the Pyrrhura conures.

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## Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report will be posted on the PBA Yahoo list later in January.

## Membership Report

### Kelli Eager

We have 43+ members from the United States, Canada, Australia, and several countries in Europe. We encourage each member to send along an application for membership with each bird sale.

We are working to make the PBA an organization that offers value to its members, in the form of education, networking support for breeding issues (including legislative alerts that affect aviculturists), and Consortium oversight.

## Election of Officers

We still need a Nominating Committee to provide Officer candidates for 2006. Please volunteer! The Officer positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Candidates must be current in their PBA dues to be nominated and to serve.

## AFA in Brief, December 2005

### Carol Brasaemle, Editor

**Turkey is Fine**—Many of us have received questions about the safety of eating turkey due to the avian influenza scare. Various authorities agree that you cannot contract influenza from cooked turkey, or any other fowl, so you all can

savor your holiday dinners in safety. Pass the word!

**Avian Influenza H5N1**—This "bug" started almost 10 years ago in Asia and is finally spreading - in birds. All human cases have

occurred due to direct contact with sick birds. Now the virus is spreading, as evidenced by outbreaks in Turkey, Romania and the former Soviet Union. To date, there have been no outbreaks here in the U.S. The virus has not mutated to allow human-to-human contact. However, it is time to take a look at our biosecurity efforts to protect our birds. We should all routinely be implementing biosecurity measures. It's time to review what we do and beef up security measures now.

1. If your birds are kept outdoors, be sure the roof of your aviary is covered lest something unpleasant drop from above and contaminate your enclosure.
2. Do you keep waterfowl, poultry or game birds? As much as possible follow guideline #1 (above) and do keep poultry and game birds well away from parrot and softbill aviaries.
3. Have a different pair of shoes for each area - one for parrots, another for poultry and game birds, and another for home to prevent any cross contamination.
4. Keep your collection closed for the time being. If you do purchase another bird, quarantine thoroughly for at least 60 days away from all other birds.

5. Ask your avian vet what else he/she recommends for your birds' protection, and for yours, on the off chance that the virus appears in your flock.

6. If an inspector arrives for a routine inspection, ask if he/she has been to a bird facility prior to coming to you. If the answer is "yes," there are 2 options:

- a. Explain that you practice tight biosecurity and ask the inspector to return another time as his first inspection of the day.
- b. If that fails, be sure the inspector washes with anti-bacterial soap and provide throw-away surgical shoe covers and coats. Google "medical supplies" or "surgical supplies" if you do not have a source.

7. Finally, remain calm. The media has had its way with us (and everyone else) and panic has been the result. Hysteria helps no one, but your influence can. Talk with neighbors and friends, answer their questions matter-of-factly, let them know that you are doing your part. Be the calm in their lives.

For more information on AFA's official statements on the Avian Influenza, visit the AFA website at [http://www.afabirds.org/pdf/11022005\\_Bird\\_Flu.pdf](http://www.afabirds.org/pdf/11022005_Bird_Flu.pdf)

## Breeding Rose-Crowned Conures

Darlene Johnson, Little Darlings Aviary, Canada

*Biographical Sketch—As far back as I can remember, when I was a wee little sprout, I had a fascination with God's creatures. I would go down to the river, creek and pond and see what I could find and catch (I would never harm them.). I would also find myself in the meadows and scrub brush investigating everything and catching creatures too. Or, I would take a book with me and climb a tree and read (books were always about animals, birds, etc.). I was constantly at the library and would bring back an armful of books to read. I tried to learn everything I could about any species. They all just fascinated me!*

More: <http://www.mylittledarlings.com/aboutus.html>

*[Ed. note: These articles were many pages long and in great detail. They have been condensed for this newsletter, but I would suggest asking Darlene for full articles to appreciate her descriptions of her breeding setup and experiences.]*

## **Breeding Rose-Crowned Conures** *(Pyrrhura Rhodoccephala)*

### **Background Information**

On July 25th, 2001, my two pairs of close-banded, aviary-bred Rose-Crowned Conures came into a Canadian quarantine from Belgium. The one pair was eighteen months old and the other pair was a two year old male with a six month old hen.

I received them from the quarantine station on September 11th, 2001. They came in poor feather condition with black stress mark feathering, missing feathers, broken and missing tail feathers, low energy level, non-vocal, etc. I placed them in my personal quarantine for sixty days and basic tests were run. I converted them over to a better diet (mentioned below). They passed the tests before being placed in the breeding facility on November 10th, 2001. The quarantine is directly in my main living area, the laundry room on the first floor. We have steam heating, which there is no air exchange at all, into the breeding room.

