

## MODEL AVICULTURE PROGRAM

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### **AN OVERVIEW OF MAP**

The Model Aviculture Program (MAP) was designed by aviculturists and avian veterinarians to improve avicultural practices through setting basic standards for avian husbandry. Individuals who apply to MAP are sent a sample Inspection Form and Guidelines to prepare for the inspection. Applicants select a veterinarian to do the inspection and inform MAP. The applicant is sent the official NCR Inspection Form and the veterinarian of their choice performs the inspection when the applicant sets up the appointment. MAP certification is provided for the individuals who meet MAP standards.

MAP is not a private business; it is a non-profit service organization designed to be of benefit to aviculturists. Application fees are used for basic administrative costs. The clerical work is performed by one, part-time person. The management of MAP is under the direction of the MAP Board of Directors. The MAP Board is comprised of aviculturists experienced with a wide variety of bird species and of avian veterinarians. The MAP Board of Directors guides the organization and generates policies under which the certification program is administered. Many members of the present Board of Directors helped to design the program. In addition to the MAP Board, the organization is assisted by an Advisory Board of accomplished aviculturists and veterinarians from different geographical regions in the United States.

### **THE MAP PROCESS**

People who write or call requesting an Application Form, receive a set of Guidelines and Instructions on how to prepare for the inspection process. MAP applicants send a completed Application, with the appropriate fee, to the MAP office. The fee for the first inspection is \$50.00 for 15 or less aviaries/flights/cages, and \$100.00 for 16 and over aviaries/flights/cages (the renewal fee is half the original fee: \$25.00 and \$50.00). After the first two years, renewal is every other year. The Application includes basic address information on the applicant and his/her veterinarian of choice. The MAP office sends a numbered Inspection Form (in triplicate) and MAP Guidelines to the applicant or the applicant's veterinarian. The applicant makes an appointment with the veterinarian (the applicant is responsible for paying the veterinarian for the inspection visit). The veterinarian inspects the facilities, management and husbandry practices, and record keeping procedures. The Inspection Form is returned to MAP, in triplicate, and processed. Questions are weighed. Applicants who pass the inspection are provided with a signed and numbered MAP Certificate and MAP Logos for use on business cards, letterhead, or in advertising. Some applicants have need of record keeping forms (weight records, genealogy records, etc.), or a variety of contracts (sales, consignment sales, hand-feeding, breeder loan). MAP sends these forms out to the new MAP participant upon request at no additional cost to the MAP member.

### **WHY DO WE NEED MAP?**

For the past 15 years, rules and regulations on a local, state, and national level have been considered and proposed. Responsible people within the avicultural community and within the governmental agencies have attempted to regulate the pet bird industry, which would, of course, affect all of aviculture. In addition, since the early eighties, animal rights groups, sometimes with the help of the conservation community, have attempted to ban importation of wild-caught birds into the United States, prohibit interstate transportation by air, and regulate ownership and care of exotic birds within the U.S. When there is a law in force dealing with exotic birds, there will be regulations in association with that law: permits, fees, licenses, inspections, a definition of legal and illegal activities under those regulations, and perhaps even stipulations about the care of exotics. Across the U.S., both state and local laws have been proposed on these matters.

Historically, aviculturists have been anti-regulation, privacy-oriented individuals. They have resisted all attempts to regulate their activities, until the passage of the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992. In fact, this law would probably not have been passed if aviculturists had joined together to form a professional association or organization which would have set basic standards for bird care. The lack of such a nationally-known organization left the door open for restrictive legislation.

Unfortunately, throughout the eighties, aviculturists did not join together and work in a unified manner to meet the rising tide of animal rights legislation. Hopefully, we will remember and respect the old saying: "...those who won't stand together, will all hang separately...". It is time for aviculturists to join together to work for our common interests. The alternative is to be overcome by those who do not believe in captive breeding and do not want to see birds in cages for any reason.

