

COMMUNICATOR

The voice of the Associated Birdkeepers of Australia Inc.

President

Norm Bennett
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Secretary

Barbara Devnie
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Treasurer

Kevin Devnie
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FOR THE FRIDGE DOOR General meetings

- 15 May
- 19 June
- 17 July
- 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

My workload appears to be increasing, its that time of year to re enter renewals and issue Insurance Certificates, not that I mind, it shows that the work done throughout the year is proving to pay dividends. This "Communicator" should provide interesting reading, the envelope contains more reading plus instructions needing pen to paper. The draft of our Voluntary Guidelines, please help with any changes etc. We will be putting this before the members for adoption at this years AGM.

Good news is that we are getting more members who have various problems asking for help proving that we are able to make a difference to the keeping and breeding of birds.

For instance over the last few days, phone calls from an unnamed person who has a rooster causing angst from neighbours. I suggested that as this was in the Ryde Council area he asks his relations in the bush. to take it before the council gets involved.

Another long saga, in WA, is a pigeon loft which has been in the same position for 17 yrs and with the same neighbor, she is hell bent that the loft be moved to comply with the new changes to the distances between the loft and the adjoining fence that being 9 meter's!!!

On another success, but very welcome, Cowra Poultry Club we finally managed to get the Trustee's to allow a sale to take place in the betting ring. Cold morning, no facilities for making hot drinks and as for the toilet facilities, we will leave that to your imagination

We are awaiting, with bated breath, correspondence to allow the end of May sale to be in the Poultry Pavilion with Clubs pens back in use after 4 years (imagine the cobwebs!)

Continued on Page 2

Frozen chicken comes back to life

Thursday, 24 January 2008

According to an article on Cheers.org, a Chinese man was shocked when he discovered that a chicken that had been frozen for two days was in fact still alive!

Gan Shugen wrapped the chicken in a thick plastic bag with its legs bound and placed it in the freezer, assuming it was dead. However, according to this article, the man took the hen out of the freezer two days later to find that the bird was still alive.

As the story goes, the man heard weak sounds and, when he opened the bag, a red head popped out the bag..."and when I removed the tape, she could stand," said Shugen. According to Shugen, the bag also contained a big chunk of frozen excrement.

"If the hen was locked in a fridge, that's still amazing; but if she survived in a freezer for two days, that's magic," said Li Fazhi of the Chinese Association of Animal and Veterinary Sciences.



The Multilingual Parrot

This guy passes by a pet shop and sees a parrot that costs \$500. He asks why it costs so much and the salesman tells him the parrot speaks five languages. "Five languages!" exclaims the man. "Does it speak Yiddish?" "Sure," says the salesman.

The customer figures, his mum lives in the inner city, all alone so he'll send her the parrot to keep her company. He pays the \$500, has the shop deliver the parrot to his mother, and the next day he calls.

"Mum, how did you like the parrot I bought you?"

Oh son, it was delicious!" she says. "What do you mean delicious?"

"I made soup out of it, came out great!"

"But mum, this parrot spoke five languages!"

"Oy vey — why didn't he say something?"



Migratory birds not main source of bird flu: WWF

Wednesday, 20 February 2008

WILD migratory birds may suffer from Avian Influenza (commonly known as bird flu), but they are not the main source of the disease's outbreak in Pakistan, according to a study statement issued by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Lahore chapter on Friday. The statement said that the statements about migratory birds being the main reason for the latest outbreak of bird flu in Pakistani poultry farms might have serious repercussions against the birds and their habitats. It said since the recent outbreak of bird flu in Sindh, WWF Pakistan had been in contact with BirdLife International, which carried out research on the role of wild birds, including migratory species, in the spread of HPAI H5N1. The WWF said there were no sound grounds to support the allegations that migratory birds were solely responsible for the spread of H5N1. It said the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) collected samples from between 300,000 to 350,000 wild-birds across the world. None of these were found H5N1 positive. Likewise, sampling of 5000 water birds after the outbreak in Nigeria during 2006 found no traces of the virus (according to the Wildlife and the Environment Web).

Despite increased sampling around the world, no fully documented migratory wild birds have tested positive for H5N1.