### **Aviary Set-up**

My breeding aviary is indoors and is twenty-two feet wide by twenty-eight feet long. We have four banks of double four-foot fluorescent lighting, consisting of Vita lights and cool whites which are set on timers. We also have two sets of double four-foot fluorescent lights, placed



separately throughout the aviary. We have installed, throughout the months of October through to May, a humidifier going twenty-four hours a day to help with the humidity level. It is usually kept around 35% minimum. A radio is on a timer for the birds all day long, on a channel that has soft music playing. We have a Hepa filter placed in the room to help filter the air. The aviary is swept a couple of times a week, and the floor disinfected twice a month. Screened windows are opened daily for fresh air exchange.

### **Cage Setup**

We place three separate cages on top of each other, which is then sitting on top of a two by four pine wood frame, with quality swiveled castors attached at the four corners on the bottom of the wood framework, to make a triple decker cage unit.

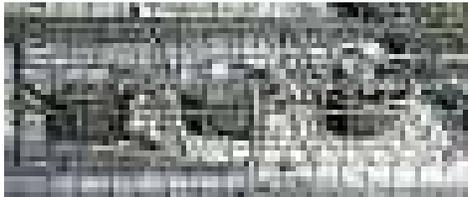
On one side of the cage is a bump-out section, where the nestbox goes in the top part of the wire bump-out section. Underneath the nestbox the stainless steel dishes are placed in a wire three-section feeding station which is attached to the inside of the cage. The nest boxes are made out of one inch pine wood from the mill, planed smooth on one side. The smooth side is the outside of the nestboxes.

Our pairs have access to toys and a swing at all times. We have one or two natural perches of various widths. One is placed up high near

the nestbox opening and the other is at the opposite end, placed lower in the cage.

### ***Diet***

For all our birds we use in each cage three stainless steel half pint dishes. One is for Roudybush pellets which is available at all times; one is for water; and one is for their soft foods and treats. They receive pellets and fresh water twice a day, and in the evening, they get an almond. On alternating days, they receive one teaspoon per pair of a mixture of Hagen Tropicana Gourmet Parrot treat, mixed with pumpkin seeds and dried pasta (in shapes and different colours of wagon wheels, radiators, etc.).



### ***My Breeding Experience***

The eighteen month old pair, "Tinker and Belle," were placed in the breeding facility on November 10th, 2001. They were the first to breed for me in just under five months after I got them. They bred at the age of twenty-three months.

Both the Cock and Hen incubated. When the cage was serviced, the Cock would come out of the nestbox and stay out until we left the area. Then he proceeded back into the nestbox. When the chicks were starting to hatch, the Cock would also sit on the chicks and eggs and stay with the Hen all the time, unless we were servicing the cage. He would come out and sit on the feeding station with his head and neck feathers raised waiting for the soft food mixture. As soon as we placed it into the feeding station, he would immediately dive in.

When it was time to inspect the nestbox, we would knock on the nestbox to open the inspection door. We would open it a couple of inches and shine a tiny flashlight into it. The

imported pair would then slowly leave, with their neck feathers raised in protest. They would stay on the perch by the nestbox opening, just waiting to hear the door close. As soon as the door closed, they immediately went back in.

Since this was a good size clutch [6] and the babies were so widespread in ages, I decided to help the parents by taking two chicks out for handfeeding earlier than I normally would have with smaller clutches.

When the chicks had become fully feathered. I noticed that they had juvenile plumage. They almost looked like the parents, but not quite, the major difference being in the forehead and crown area.



The Rose-Crowned Conure pair decided to start their second clutch, yet again seven eggs. Eggs one through five were fertile, the sixth egg was clear, and the seventh egg was fertile. This clutch of six Rose-Crowned Conure chicks also weaned at twelve weeks of age.

Once again the pair decided to breed and produced a third clutch! [Due to a disturbance in the aviary] only two Rose-Crowned Conure chicks survived in this clutch.

### ***Conclusion***

I would conclude that this species of *Pyrrhura* conure can be very prolific and can also be very easy to breed, if the right conditions are met. Conditions being: a true pair, true bondedness, healthy, proper nutrition to meet the pairs needs, proper cage setup with plenty of flying room, privacy, and a stimulating environment.

