

1.4 Aviary Escapees

Policy revised 17/3/96: 1.4.1 – 1.4.8 reviewed 06/2007

Introduction

- 1.4.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with policies 1.13, 1.10, 1.15 and 1.18.
- 1.4.2 Many pet or aviary birds escape from aviaries.
- 1.4.3 Some of these escapees are crossed with other species (hybrids) or over-bred with their own species to produce mutations. Often these hybrids or mutants are not obvious to the untrained eye.
- 1.4.4 There are also many non-native species, which escape, however it is an offence under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to release these species.
- 1.4.5 When assessing the potential for release of probable aviary escapees, the following should be considered: hybridisation, mutation, transfer of disease, gene pools, natural range of species allowing for natural migration, and local habitat loss within the vicinity, plus any climate conditions which may have forced the bird out of its normal habitat.
- 1.4.6 When considering the potential and prospect for successful release, one should consider the extent of imprinting, natural food recognition, predator awareness and habitat availability. A single animal release is not recommended.
- 1.4.7 If any of the above are present but will not jeopardise the rehabilitation of the animal, then rehabilitation may be considered.
- 1.4.8 It shall be noted that it is an offence to dispose of protected species to an unlicensed person. The following are the only native birds which may be disposed of to unlicensed persons:

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| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | Stubble Quail |
| Galah | Brown Quail |
| Long-billed Corella | King Quail |
| Short-billed Corella | Diamond Dove |
| Cockatiel or Quarrion | Peaceful Dove |
| Budgerigar | Zebra Finch |

All other birds which are retained in captivity must be passed to a person holding a current aviary registration certificate issued by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, or hold an equivalent licence which permits the holding of native fauna. When completing the required WIRES Animal Report Forms and the annual returns for NPWS, the licence number of the person receiving the protected species must be included on all paperwork.

Policy

- 1.4.9 A non-native escapee, although technically not the responsibility of WIRES, must not be released and should be housed with others of its own kind. These animals should not be returned to aviculture through the pet trade. If no suitable home can be found the animal should be humanely euthanased.
- 1.4.10 A native bird, of a species which is often kept in aviculture and which is not known to be endemic to the area in which it was encountered, should be considered to be an aviary escapee. If there are facilities available in the area where that species occurs naturally, rehabilitation may be considered, taking into account points mentioned in 1.4.11. If rehabilitation is not a prospect, the bird may be retained in captivity with its own species. The bird should not be returned to aviculture through the pet trade. If no suitable home can be found the bird should be humanely euthanased.
- 1.4.11 A native bird of a species which is endemic to the locality of encounter and has been determined to be an aviary escapee, but is being considered for rehabilitation to the wild, must be assessed for the potential for possible hybridisation, mutation, aviary bird diseases, recognition of natural foods, imprinting and so on and have reasonable prospects for successful release. If release is not a prospect, the animal should be housed with its own species, but should not be returned to aviculture through the pet trade.
- 1.4.12 Native protected birds must be disposed of to licenced persons as noted in 1.4.8.
- 1.4.13 If WIRES is asked to rehabilitate pet native birds by pet owners, the same assessment criteria should be applied as if the bird was an aviary escapee. A fee covering the rehabilitation process should be sought from the owner.