The WWF said the mapping of bird flu outbreaks across the world had shown that they followed poultry trade routes rather than the migratory birds' flyways.

Therefore, after a comprehensive critical review of recent scientific literature, it was concluded that poultry trade, rather than bird migration, was the main mechanism of the global dispersal of the H5N1 virus.

Continued from page 1.

Please note the NEW letter heading, we had received so many comments about the previous one that in order to suit ALL of our myriad species belonging to members, is a feather, which is common to all.

A forlorn hope from me, can members please get their respective "grey cells" working to produce interesting snippets for the next issue of the Communicator.

This would help both Bob and myself from "pulling our hair out" prior to "putting the Communicator to bed."

Also, any comments, whether they be critical or even praise, would be very welcome.

Yours in Aviculture

Barbara Devnie

Dogs can catch influenza

Washington, April 2 (Reuters)

Dogs can catch influenza directly from birds, Korean researchers said on Wednesday, saying their finding shows pets could play a role in future pandemics. Several pet dogs became ill and died from what turned out to be purely avian strains of seasonal flu virus, the researchers reported in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. "Our data provide evidence that dogs may play a role in interspecies transmission and spread of influenza virus," Daesub Song of Green Cross Veterinary Products Company Ltd in Yong-in, South Korea reported. The dogs had H3N2 influenza — a strain similar to one of the flu strains now circulating among humans.

But genetic analysis showed the dogs were infected with viruses directly from birds, Song's team said. Doctors know animals pass flu viruses to one another. Many experts believe most, if not all, influenza viruses originate among birds. It has also occasionally infected dogs, cats, clouded leopards, civets and dozens of bird species, from swans to coots. The fear is that it will somehow change or combine into a form that is easily passed from one human to another, sparking a pandemic that would have the potential to kill hundreds of millions of people globally. H3N2 is found in birds and is also a very common human flu strain. But the varieties that infect birds and people look different on the genetic level.

Song's team investigated outbreaks among dogs. "From May through to September 2007, cases of severe respiratory disease occurred in animals at three veterinary clinics located 10 to 30 km (6 to 18 miles) apart in Kyunggi Province and one kennel located in Jeolla Province (southern South Korea)," they wrote. Another 13 dogs in a shelter were affected, and there is evidence some dogs infected others. DNA analysis showed the viruses from the dogs closely resembled those from Chinese chickens or ducks in Hong Kong, Japan and China.

Transmission of avian influenza A virus to a new mammalian species is of great concern because it potentially allows the virus to adapt to a new mammalian host, cross new species barriers and acquire pandemic potential," they wrote. They believe the dogs were infected via food. "We are positive that this transmission results from feeding dogs untreated minced meats of ducks or chickens," they wrote. *reporting by Maggie Fox*

A banker is someone who lends you an umbrella when the sun is shining, and who asks for it back when it start to rain.
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The Eclectus Burglar

A burglar breaks into a house in the ritzier area of town. He slowly takes out his flashlight, switches it on and looks around the room. He's sure that there's nobody home but he sneaks in, doesn't turn on any lights and heads for where he thinks the valuables are kept. He sees a bird cage with a parrot in it. "Did you say that?" He hears a voice say, "I can see you! Jesus can see you, too!" The parrot says again, "I can see you! Jesus can see you, too!" He freezes in his tracks! He doesn't move a muscle! "Hah! So what?! You're just a parrot!" says the burglar. "I may be just a parrot," replies the parrot. A couple of minutes go by. The voice repeats "I can see you! Jesus can see you, too!" "But Jesus is a Doberman!"