# Pet Potential of the Rose-Crowned Conure

**Darlene Johnson**

I currently breed the Green-Cheeked, Crimson-Bellied, Painted Conure and Rose-Crowned Conure. Working with these four species as handfed baby birds, I have found that the Rose-Crowned Conure is now my absolute favourite as a handfed feathered pet companion. They are a very sweet natured, affectionate bird that has a very gentle, calm and trusting disposition. They are generally quiet, quite intelligent, mischievous, can be clownish and energetic, have the least tendency to nip, and just crave human contact.

Whether they be male or female, they are quite the cuddle bugs and are just love sponges, almost like the cockatoo species. They have been affectionately called little green cockatoos by their owners. One of their favourite pastimes is to snuggle right up under your chin on your throat and chest for long periods of time, where you can rub their head, neck and back feathers with your chin and also scratch their head and cheek feathers with your fingers. Another great place is on your shoulder, snuggled tightly against your neck. While being there, they will be cuddling, playing, preening, relaxing, sleeping, or hiding in your hair.

They also enjoy riding around on your shoulder while you go from place to place in your home or when you are doing the chores, and they will also use your body as a play area. For instance, they like buttons, earrings, eyeglasses, necklaces, rings, watches, and zippers, etc. I prefer not to wear these toys when they are on my shoulder, and I give them other appropriate things to entertain



themselves. They also enjoy cuddling right up against the face, in the palm of your hand. You can use your nose and cheek to caress their feathers around their head and body. When in/on your hand, they listen so attentively to everything you have to say and keep cocking their heads from side to side as you speak. They really enjoy your stroking and caressing their feathers and giving them little kisses on their beak, cheek, and head (lips closed and no saliva on the lips).

They constantly want to be with you and bounce up and down on the side of the cage asking to come out. I have noticed that you can do anything with them, because they are so trusting of humans and feel very comfortable with us. They truly become a member of the family. The Rose-Crowned conure is a constant delight to its owner!

Females as handfeds, are very sweet, gentle, affectionate, quiet birds, and they love to cuddle. They make soft little noises and only once in awhile a squawk. Females can talk quite well when taught. The Rose-Crowned Conure females have the best talking ability and can have the largest vocabulary of the four species that I currently breed.

Males as handfeds love to be petted, have their head and cheeks scratched, and enjoy cuddling under your chin. The males also tend to have the greatest talking ability and larger vocabulary of the four species that I currently breed.

Occasionally some males, when they are in their cages, can be a little feisty about their territory

as they grow older (mostly bluffing). But once out of the cage, they change and become real sweeties when they are with their humans.

Males and females tend to become really attached to their favourite humans, but when well socialized will go to the whole family, as well as friends and strangers.

Some Rose-Crowned conures will even accept other species as friends and can become friends with various avian psittacines, when well-socialized. Talking can start as early as four to five months of age in the males and six to nine months in the females.



The chicks at night really enjoy sleeping in a Kleenex box lined with thick paper toweling. Around the age of 8 to 9 weeks, they will not dirty their bed. It is so cute to see them sleeping there with their tails sticking out of the box. Occasionally some of the Rose-Crowned Conures enjoy being on their backs any time throughout the day, when taking a nap. The chicks also like to hang upside down from the perch doing nothing or flapping their wings in that position.

They seem to enjoy all different types of toys that you can put in their cage and in their play area—whether it be hanging toys, foot held toys, swings, or home-made toys.

This is a species that enthusiastically enjoys bathing a few times a week in a room temperature so they can't catch a chill. They will totally drench themselves from head to toe and immediately start the process all over again until they are soaking wet with water dripping off their feathers from most parts of their body. The chicks are so comical, as they are all perched around the bowl and everyone tries to

bathe at the same time. Then they figure it out that this doesn't work, some will get off, and usually two are left trying to bathe. One will bend down and splash around for a bit, then come up for a breather and then the other chick will push the drenched one off the bowl and proceed to bathe, as a different chick will hop onto the edge of the dish and wait or push the other one off and bathe too. This will go on until all are completely and thoroughly drenched!

When it comes to diet, they are most willing and not too picky to try anything that you offer them. They enjoy a wide variety of foods. They bounce up and down and run back and forth in the cage when they see you bringing their treats! They seem to have a zest for various types of food and will eat it with pure enjoyment.

When well socialized, the Rose-Crowned Conures can keep themselves entertained in or out of their cages for quite while, so long as there is an abundance of toys from which to choose. They are very quick to learn to do various tricks and can adapt to many different situations because of their calm demeanour.