## **National Cage & Aviary Bird Improvement Plan Proposed in 1984**

In 1981, the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA), at its annual meeting, added other avian species to its Committee on Transmissible Diseases of Poultry, which then became the Committee on Transmissible Diseases of Poultry and Other Avian Species. A resolution was made to establish a subcommittee to prepare a model state program for pet birds. Thus, the National Cage and Aviary Bird Improvement Plan (NCABIP) was born. The subcommittee which prepared the NCABIP was composed of representatives of the US Department of Agriculture (Veterinary Services), bird breeders (AFA), pet shop owners, the pet industry (PIJAC), and the poultry industry (NPIP). The plan was submitted in November of 1984. The NCABIP was to be administered by state agencies. All records of purchases and sales and product identity were to be subject to inspection by officers of the state. Even advertising would have been regulated. Participants could not buy, sell, or receive any products (birds) from anyone who was not a participant. All birds would have to be identified with a numbered leg band. The aviculturist's facilities, as well as birds and records, were to be completely regulated by state agencies or their appointed agents. This program aggravated and frightened aviculturists who felt that it did not address their real needs and would not improve exotic bird care.

## **Planning MAP, January 1985**

Several aviculturists in Northern California attended a poultry association meeting on pet birds in Santa Rosa, where Marshall Meyer of PIJAC presented the information on NCABIP in the fall of 1984. Finding the proposed regulations of great concern, the word went out that a meeting was needed. In January 1985, the first meeting organized by aviculturists was held to discuss NCABIP. It was determined that aviculturists should design a model improvement plan for aviculturists in the United States and that it should be a plan that would be beneficial to the birds, while protecting the privacy of the individual aviculturist. Thereafter, a group of bird breeders began holding monthly meetings where the pro's and con's of NCABIP were studied and discussed. From the beginning, avian veterinarians were included in the discussions and provided valuable input on the medical aspects of exotic bird management. The group discussed concerns of the Department of Agriculture, (escaped exotic birds may become agricultural pests), concerns about the US Fish and Wildlife Service (escaped birds may displace native species), and the Center for Disease Control (psittacosis). Each of these governmental organizations were concerned about the effects of exotic birds in the United States. It was determined that these concerns should be met in the design of the plan. This group of bird breeders discussed the needs and requirement of the many species of birds kept in aviculture, from Finches to Pheasants and waterfowl, from Macaws to Budgies and Softbills. The group recognized that the many species have different housing and dietary needs and that different methods are utilized for rearing progeny. The MAP planners determined not to create a large book of detailed specifications on each species. They recognized that the specific practices in aviculture in the United States vary greatly, according to the different geographic regions. In addition, within the same geographic area, avicultural practices may vary greatly and still result in successful breeding. Since modern aviculturists still do not know all there is to know about bird care, it seemed best not to establish species-specific caging and dietary requirements while there is still a great deal being learned. These decisions resulted in the use of a simplified approach, i.e.: the design of models of husbandry practices which could be applied to any species in any location.

## **The 3 Key Elements of MAP**

### **Key Element 1:**

The very first key element of MAP is the use of models for husbandry practices involving the areas of quarantine, safety systems, caging, nutrition, nursery, and record keeping. Models can be applied to a variety of set-ups in avicultural facilities. Guidelines were designed to provide instruction on each area within the aviculturists' facility. These Guidelines are for the use of the aviculturists in planning or improving their facility and to provide assistance to the veterinarians when they are inspecting the facility.

### **Key Element 2:**

The second key element of MAP is the use of the veterinarian as inspector. The veterinarian who inspects the bird farm facilities is chosen by the aviculturist. The veterinarian imparts the authority of a state-licensed professional to the MAP process, while maintaining the confidentiality of the aviculturist. Avian veterinarians helped design the Model Aviculture Program; their medical experience and knowledge has provided the needed compliment to the experience and knowledge of the aviculturists in creating a program that is effective and useful.

### **Key Element 3:**

The third key element of MAP is the utilization of the Closed Aviary Concept. Avicultural facilities which use this concept have an effective means of disease control. The Closed Aviary Concept provides the aviculturist with a means to secure and maintain flock health, to isolate and control disease outbreaks in flights or in the nursery, and thus to reduce losses and achieve production goals. Applying the principles of the Closed Aviary Concept to avicultural husbandry practices lays the foundation for a successful bird farm.