Rewriting 'the book' on a devastating poultry disease

13 February 2008
A world-first discovery made by a Monash University PhD student working at CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) in Geelong, has poultry scientists worldwide taking a fresh look at the devastating bacterial disease, necrotic enteritis. In a paper published on 8 February in the respected 'open access' international journal *PLoS Pathogens*, Anthony Keyburn and a team of Australian scientists outline the discovery of a new toxin and the finding that alpha-toxin protein – long thought to be required for necrotic enteritis to develop – is not the main cause of the chicken disease. Mr Keyburn – who has been working at AAHL on an Australian Poultry Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) project – said necrotic enteritis is one of the world's most common and financially crippling poultry diseases. "It's caused by *Clostridium perfringens*, a bacterium found in soil, litter, dust and in small quantities in the intestines of healthy chickens. The bacterium only causes disease when it proliferates to high numbers, producing extra cellular toxins that attack the bird's intestines, causing lesions," he said. Poultry producers use antibiotics to treat and prevent the disease, which, when triggered, can cause mortality rates of up to 50 per cent. Necrotic enteritis costs the world's poultry industries an estimated US\$2 billion every year.

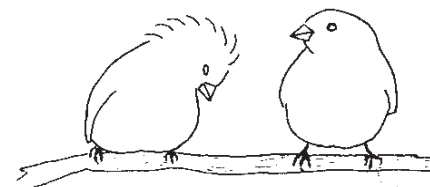
Japan parrot beats humans in solving chain puzzle

TOKYO (Reuters)
"Ten", a six-year-old New World parrot, can solve a puzzle consisting of two entangled chains in less than 30 seconds. It takes humans about an hour. The female macaw at a botanical garden in suburban Tokyo competes against more than a dozen human visitors every day, but remains undefeated. "I can't do it! It's impossible!" said eight-year-old Yuto Uotani, after Ten solved the puzzle in a matter of seconds, using her beak and foot. Other parrots have so far failed to beat Ten's record. Most of them pay no attention to the chain puzzle. "Ten is having fun while solving, whereas other parrots must learn first to disentangle. That's the difference right there," parrot keeper Daichi Yamanaka told Reuters. It all started a few months ago when a parrot keeper handed a chain puzzle to the parrot. Ten first fiddled around with it on a passing whim and managed to solve it within a matter of few days. "I can't believe I lost! This is frustrating!" said 23-year-old visitor Yuka Ishida, who kept trying even after being walloped twice by the parrot.

Reporting by Chika Osaka

Soliciting Preening

Understanding Finch Behaviour



When a bird solicits preening, it lowers its head and spreads its head feathers. Finches use this posture to solicit preening from their mates often while the partners are clumping (group close to one another for beneficial purposes). To invite preening as gesture of submission (after a conflict) or, as many finches do, to seek reassurance and comfort from non-threatening companions after unpleasant or frightening events (such as being chased by rivals).

Jayne Yantz, finch expert

Information for Members

Members should be aware that if they belong to a club which has Public Liability with the ABA Inc. it is for the Club's activities, etc.

If a member of a Club has a problem such as a complaint from a neighbour going to the local council, if they need help THEY must join as a private member for any assistance from the ABA Inc

Barbara Devnie
Secretary ABA Inc.

Snakes in the Post

THE snakes were in the post, but they didn't get past Customs.

Four green tree pythons sent from South Africa were discovered by Customs officers in airmailed parcels intercepted at the Sydney International Mail Centre.

The snakes, each about 1.3m long, were detected when the parcels were X-rayed.

Customs national investigations manager Richard Janeczko said the parcels had arrived in Sydney between March 19 and March 30.

This year alone, Customs had seized valuable snakes hidden inside garden gnomes and parrot eggs concealed in a body vest, he said.

"Customs has also been following people we believe to be trapping reptiles around Australia," Mr Janeczko said.

"On average, we would have wildlife smuggled at least once a month, both in and out of Australia."

Mr Janeczko said smuggling

wildlife was the third most lucrative international criminal activity after drugs and weapons.

A Melbourne man faced the Melbourne Magistrates' Court last Thursday charged with four counts of importing a Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species specimen.

Each charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years jail and/or a \$110,000 fine. The man, 32, was granted bail and will reappear in court on May 14.



Photo: Australian Customs Service

One of the snakes intercepted by Customs



Don't put a comma, when conscience indicates a full stop.

First human-to-human transmission

The Sangai Express & Agencies

London, April 05

A REPORT by BBC News has confirmed the first case of human-to-human transmission of bird flu in Pakistan. Pakistan's northwest and southern regions were hit by bird flu last year. Thousands of birds were culled to control the spread of the disease.