In my opinion, the Rose-Crowned Conure has the best pet potential of the four *Pyrrhura* species that I currently breed. They have such wonderful personalities and qualities that are so totally irresistible in a small bundle of feathers. Current owners of handfed birds of this species just cannot say enough wonderful things about them!

To read what owners have to say about them go to <http://www.mylittledarlings.com/testimonials.htm>

# Crimson Bellied Conures as Pets

**Marcy Covault**

We've seen enough of these gorgeous little Pyrrhuras, the Crimson Bellied (CB) Conure, to know we love the looks of them. But beauty is as beauty does. Preservation and proliferation of these gems are excellent avicultural goals, but there are a limited number of aviculturists who can keep a breeding "collection" without needing some return on investment.

The time has come when the burning question must be answered for breeders who are considering marketing to pet homes: "How do these guys compare as home companions to other Pyrrhura conures and other small parrot species?"

While they have the Pyrrhura traits that endear them to Py people—spunkiness, territoriality, playfulness, touchy-feeliness, emotive expression of likes and dislikes, flock mentality, aerial agility, etc.—CBs also have some traits that I think are unique to them in comparison to many other companion Pyrrhuras.

Now, any of the pys can have endearing qualities, but anyone who has thrown a bunch of green cheeks in a flight knows that you have to watch them for a while to be sure they don't take on the gang mentality and stalk and pounce. CBs are less that way—more easy going, like sun conures.

**Suns in Christmas Drag? What CBs are NOT are green cheeks in Christmas drag, but suns?**



CBs and parrotlets raised together were very compatible. The CBs were very good at ignoring the parrotlet "chatter" and literally shoving them out of the way if it suited them. That actually helped the parrotlets curb that natural "Napoleon complex" that they seem to express with other, larger birds. The parrotlets were not nippy, but then, they were not having to defend themselves against that action from the CBs.

Maybe. To me, they have almost a sun conure disposition as youngsters—extra sensitivity, sociability with less territoriality than many other pys, and cuddliness that can rival suns.

CBs seem to be "gentler" in nature than GCs—more like what I've seen with sun conure

youngsters. Of course, the "spiciness" of the Pyrrhuras is what attracts many people to them, but mellowing that a bit with the CB is welcome also.

**Mixing Species**—From my experience with mixed flocks in a home, young CBs seem to be more easy-going when it comes to accepting other species than green cheeks (GCs) or black-capped (BCs). Now, if any of them are going to nest, or in that time of year when hormones flare, they would be typical parrot-defensive. I don't think we could expect any less! What I don't see with the CBs is the extent of py-bluffing that I do with GCs.

In fact, what I've seen is that if another species is not aggressive, the young CBs aren't either. The clutch of CBs raised with parrotlets were very accepting of them—but then, so were the GCs that were raised with parrotlets (different clutch). It may be a good early experience for these birds to be around other species, as they may be more adaptable to "different" types of birds in a pet home. That said, just as with ANY parrot, caution should be used in introducing

new birds to a flock and in mixing CBs with bird of greater or lesser size than they are.

**Talking and Mimicking**—More so than GCs or BCs, I have heard CBs mimic sounds of other species, like the tiny whistle of the parrotlet and the raspy call of the sun (in a much less strident tone). I have not noted that CBs are exceptional talkers, but they do learn a few phrases. If they are more isolated with people and less as in a communal flock environment, I'd think they would be somewhat better talkers than suns, GCs, or BCs.

**Acrobatics and Playing**—Perhaps because they are heavier-bodied than GCs—more like the cobby-bodied suns—while they can swoop through the air, their flight patterns are more sun-like rather than jet fighter-like.

Like GCs and other Pyrrhuras, the CBs like to hang upside down in their cages.

CBs LOVE bells—they will ring them over and over again. They also love the long hanging plastic chains. I've seen them get about 2/3 of the way down the chain, flap their wings, and fly in circles around the chain (in the middle of the cage). Indoor calisthenics.

**Sociability and Cuddling**—Similar to suns, the CBs seem to be little social butterflies. When



This young mature pair of CBs befriended a young cinnamon GC female. There was lots of mutual grooming and they hung together in the evenings when everyone was out. I watched at first with concern because of the difference in age and the fact that the CB pair were bonding with each other, but the cinnamon GC just got in between the two of them, and they "worked on" each other.