## **Exotic Bird Farms**

Exotic bird farms may consist of a few aviaries in the backyard, a few cages in a room or basement, or many cages in a separate building or outdoors. Aviculturists representing most of these examples have made application to and become certified by MAP. The goals of these individual aviculturists, or bird farmers, are quite varied.

Some have small collections of very rare and expensive birds. They wish to maintain these birds in good health, and perhaps they may breed. Youngsters might be held back for future stock, or be sold or traded. Although income from these birds is important, conservation of rare birds is also a goal. Other aviculturists have large farms with hundreds of pairs of birds. These farms are production-oriented with the goal of raising hundreds of health chicks destined for the pet market. Other aviculturists have small backyard aviaries where they raise a few youngsters every year; their goal is to enjoy their birds and to earn some money. Some aviculturists combine an interest in conservation of rare or unusual species with an interest in income-producing birds. Although the goals of these individual aviculturists may vary, the success of their bird farm will depend upon using good avicultural husbandry practices and the Closed Aviary Concept.

## **The Closed Aviary Concept**

A complete understanding and correct application of the Closed Aviary Concept is essential to the successful bird farm. Putting this concept into practice requires defining separate areas within the facility, each with a distinct location. These areas are as follows: Quarantine Area: The area where all new birds are housed for a period of time (not less than 60 days) to determine their condition of health through observation and appropriate testing. The Quarantine Area should be serviced last each day. Breeding Area: Adult breeding stock are housed in species-appropriate setups so that production of eggs or young is enhanced. Nursery Area: The nursery area is where young are fed and raised when not being parent-raised.

Nurseries may vary according to type of species being raised, i.e.: a waterfowl or Pheasant nursery would require a different setup than a nursery for psittacine chicks. The nursery is potentially a high-risk area for disease outbreaks. Isolation Area: An area where sick or injured birds can be kept apart from the breeding collection and the nursery. This area must be separate from the Quarantine Area. Food Storage and Supply Area: Food storage, preparation, and wash areas may be combined. Planning the aviary design to control and monitor the traffic flow of birds, feed and water bowls, and service personnel between each area in the facility is critical for the prevention and control of disease transmission. In addition, air flow in enclosed quarters should be designed so that air from the Isolation Area and Quarantine Area does not enter the Nursery Area, Breeding Area, or Food Preparation Area.

## **The Veterinarian's Role In MAP**

The Model Aviculture Program provides for facilities' inspections performed by state-licensed veterinarians. Placing the MAP inspection process in the hands of veterinarians, means inspection by unbiased professionals. The integrity of MAP rests upon the integrity of the individual veterinarian performing the inspection. Of course, for the inspection process to be successful, the veterinarian will need to be informed about avicultural husbandry practices and the Closed Aviary Concept. The veterinarian will also need to be flexible in approach to the varied types of facilities and record keeping practices. The inspection process involves the veterinarian reviewing the MAP Guidelines and MAP Inspection Form prior to the inspection. Upon arrival at the facility, the veterinarian will need to observe the record keeping procedures and paperwork to see that the record system is functional, to observe the husbandry practices, to review the traffic flow at the facility, to walk through the facility, and to complete and sign the Inspection Form. The veterinarian can either leave the completed Inspection Form, in triplicate, with the client, who will then send the completed Inspection Form, in triplicate, to the MAP office for processing, or the veterinarian can mail in the completed Inspection Form themselves, in triplicate, to the MAP office for processing. Inspection Forms are processed by the MAP staff and those who pass, receive a signed, numbered Certificate indicating compliance with MAP standards.