Tests carried out by the World Health Organisation (WHO) have now shown that bird flu killed some members of a family in northwest Pakistan late last year. This is the first confirmation of people dying from bird flu in the country, with the samples collected from the family in Peshawar testing positive.

According to Dr Mukhtiar Zaman Afridi, a poultry worker in Peshawar apparently passed the disease on to members of his family. Though this worker has fully recovered since then, his elder brother was brought in with similar symptoms. He died a week later. Two more brothers of the same worker came down with bird flu.

Apart from the poultry worker, none of the others was found to have had any direct contact with sick or dead poultry. Genetic sequencing tests performed by WHO laboratories in Egypt and the US on samples collected from three of the four brothers established human-to-human transmission. Serum taken from all three was found to have been infected by the H5N1 avian influenza virus. It said initial tests by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which sent a team here last week, had ruled it out but that Pakistan had sent samples to Geneva the WHO's headquarters for further confirmation. Scientists fear that if the virus

were passed from one person to another, rather than from infected birds, it might indicate a mutation that could lead to a global pandemic with the potential to kill millions.

There has been no new outbreak. The H5N1 strain of bird flu has killed more than 200 people worldwide, mostly in Southeast Asia, since late 2003.



Parrot egg smuggler to be deported

Thursday, 3rd April 2008

A **DUTCH** national, who was arrested and charged by Customs when he attempted to smuggle exotic birds' eggs into Australia, was today ordered to be deported after serving time in jail since his arrest last year.

Customs National Manager Investigations Richard Janeczko said, "Smuggling of wildlife including birds' eggs into and out of Australia is big business to some people but it poses a real threat to the global environment and puts profits before the welfare of the animals and the future of endangered species."

Antonius Duindam had pleaded guilty in Sydney's Downing Centre District Court to illegally importing 10 West African parrot eggs last November. In sentencing Mr Duindam, the judge handed down a jail term of four months and 25 days, which he has already served, and his immediate deportation.

Customs officers at Sydney Airport discovered the eggs concealed in a purpose-made body vest when they searched Mr Duindam who had travelled from the Netherlands via Hong Kong.

He was arrested by Customs investigators and has remained in

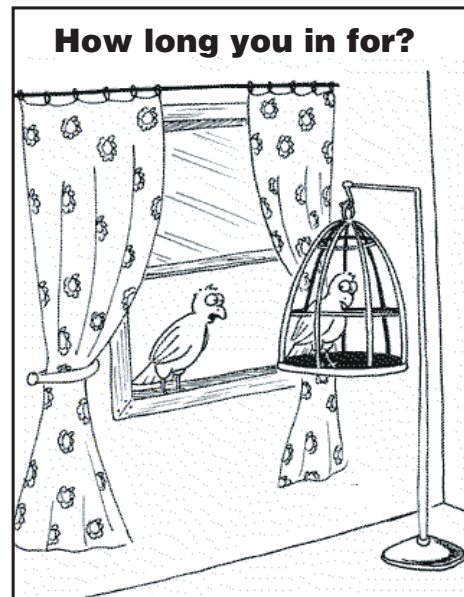
custody until his sentencing.

Mr Janeczko said the sentence reflected the seriousness of wildlife smuggling.

"Australia has some of the strongest wildlife protection laws in the world. Under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, the export and import of wildlife products is strictly controlled and policed.

"The smuggling of birds' eggs into Australia is also a concern for health reasons as they pose a high quarantine risk with the real possibility of introducing diseases into the environment," he said.

Customs Media 02 6275 6793



DNA sexing of your birds

Interest in sexing services has blossomed worldwide and replaces the former surgical and blood testing methods and a number of centres offer DNA sexing from normal feathers.

Results will normally take two to five working days, outcomes are claimed to be very accurate (around 99.9%).

For DNA sexing all that is required is two **NORMAL** feathers from the bird by simply pulling them from the bird's body, tail or wing (you will not obtain a result from feathers picked up off the ground) Basically, all feathers will contain DNA.

The feathers do not need to contain any blood; unless the bird is very young and only growing (blood) feathers are available.

When collecting feather samples avoid handling the tip of the feather shaft.