The CB and white eared (WE) conure in the picture have been out in the same area, but not caged together. Both are from spring. Since the white eared is not aggressive, this particular CB male is friendly—and he is a pretty territorial little guy around his own cage.

out, they are also constantly checking in with the resident human caretaker. CBs are also incredibly curious. They want to know what you are doing, what you just did, and to explore any place you might have been!

The youngsters do not seem as prone to gnawing on flesh as some Pyrrhuras, more like gentle tasting (similar to suns).

Like most Pyrrhuras, they love to be snuggled up to your chest. And unlike a typical Pyrrhura which cannot be still for long, a CB will quieten down and snuggle for long periods, e.g., for a nap with a favorite person.

**Future Potential as Pets**—I think it is EXCELLENT! These birds are a bit larger than the typical Pyrrhura conure, which means they have more "substance" to them, which is important to some people. CBs are beautiful, expressive, and affectionate, and although they can get "noisy," the decibel level and stridency cannot remotely approach a sun's, for example. Insofar as breeding for the future, it must be noted that the gene pool is somewhat limited, so it will be important to keep records and not cross closely too often. Also, these birds do not seem to be quite as prolific as the popular GCs or suns, for example, so the availability may not be quite as good. However, that probably means the price will hold better than some other conure species.

## PAWS: Nov. 8th Hearing and the birth of PAWS II

Susan Wolf, North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance

On November 8, 2005 the Senate Subcommittee on Research, Nutrition and General Legislation convened to hear testimony regarding PAWS. The one-sided hearing allowed only PAWS supporters time to present statements; AVMA and PIJAC each stated an area of concern but stood overall in support of the legislation. Opponents of PAWS were denied any opportunity to speak. The hearing was a sham, not a single subcommittee member was in attendance.

<http://agriculture.senate.gov/Hearings/hearings.cfm?hearingId=1649>

Wayne Pacelle's testimony on behalf of HSUS was for the most part expected rhetoric. However, Mr. Pacelle did make this disturbing comment:

*"I must note that dog fighters have been among those working most diligently and persistently against the bill, as demonstrated by the traffic on several of their websites. Dogfighters masquerade as legitimate breeders, but are themselves involved in the vicious and despicable business of selling animals for fighting ventures."*

Is anyone surprised that Mr. Pacelle would dismiss reasonable arguments by hundreds of thousands of PAWS opponents, including dog, cat, bird and rabbit breeders, and instead equate opponents with dog fighters?

**Surprised—maybe; offended—definitely.**

Pacelle cited the need for PAWS because of

*"Documented problems at major breeding operations include a lack of veterinary treatment, poor quality and unsafe housing,*

*insufficient protection from the elements, excessive breeding, and a lack of basic sanitation."*

"Excessive breeding?" Is this a slip back to the previous version a.k.a. 'Puppy Protection Act' where breeding and socialization standards were called for up front?

***Does anyone actually believe that HSUS has dropped this issue?***

This full editorial can be read at the following site:

[http://www.ncraoa.com/PAWS\\_Packet/PAWS\\_HearingAndTheBirthOfPAWSII.pdf](http://www.ncraoa.com/PAWS_Packet/PAWS_HearingAndTheBirthOfPAWSII.pdf)

More articles and discussion on PAWS and why it should be opposed can be found at <http://www.ncraoa.com/alerts.html>

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[Editor's note: This is an excerpt from a long article discussing the various "players" at the November 8 hearing, including AVMA, HSUS, AKC, some obscure regional humane society representative, and PIJAC. NO strong PAWS opponents were allowed! As of January 14, 2006, there has been NO PAWS II, no revision to the onerous language. AKC has been touting its influence on a new version, and AFA has said that it has been assured By USDA that birds will be exempt from this. HSUS and other AR organizations are OPPOSED to any change in language (unless they decide at the last minute that there is no other way to get it passed—which is a priority).

Federalizing home hobby breeding—what a feather in the AR caps! What a bludgeon to begin using at all levels to go after breeders!]

# NAIS: 3 Viewpoints!

Marcy Covault

Like many animal breeders in Texas, I have gotten a request from the State to "voluntarily" register for NAIS, if I have animals that currently fall under the categories targeted at this time (e.g., cattle, goats, domestic or exotic fowl).

NAIS has been discussed on several lists, with arguments for, against, and in the middle, and I thought it would be useful for PBA members to see more than one side of this.