## **A MAP for the Future of Aviculture in the United States**

MAP has been endorsed by the Board of Directors of the American Federation of Aviculture as a viable program for inspection and certification of aviculturists. MAP has the active support of several major zoos, including the San Diego Zoo, which only permits the sale of surplus zoo birds to private sector individuals who are certified MAP participants. MAP was presented to the leadership of World Wildlife Fund who recognized MAP as a valuable program in the conservation of birds. MAP has been presented to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Management Authority as an organization designed to improve captive breeding of birds in the United States. MAP has been presented to the US Department of Agriculture as a viable means of voluntary self-regulation by the avicultural community. Australia and Canada are in the process of developing MAP programs for their countries based on the United States' model.

MAP has been designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the avicultural community, whether the aviculturist is a beginning breeder with a very small collection of breeding pairs who hopes to raise enough youngsters to pay the birds' expenses and perhaps even make a profit, a breeder of extremely rare or unusual species who expects to sell or trade very few youngsters, or a large breeder with a bird farm designed to provide hundreds of

young birds to the pet trade. MAP was not designed only for large breeding farms. The principles that apply to exotic bird breeding and care are the same, whether or not the facility is a room or a building or outdoor pens or flights. It is important to designate separate areas for separate functions, such as Nursery Area, Food Preparation Area, etc., and following a plan regarding traffic flow between these separate areas so that potential disease contamination is avoided. It is important that specialized equipment used in the nursery be functioning correctly and that the aviculturist understands the equipment and how to monitor its performance. It is important that the aviculturist become knowledgeable about the avian species with which he/she is working. It is important that the aviculturist keep abreast of the latest developments in avian nutrition, avian diseases, and laws and regulations regarding exotic birds. MAP is designed to do its part in upgrading and maintaining good husbandry and record keeping practices by aviculturists and thus, to promote the advancement of aviculture and to protect the interests of aviculturists in the United States.

Question 20 regards the development of the young. Young must be fed and cared for in a manner that allows development in a pattern that is within the accepted norms for the species. In those species for which weights are not available for comparison, acceptable appearance for age and species can be allowed. A 'No' answer to this question means that there are stunted babies in the nursery, and these abnormal babies outnumber the normals. Stunting is identified when chicks have limbs that look like sticks, with skin of a reddish-purple color, taut against the skeleton. The head is generally oversized in relation to the body for the species in question. The flesh appears to be dry and may be scaling off. A stunted chick is generally grossly underweight for its age.

Question 21. There must be a way to accurately weigh baby birds in the nursery at all times. A functional scale is essential to adequately monitor normal development and is especially helpful for individuals new to hand rearing exotic birds.

Question 22. Hand feeding formula should be made fresh daily (frozen formula is considered fresh upon defrosting). Hand feeding formula should not be reheated and reused but should be fed fresh at each feeding. Hand feeding formula should be handled and stored in such a manner that bacterial contamination is prevented. Commercial formulas can become outdated and should not be used after that time.

Question 23. For MAP members who are new to hand-raising exotic chicks, or experienced breeders working with species that are new to them, it is recommended that daily empty weights and formula intake be recorded along with additional information of importance. A functional record system for such baby birds includes an individual record with designated space for young by ID number, date of hatch, species, and formula being used.

For **Level III** MAP members working with rare species it is recommended that daily logs be kept. These logs contain information on each chick by ID number and shall have designated space for the following minimum information: day of age, weight, times fed, formula used, volumes fed, and comments regarding the chick. It is hoped that records kept for those species that do not have an established 'normal' weight gain chart will provide for the development of weight standards for the future. Experienced breeders raising exotic species with which they are familiar do not need to weigh birds daily. However, weights taken at key stages are important.

Record keeping on young birds ranges from: a) Recording occasional weights and basic ID information: Species, hatch date, Chick ID information (rating of 1); to b) Recording species, hatch date, chick ID, hand feeding formula, daily entries by age, daily entries by weight, daily entries of times fed, daily entries of amounts fed, daily entries of comments where appropriate (rating of 5). Daily pediatric record keeping at large breeding farms or with small psittacines, (such as Budgerigars), is inappropriate and not necessarily endorsed by MAP. Limited record keeping with some weights, where birds are selected randomly from the group clutch at key ages, is appropriate and indicated. This information on weights helps the novice more than the professional. However, it allows for the documentation of developmental parameters and growth of exotic birds, and thus furthers the scientific and professional development of the exotic bird industry.