Label a separate clean envelope (or plastic zip-top bag) for each bird you intend to have sexed with some form of identification eg. Ring No., etc.

Pull two tail or wing feathers from each bird with one swift motion and place them in the envelope labeled for that bird. Please do not lick envelopes shut.

For small birds like finches, two primary feathers are required (largest tail or wing feathers).

For medium sized birds like canaries or ringnecks two secondary flight or tail feathers are ideal.

For very large birds, like cockatoos or macaws, their breast or back feathers are sufficient.

If a growing feather is collected, then only this single feather is required for a bird of any size.

If you have a young bird that only has growing feathers, then this single feather, even a tiny blood feather, will have enough DNA in the blood in the feather tip to sex the bird many times over. Put any blood feathers in a paper envelope, or allow them to air dry before putting them into plastic zip-top bags.

Large feathers can be cut down to fit into small bags or envelopes. The testing centers only require the end of the feather with the shaft tip attached.

For Test Centers in your area look in the Yellow Pages or on the Internet.

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to its licensees and has sought assistance from the NAKCC. Key areas—canvassed at the meeting were its:

- Licensing forms
- Protocols/procedures
- General information on standards/husbandry
- Training of licensees

The Unit is keen to improve its information resources to make its licensing programme more efficient, reduce the drop out rate of licensees and enhance compliance.

NAKCC to provide information on what data information tools is wanted from DECC prior to next meeting

NAKCC to review NSW Native Animal Keepers' Information book and provide feedback to DECC.

Frequency of meetings

The Committee agreed that meetings be held every six months. Extraordinary meetings may also be called should extra issues arise.

Composition of the Committee
The Committee agreed that the existing membership is appropriate. However, specialists may be required eg for specific items such as when developing standards. NAKCC to disseminate information on finalised actions to a wider network.

DECC to provide e-copies of information to NAKCC to disseminate to a wider network.

PIAA to include links to DECC licensing information on its website.

Adjust NAKCC operational procedures to fit new DECC structure (DECC executive to PWG Directors).

Amend operational procedures so comments on minutes need to be received within two weeks for speedy approval of minutes to occur to allow circulation by Committee members.

Review of bird classification

This matter has been raised at numerous NAKCC meetings and involves the exemption of (turquoise parrot) mutations from licensing. Current legislation does not allow for exemptions of colour variations (see definition of species). Possible alternate options were discussed at the meeting and include:

- holding notice of sale receipt only if mutation
- maintaining a licence
- other proof of purchase

Changes would still be required to legislation stating if one of these options is provided no regulatory control is needed.

Brendon Neilly to review Barbara Devnies letter regarding mutations
Brendon Neilly to formalise alternate options other than exemptions and discuss at the next meeting

NAKCC members to liaise with Dr Gott if they have concerns of continued regulation of mutations.

NATIVE ANIMAL KEEPERS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Matters arising from the previous minutes

Barbara Devnie to provide DECC with a formal request to review current policies, regulations and practices associated with the sale of birds at shows (carry over from meeting 28 June 2006).

Barbara Devnie to ask DECC for assistance with a review of the Associated Bird Keepers Australia code of ethics for keeping and selling birds

Barbara Devnie to discuss with the NAKCC a proposal to exempt the Long-tailed Finch (*Poephila acuticauda*) from licensing.

Allan McLean to respond to a question from Aviary Life Magazine regarding how to legally record the sale of an animal. What documentation is required?

Barbara Devnie to provide copy of illegible seizure receipt. An ABA member has submitted a receipt but details recorded by DECC staff are not readable creating potential enforcement difficulties.

Ron Haering will invite Russell Harrison Manager, Special Investigations Unit to attend the next meeting and provide an overview of current DECC initiatives in compliance and enforcement.

New wildlife licensing system overview

Linda Crawley provided an overview of the Government

Licensing System (GLS) and its implementation in March 2007. Items discussed were the scope of the GLS, its potential benefits and future initiatives such as on-line renewals. At present all animal keeper licences, companion animal and import/export licences are all on the GLS. DECC are working toward introducing its scientific licences and remaining head office wildlife licences in June 2008. On-line renewals are a possibility within the next 12 months.