## **AGAINST (and can see all the negatives that could result)**

### **NAIS - U.S. Govt Mandates Mass Animal Surveillance By 2008, January 09, 2006**

Imagine a country where the government has a mass surveillance tracking program that uses satellite technology and microchips to track citizens and their animals. All citizens - with even just one horse, cow, pig, chicken, sheep, pigeon, or virtually any animal - are tracked. No one is exempt. All must comply.

- All animal owners must register their homes or premises, including owner's name, address, and telephone number
- All animal owners and animals will be keyed to Global Positioning System coordinates for satellite monitoring, in a giant federal database under a 7-digit "premises ID number."

All animals are:

- Assigned a 15-digit ID number, also to be kept in a giant federal database; and
- ID'd through a microchip containing a Radio Frequency Identification Device designed to

be read from a distance, or through a retinal scan.

Welcome to The Matrix of the United States of America. But now the government has expanded The Plan - and The Plan just may include you, Mr. Anderson.

**The NAIS**—The "Plan" is the National Animal Identification System, developed jointly by the USDA, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Homeland Security. The goal is to address the safety of the nation's food supply, but there are other built in goals as well - but they are not for the benefit or citizens like you and me.

That Plan (NAIS) is already being rolled out throughout the country as a "pilot" and will become mandatory by 2008 - unless you do something about it right now.

**What's NAIS Got To Do with Dogs?** In a phone call last month between this blogger and a spokesperson at the Senate Agricultural Subcommittee's Press Office, neither the USDA nor the Senate Ag Committee would rule out inclusion of dogs, cats, or bunnies. Got that?

Read between the lines, Mr. Anderson. Companion animals, such as dogs, cats, rabbits, etc., are NOT EXCLUDED from The National Animal Identification System. While dogs and cats are not included in the initial rollout of the Plan, the USDA will not rule out inclusion of companion species.

And for you smarty pants out there - Yes - that would be the very same Senate Agricultural Subcommittee's Press Office that handles SB 1139 - The PAWS Bill. Do I hear any gasps of shock out there?

The USDA and every state in the union is acting like NAIS is a done deal—running radio ads designed to get animal owners to register their premises—when in fact it's not. But they want you to think that it is. That's why they are holding public comments until July 2006. Their strategy is that by that time, NAIS will be firmly embedded—too late to turn back—too much money spent.

For the rest of this article and much more, go to [http://dogpolitics.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/2006/01/nais\\_us\\_govt\\_ma.html](http://dogpolitics.typepad.com/my_weblog/2006/01/nais_us_govt_ma.html)

## **NO PROBLEM WITH IT (but doesn't necessarily support it)**

**Norma Bennett Woolf**

NAIS may be problematic for some, but I think it needs to be put in perspective. NAIS requires registration of property where certain animals live, to uniquely identify each property in a machine-readable database.

Some people think that this identification system will lead to privacy issues such as satellite surveillance of their farms and animals. However, satellite views of all properties are already available in online databases, both to the public and the government. In addition, every property is already included in multiple data bases for local tax and zoning purposes, property audits, and mail delivery. Therefore, public health officials don't need satellite photos to aid them in locating a farm.

Most livestock is already identified in some fashion. Those who breed animals for market or resale, those who exhibit animals, and those who are involved in rare breed conservation keep detailed records. However, the systems in place are diverse, often cumbersome, and incompatible, and it takes time to trace livestock back to the farm of origin if an

outbreak of zoonotic or contagious disease occurs. The use of microchips or other standardized identification systems tied to a property number can speed the process, help direct resources to containment, and save lives, both human and animal.

Some people oppose NAIS because they mistakenly think that the system allows the government to track their animals via satellite. However, microchips can only be read by scanners held relatively close to the animal, not by satellites circling thousands of miles above the Earth. Furthermore, GPS satellites continuously broadcast signals that are used by a GPS receiver to calculate its position. They do not receive or relay ground signals containing unit location information, they don't broadcast or receive on microchip frequencies, and they have nothing to do with microchip identification technology.

NAIS is intended to kick in when a disease is discovered. Tracking comes in only after a disease is identified. Those who own livestock that never leaves their property are encouraged to register but are not required to do so. I recognize that details remain to be worked out, but I see a collaborative effort to solve a problem, not a conspiracy.

## **THE MIDDLE GROUND (advocating limitation to large commercial operations)**

**Laurella Desborough**

It seems to me the issue is more complex than it appears on the surface or in the materials publicized so far.

I would not suggest that the NAIS be trashed. I would suggest that it might be more appropriate, less costly, and very effective to require animal identification and tracking for

commercial facilities that raise beef, pork, and chickens for sale to slaughterhouses, rather than for sale to the general public.