Question 24. Hand feeding equipment should be cleaned, disinfected, and stored in a manner that will eliminate the spread of infectious disease on those instruments (e.g. storing instruments in a disinfecting soak between use for feeding).

Question 25. Humidity and temperature requirements for the different species should be met. It is not recommended that individuals from separate clutches be intermingled. Keeping clutches separate minimizes the transmission of disease in the nursery.

## **RECORD KEEPING SYSTEM**

It is a requirement of MAP that aviculturists maintain records on birds. Good records provide the basis for the bird farmer to analyze the productivity of each pair and determine what should be done to prepare for the next breeding season. It is recommended the records contain the following minimum information:

Origin:	Domestic-Raised:	Purchased From:
	Wild-Caught:	Purchased From:
	Quarantine In:	Quarantine Out:
	Medication:	Diagnosis:
Hatch Date:	Parent Reared:	Hand-Fed:
I/D:	Weaning Date:	Formula:
Lineage:	Parent Pair I/D:	Cage/Flight #:
Clutchmates:	Nestbox Type:	Nesting Material:
	Diet:	Disposition:

Question 26. IT IS MANDATORY THAT A FUNCTIONAL RECORD KEEPING SYSTEM IS IN OPERATION. Record keeping on the birds in the collection ranges from: a) Minimal, which includes the ID of each bird, the species, the sex, and the band number (rating of 1); to b) The ID of each bird, the species, the sex, the band number, plus the information listed in the prior paragraph, starting with Origin (rating of 5). Record keeping rated '5' should have easy accessibility, be applicable to needs, be current, have permanence, allow for evaluation, and include productivity of the overall facility.

Question 27. A written statement of the conditions of sale shall accompany all birds sold by MAP members. The time period and specific limitations of liability for health-related problems shall clearly be stated. Information provided on a Bill of Sale ranges from: a) Names of buyer and seller, bird ID, price, date (rating of 1); a written statement of conditions of sale, the time period of the seller's guarantee of health status clearly stated, and history and genealogy of the bird sold (rating of 5). All MAP members will abide by their written conditions of sale, with no exceptions. Written conditions of sale shall include directions and instructions regarding basic care, husbandry, and nutrition for the birds sold.

These Guidelines are for the information of the applicants and the inspecting of veterinarians and will be updated, as new information is available. Questions regarding the Guidelines may be addressed to the MAP office or call (925) 684-2244, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday, or fax (925) 684-2323, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday.

## **BENEFITS TO MAP MEMBERS**

Several major U.S. zoos, including the San Diego Zoo, provide sales lists of surplus birds to aviculturists who are certified by MAP. These surplus lists are provided by the zoos themselves and not by MAP. If a zoo has a surplus, you will be contacted and sent the list by the zoo with the surplus, not by MAP. MAP members are permitted to purchase surplus zoo stock. MAP provides a variety of record keeping forms to members, including weight gain forms for hand-feeding young birds, record keeping forms for genealogy, quarantine record forms, etc. Please write or call for samples, which you can copy, and use. Contracts prepared by an attorney are available: Handfeeding Agreement, Breeding Loan Agreement, Sales Agreement and Deposit Receipt, Consignment Sales Agreement, and Boarding Agreement. MAP members are provided with MAP logos for use in conducting their business, such as on letterheads or in ads. MAP provides input to legislative and regulatory bodies in state and national governments in order to provide information about aviculture and to promote the advancement of aviculture.

## **MAP ADVISORY BOARD**

Individuals from the avicultural and veterinary communities in different regions of the U.S. have agreed to participate on the MAP Advisory Board. These Members of the MAP Advisory Board provide important information and suggestions regarding improvement of the MAP inspection and certification process. They also provide information to the avicultural community about MAP. Regional differences in seasonal climates and state and local regulations influence the keeping and breeding of exotic birds. The different needs of the many avian species are best known by the specialists or specialty groups; their input is considered valuable. It is important that MAP be well advised in order to function effectively in providing needed services to MAP participants.