Wildlife review overview

Dr Miranda Gott advised the NAKCC that DECC is undertaking a broad review of its current wildlife management practices. The immediate focus will be on wildlife licensing regulation, in particular high conservation value and high risk activities related to buy, sell, and possess processes. The review is scheduled to be completed in June 2008. Dr Gott is seeking input from the NAKCC and other relevant stakeholders.

NAKCC members to liaise with Dr Gott and provide contact details of other relevant stakeholders and feedback on issues of concern to their members.

Information tools

The Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit is seeking to improve the information it provides

Bird Flu Sweeps Indonesia, India, Tibet

Associated Press, Thursday, 31 Jan. 2008
Bird flu killed its third victim in as many days in Indonesia and ravaged poultry stocks in Tibet and India on Wednesday, as the virus picked up steam across Asia.

The death of the 32-year-old man raised Indonesia's human toll to 101 — accounting for nearly half the worldwide total. The man died in the capital Tuesday, three days after being hospitalized.

It was not immediately clear how he contracted the H5N1 virus, said Health Ministry official Toto Haryanto, though one of his neighbors was known to be a pigeon breeder.

"We are not sure if any of those birds were sickened by the H5N1 virus," he said. "We're still investigating."

In southwestern Tibet, a poultry farm was quarantined after an outbreak of the disease killed 1,000 birds, agriculture officials reported Wednesday. More than 13,000 other poultry were killed to prevent its spread.

In India, the virus spread in three districts of West Bengal state, where culling was under way and more than 129,000 poultry birds have died, said Animal Resource Development Minister Anisur Rahaman.

Health workers have killed nearly 2.5 million at-risk birds and were clearing areas within three miles of infection sites, said Rahaman. No human infections have been recorded.

Chickens, ducks killed by vandals

VANDALS have killed and injured several farmyard chickens and ducks raised by students with learning difficulties at a school in Canberra.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the animal cruelty carried out in the grounds of the MacKillop Catholic College overnight.

Staff arrived to discover three chickens and one duck dead, and another duck and chicken seriously injured, in what police believe to be a deliberate act.

School principal Michael Lee said that the animals were part of a program designed to help year 7-9 students with learning difficulties engage in practical science. Some of the birds had been hatched and raised by the students.

"The program has been going for about three years and has been very successful in engaging struggling students in the world of science. Some of these animals have been hatched and raised by students, and they are going to be very upset about it," he said.

Mr Lee described the attack as a "low act" and said that while schools live with vandalism all the time it was very disappointing to see defenceless animals killed and injured.

Chief executive of the ACT RSPCA Michael Linke said he was sickened by the act and has urged anyone with information to come forward.

The Tale of Bird's Nest Soup

by A. M. Zukarnaen

Authentic bird's nest soup is made using the nests of the swiftlet, a tiny bird found throughout southeast Asia. The swiftlet lives in dark caves, using a method of echo-location similar to the bat to get around. Instead of twigs and straw, the swiftlet makes its nest from strands of its own gummy saliva, which hardens when exposed to air. Humans who harvest the swiftlet nests often come from families that have made their living this way for generations. Prying the nests from the cave walls is extremely dangerous, and many harvesters die each year.

Once the nests are harvested, they are cleaned and sold to restaurants, where they are served simmered in chicken broth apparently it is an acquired taste — many westerners think it tastes quite rubbery the first time they try it.

However it is quite popular throughout Asia, perhaps because it has the reputation of being an aphrodisiac (also known as longevity soup).

It is also costly; many western restaurants serve a less expensive version consisting of soup with noodles shaped to resemble a bird's nest.

Japan eyes all-round bird flu vaccine

Japanese researchers said they had paved the way to develop an all-round vaccine to protect people from bird flu, including potential mutations that could set off a global pandemic.

The new method entails injecting people with a tiny bit of fat known as a liposome. It carries on its surface an antigen, the molecule that triggers a response in the immune system.

Current bird flu vaccines rely on the immune system's ability to attack the virus itself, but they become ineffective if the virus mutates.