And, it would be quite appropriate to remove from the identification requirement all the small family farms who produce animals and use them for family food, and to remove all hobby/show breeders of domestic animals, including kids who raise animals for school projects or Future Farmer projects. It is an unnecessary burden to require chipping, recordkeeping and tracking for these private animal producers. I see nothing that is served by requiring that all these private individuals participate in this identification and tracking system.

Reason is this. There are thousands of small family farms where the farmer actually makes his/her living doing other work off the farm, but on the farm they raise their own beef, pork and chicken, for their own consumption. The meat products they produce do not end up as public fare. Therefore, it really doesn't make any sense at all to include these people in any national animal ID system, since their animals will not affect public health.

However, it clearly makes sense to the large corporate entities to require these small family farmers to participate in the identification system...for two reasons: control and money. When the large corporations can control the identification system and set the fees and permits, this will eventually cause the small guys to opt out. This means they will then be "purchasing product" through the regular channels and not producing it for their own consumption. So, control over these small producers eventually means more money for the commercial facilities. Also, in terms of money, the digital companies will bring in a lot more money if all the small farmers are involved.

There are millions of kids who raise animals for Future Farmers and exhibit their animals at county and state fairs. These kids would be impacted by these regulations. All the "hobby" breeders of "rare and endangered" domestic animals will be affected. These people raise and show and maintain specialty breeds of chickens, pigs, cattle, etc. which are not a part of the commercially produced agricultural products. Presently, whether it is recognized or not, these hobby breeders are serving an important function for agriculture...they are maintaining breeds that would be lost otherwise. As has been shown in plant products, it is important to maintain a variety of breeds because we do not know when we are going to 'need' them to solve a genetic or disease issue with the breeds used commercially.

It makes sense to identify, mark, and track cattle, pork, and chickens that are going into the public arena for food...especially for tracking BSE. But I don't think it makes sense to require EVERY animal to be so identified and records kept and the animal tracked...to the vet, to the county fair, to the local slaughterhouse—when that animal is for private use only.

It makes sense to use technology where it will provide the result needed to secure the health of the public at large, but not to require it where it will provide no benefits to the public, nor to many thousands of private citizens. This decision regarding identification of animals should be made on a scientific basis, with a focus on the overall benefit to the general public and to the private citizens.

While the corporations put forward the issues of prevention and control of disease, they say nothing of the actual control of the marketing and sales of the animals, which is one of the side effects of the mandatory use of the NAIS for all animals.

NAIS gives ultimate control over breeding and marketing of animals to those entities that are in charge of the NAIS program. I cannot see how that would be good. It is similar to giving WalMart control of grocery and department store sales. I have no problem using a mandatory identification and tracking system

for all animals bred for the public marketplace. That provides limited protection. But, I do not see any benefit to identifying and tracking all animals owned and/or bred by individuals for their own family use, whether for pets or for food or for labor.

## Rantings on Anti-Breeding Propaganda

Marcy Covault

There has been a furor recently over an aviary in Oregon, targeted by local animal control and animal rights activist groups as substandard in the care of its birds. Whether the accusations are somewhat or very true is for those involved to determine. What bothered me about the whole scenario was that, once again, an animal breeder was vilified, this time in an article by a well-known anti-breeding reporter. In addition, there were many on internet lists that were willing to tar and feather this "bad" breeder on only the word of the anti-breeding reporter! Are we that gullible and easily led? Evidently many are... It's that old lynch mob mentality that comes into play when the frenzy of the crowd/ pack/ flock instinct overrides reason.

What has happened to our society's attitude toward animal breeding and husbandry? In my opinion, over the past few decades, there has been a slow "tainting" (or, poisoning) of the stream of consciousness in the "civilized" societies, e.g, United States United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Italy, etc.

Breeding animals has been propagandized as banal and inhumane. Those who are involved in many of the rescue organizations have also incorporated this mentality into their jargon and slogans, e.g., "Adopt don't buy, while shelter animals die."

What is this misapplied logic? It makes NO sense, but it does appeal to the emotions of people, especially when it is combined with a cadre of pictures showing pitiful animals and slovenly care facilities, even if those cases are a TINY percentage of the total animal ownership situations!

This anti-breeding attitude is part of the incremental undermining of the use of animals, with the ultimate goal of ending animal ownership, whether that's a so-called "factory farm," a "bird mill," or a "backyard breeder." All of these derogatory terms have been absorbed into our societal consciousness, and they are affecting strongly the legislative successes that we are seeing in controlling animal handling/ ownership/companionship/ breeding in the U.S. and in other countries.

