



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Connecticut River Fish Show Promise After Long Restoration Effort. More than 500 Atlantic salmon have begun their spawning runs up the Connecticut River so far this spring. The number represents the largest run since restoration efforts began in 1965, according to Galen Buterbaugh, Associate Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Fishery Resources.

All salmon, shad, and herring spawning runs stopped in 1814 on the Connecticut River with the construction of mill pond dams. In 1974, after removal of a number of dams one salmon finally returned on its spawning run. The next year three returned, and by 1978, 90 salmon were counted running the river. Last year, the number was 175.

Shad and herring runs have also resumed in the river. The shad run is expected to at least equal last year's record of 376,000, and the herring run is expected to exceed half a million.

Restoration efforts for the salmon are guided by the Technical Committee for Fisheries Management of the Connecticut Basin, which includes fishery experts from several of the New England state agencies, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The huge restoration task included removing or circumventing dams and other obstacles to migrating fish, drastically reducing pollution, and releasing large numbers of smolts and fry in the headwaters of the river. Major hydropower companies also have contributed significantly to the restoration effort, Buterbaugh said, by providing access at five mainstem dams for the fish to reach their traditional spawning grounds.

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Wildlife Importer Sentenced. The owner and operator of one of the oldest and largest bird import operations in the U.S. was sentenced June 5 to serve 1 year in prison and fined \$18,000 by Judge James W. Kehoe in U.S. District Court in Miami, Florida.

Bert R. Slocum, owner of the Quality Bird Co. in Miami, was one of five persons found guilty recently of multiple violations involving the importation and quarantine of birds. His wife, Louise V. Slocum, was fined \$1,000 and placed on 2 years probation. The other three included his son, Ray, and two employees, Francille Miller and Doris Fuller, who were placed on probation for 2 years.

Slocum, his son, and the two employees were found guilty of conspiring to enter and maliciously breaking into a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) over

quarantine facility; removing birds, mainly parrots, from U.S. Customs custody which had been exposed to exotic Newcastle disease; and mixing them with healthy birds at Slocum's warehouse. Slocum was also found guilty of presenting USDA with a fraudulent claim for \$290,383 for diseased birds that had to be destroyed, after having exposed the birds to the disease.

The case was built on the investigative efforts of a Miami-based Government task force comprised of special agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the USDA, the U.S. Customs Service, and an attorney from the Justice Department's Wildlife Section.

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Proposal Would End Import/Export Permits for Migratory Birds. In keeping with the Interior Department's commitment to eliminate unnecessary Federal regulations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed dropping the requirement for permits to import or export migratory birds, eggs, parts, or products. The present import-export permit requirement was established in 1961, prior to other statutes such as the Endangered Species Act and provisions in various international treaties which now regulate international shipments of wildlife.

Waterfowl propagators, migratory bird researchers, and falconers are among those most likely to be affected by the proposal, which was published in the May 29, 1981, Federal Register. Interested individuals, groups, or agencies with pertinent information on the proposed change are asked to send their comments to the Director (LE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, before June 29, 1981.

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Petitioner Nominates 77 Birds for Endangered Species List. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has accepted a petition from Dr. Warren B. King of the International Council for Bird Preservation to add 77 species of birds to the worldwide U.S. List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. The list presently includes 213 foreign and native endangered birds.

The birds now under consideration occur all over the world and include 19 species from the United States and Territories. Most are forest-dwellers threatened primarily by habitat loss and introduced predators such as the feral pig and mongoose. Some, like the Amak song sparrow from the Aleutian Islands in Alaska and the serpent eagle from Madagascar, are very rare and according to the petitioner, may be extinct. Others, like the flightless Guam rail, are unique. Among the species nominated by Dr. King are parrots, parakeets, turtle doves, hummingbirds, owls, and hawks.

The Interior agency is seeking additional data and comments on the petition, which is based on data compiled by Dr. King for the 1978 and 1979 Red Data Book, published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, headquartered in Switzerland. Under the Endangered Species Act, anyone may petition to have a species added, deleted, or reclassified. The petition must be supported by substantial information to warrant review by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service will make an independent evaluation of the status of the 77 bird species after a full review of the comments and additional data received during the public comment which ends September 9, 1981. Notice of review and acceptance of the petition was published in the May 12, 1981, Federal Register.

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