The new method "targets the inside of the virus, rather than its surface," as the inside structure of the virus rarely changes, said Tetsuya Uchida, the researcher

Recycle cooking fat and feed birds at the same time

While cooking, pour off excess fat into an empty can.

For every cup of fat, you'll need one half cup bird seed.

Slowly remelt fat and add seed. Put into paper cups and refrigerate.

When mixture is hard, remove paper cups and tie string around mixture (put the string in the cup first, seems like that would hold/last longer).

Now you are ready to hang it in your trees and watch the different birds eat.

Birds-of-a-feather raise a big flap

By JON RUTTER, a staff writer for the Sunday News.

A Pennsylvania Game Commission proposal to ban Nanday conure parrots is raising a squawk in Harrisburg. The Nanday Conure parrot is from South America.

Birdfanciers say it's unfair to single out the green South American birds. "If they can justify banning the Nanday," said Chet Fuhrman of Columbia, "then they can justify banning any pet bird species." Numerous parrot lovers are expected to converge on Game Commission headquarter at 1 p.m. today during a session to gather public input. But PGC spokesman Jerry Feaser said people are blowing the issue out of proportion. Rumours aside, Feaser said, the commission has no plan to confiscate birds.

"A lot of this is based on the false assumption that there would be a roundup and euthanization of these animals. That is not part of this proposal." Nor is the suggested change much of a change, he said.

Prohibitions against the possession, importation, release and sale of "captive bred" animals from other states or nations have been on the books since 1992. At that time, the Game Commission explicitly forbade transactions involving Monk parakeets (Quaker parrots) which have established feral colonies in Florida, Texas and New York.

Now, said Feaser, the commissioners are considering further clarifications that would ban Nandays and some primates. The Game Commission will hear more public testimony beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Monday and take a preliminary vote on its agenda items on Tuesday. Feaser said the action must be publicized in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, as

Continued on page 9

"But Stephanie Bell, a senior cruelty caseworker with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), said avian health is a key argument against cooping up an estimated 10 million pet birds in the United States .

"No bird is designed to live in a cage" or have its wings clipped, she said.

Bell said birds are intensely social creatures that when confined exhibit obvious signs of physical and mental stress, such as biting and feather pulling.

PETA supports the Game Commission initiative but is not pushing it, Bell said.

"People who know PETA's stance on captive birds have made assumptions." ...

Birds-of-a-feather raise a big flap — continued from page 8

must a second approval vote, before the regulation would become law. The main goal is to keep escaped or released Nanday Conures from gaining a foothold in the Pennsylvania wild. The likelihood of colonization is remote, Feaser said, but not impossible. "We've already been down this road."

And it rides like a slippery slope, asserted Jen Johnson of the Lancaster County parrot rescue group Feathered Sanctuary. "Clearly, it's not as though Nanday Conures are descending on Pennsylvania and wreaking havoc on our wildlife habitat," Johnson said. Monk parakeets are considered pests because they build large stick nests in developed areas. However, the National Audubon Society's director of bird conservation, Greg Butcher, said he had not heard of any established populations of feral Nanday Conures. Smoketown veterinarian John Hall was sceptical that the solitary Nandays could survive a Pennsylvania winter or evade

predators such as red-tailed hawks. "The chance of that is very slim," said Hall, who helps advise Feathered Sanctuary and the Stanley Parrot Foundation in York County. Birds are the third most popular pets, after dogs and cats. Parrot owners were preparing last week to counter possible claims that their pets threaten human health by noting that the birds have not been shown to transmit bird flu or commonly carry other diseases. Hall said none of the 250 to 300 Nanday Conures he has examined over the past five years has harboured psittacosis, a bacterial disease transmissible to humans.

Parrot ban dropped

— Lancaster New Era

IN the face of angry opposition from pet bird owners, the Pennsylvania Game Commission in the US has dropped a proposal that would have banned ownership of Nanday Conures.

The agency feared that the parrots would escape into the wild and compete with native wildlife.

But a number of people, including a local veterinarian, said there was no way the parrots could survive a Pennsylvania winter.

A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at the supermarket, but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a store employee, "Do these turkeys get any bigger?"

"No ma'am, they're dead."