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Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

### Information for bird keepers

Due to some recent, inaccurate reports, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts wishes to clarify the following information.

#### **Clarifying laws relating to exotic bird seizures**

Seizures of birds are carried out under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Under Section 444A of the Act, birds, and other live animals, can be seized if it is suspected they have been illegally imported into Australia, or were bred from illegally imported specimens.

Birds that are seized can remain in situ on conditional release to the owners under Section 449BA of the Act. Owners are responsible for the care and welfare of the birds during this time. There are no renewals of 30 or 60 days required for live animal seizure notices as has been incorrectly reported.

The EPBC Act is in place to help protect Australia's environment from risks of pests and disease. This legislation helps to protect Australia's bird industry from unwanted disease which may be brought in through illegal trade.

People who keep exotic birds whether for personal or commercial purposes should help stop illegal trade within the exotic bird keeping sector.

#### **Recently forfeited birds**

A case which was scheduled to be heard in May 2008 in the Melbourne County Court was discontinued by owners seeking the return of seized birds. As a consequence the birds were forfeited to the Commonwealth under section 444D (4) of the EPBC Act.

The birds were collected by the department on 29 May 2008. Twenty nine birds were seized and forfeited, and 15 live birds were collected. The bodies of deceased birds were also collected at that time. After about 45 days in quarantine under veterinary care, the 15 live birds are now in good health and have been rehoused at Taronga and Melbourne Zoos on conditional release for educational purposes.

#### **What can you do?**

The best way to stop illegal activities is to buy only individually marked and identified birds and eggs that have adequate documentation which will help verify their origin. Keeping this information and records of your bird breeding and transactions will help individual bird keepers and the trade generally.

Participation in the Exotic Bird Record Keeping Scheme, which includes marking and identifying individual birds, is strongly advised. It is not too late to start! Information on the scheme is available on the department's web site:

[www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/exoticbirds/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/exoticbirds/index.html)

Information and record books can be requested by phoning 1800 720 466 or emailing [exoticbirds@environment.gov.au](mailto:exoticbirds@environment.gov.au)