In addition, there is this attitude of righteous contempt for breeders in business, e.g., the quote that "breeders live off the backs of their animals." Since when was engaging in a respectable business considered BAD?

The anti-breeding philosophy implies that making money from an animal enterprise is immoral. Since when has money in an animal enterprise been labeled dirty business? *Since the "animal rights" (AR) fanatics SAID it was so!* And they are bombarding the general public with this concept!

When a business is conducted in an ethical manner, humane animal husbandry methods are used, and there is follow-up with buyers (who also share responsibility for their use of the animal they bought), what can be logical about anti-breeding rantings? *NOTHING!*

Since it is not logical, perhaps it has to do with the basic AR premise, plainly stated in the PeTA article, "No Birth Nation." Think about that!!! If there is no breeding, then in a generation, there will be no more companion animals. It is as SIMPLE AS THAT!

Is it what the "general public" wants? I don't think the majority of people even think about it

as a possibility. They think, *"Oh those radical animal kooks. At it again. Doesn't affect me. Maybe they'll do some good against those BAD breeders. The good ones won't be hurt because who would hurt GOOD breeders?"*

That is fallacious reasoning when the premise is to eliminate breeders altogether! *Repeat that over and over—the GOAL is to eliminate animal breeding and therefore animal use—whether for companionship, food, or clothes!*

Unrealistic? A "reasonable" person would think so, but don't assume we are dealing with reasonable people. Please research anti-breeding movements if you doubt this!

## PBA Member Ads

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June Diccioco, Hideaway Farms, [jdiciocco@mindspring.com](mailto:jdiciocco@mindspring.com)  
803 593 9500, <http://www.hideawayfarms.com/aviary>

Roseifrons, Cinnamon Green Cheeks, and Painted singles. DNA sexed. Please call or write if interested.

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Scott Stringer, Austin, TX. [scottostringer@hotmail.com](mailto:scottostringer@hotmail.com)

Female Yellowsided, \$150; Male Yellowsided split to pineapple, \$300  
Pineapple hens \$375; Pineapple Males \$500  
Green split to Turquoise and Yellowsided males, \$250  
Turquoise Yellowsided females, \$600; Turquoise Yellowsided` males, \$650  
Turquoise split Yellowsided males, \$500; Yellowsided split to Turquoise females, \$300  
Crimson Bellied female, \$700; Related Crimson Bellied males, \$400  
Hoffmans Male

Shipping on Continental Airlines only from Austin, TX.

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Feathered Companions Aviary, Marcy Covault, [birdcompanions@juno.com](mailto:birdcompanions@juno.com),  
[www.birdcompanions.com](http://www.birdcompanions.com)

2005 pair pineapples, \$950.  
2005 YS/poss. cinn. M, \$250; unrelated pineapple F, \$350; Pair: \$550; both pairs: \$1,000.  
2005 white-eared conure male, very tame (griseipectus), \$250  
Handfeeding roseifrons. One unrelated pair available February/March, \$950.  
Also handfeeding YS (poss/cinn. if male) and pineapple females, as well as crimson bellied.  
Shipping via Continental from Austin, TX.

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# PBA: Preserving Birds through Aviculture

*The Pyrrhura Breeders Association is an AFA-affiliated specialty organization.*

## **PBA Mission Statement**

1. To bring together people interested in the keeping and breeding of Pyrrhura Conures.
2. To enhance those interests, through mutual education.
3. To provide a background in keeping of all the species and sub-species.
4. To encourage the domestic breeding of all species and sub-species.
5. To provide a networking studbook on the uncommon and rarer species.

**In addition, according to PBA Bylaws, the organization's purpose is to**

- ü create a cooperative spirit and feeling among the various bird owners and breeders and to enhance our common bond;
- ü educate the public, pet owners, and breeders in good avicultural practices;
- ü promote better caged bird care and husbandry;
- ü promote the conservation and preservation of Pyrrhura Conures through captive breeding of common, uncommon, rare, or endangered species and sub-species;
- ü assist each member in solving of any problems that may arise in the pursuit of aviculture; and
- ü keep the members informed of local, state, and national legislation which impacts aviculture.



## **PYRRHURA BREEDERS ASSOCIATION**

**c/o Kelli Eager, Secretary  
604 Fairway View Dr.  
Burleson, TX 76028**

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**