

To whom it may concern, (USE THIS LETTER IF YOU HAVE A HYACINTH, BLUE THROATED, GREAT GREEN, MILITARY OR SCARLET MACAW)

It has come to my attention that there is a proposal before USFW to put five species of macaws on the ESA list. It is my understanding that the comment period for the Blue Throat macaw closed March 11<sup>th</sup> and that the comment period for Hyacinths, Militaries and Great Greens has been reopened till April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The comment period for the Scarlet macaw was closed September 4<sup>th</sup> and has not been reopened. I also understand that a number of other parrot species have been proposed for inclusion.

As the proud owner of a \_\_\_\_\_ I am very disturbed by this possible change. These are birds that are commonly kept as pets. My pet is part of my family. I spend time caring for my pets and a substantial part of my income. If these birds had been placed on the ESA list at the time I got my bird, I would not have been able to add my bird to my family. If these birds are added to the list, I may never be able to find my bird a companion and perhaps breed them myself. And if I or my estate were to wish to sell my bird to the best situation for it in the future, if that situation is in another state it would be prohibited and then what would be the future for my beloved pet?

Today these species of birds are common in captivity and make up a significant portion of the 11 to 15 million exotic birds in the United States. Friends of Animals and WildEarth Guardians have manipulated the intent of the ESA and are now trying to add more exotic birds to this list to stop captive breeding and to fulfill their stated goal of ending the captive bird trade in the United States. Not only will this listing harm us, the pet owners, it will harm the entire industry, breeders, veterinarians, scientific researchers, toy maker, bird food manufacturers, cage manufacturers and much more. We do not need to further harm our ailing economy by further restricting pet ownership.

If the birds are added to the ESA list it decreases the legal market for the birds, making it very hard for good breeders to continue to breed the species listed. Historically, listing birds on the ESA list has not helped increase their captive population. Ultimately, without commercial captive breeding, the gene pool for these species will shrink and the species will be further threatened. As an example, most Golden Conure breeders are no longer breeding them as the markets within their states are saturated and they cannot find homes for the babies they are producing. What sense does it make, when a species is breeding well in captivity, to discourage this commercial activity? It is not hurting the birds in the wild. In fact, it is helping to preserve the gene pool.

We are told that the comments should be about new scientific information concerning the status of the species in the wild. Does that mean we should sit by quietly while our pet's fates are determined by other people? Our government provides no monetary support to the conservation of these birds. The law only applies to captive birds, not wild birds. An ESA listing of these birds will only affect

captive birds (and most specifically interstate commerce in them) and will not help wild birds. CITES prohibits international trade in endangered species and the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 already prohibits the importation of wild exotic birds. Even having such a listing for non-native birds is redundant and very wasteful. Plus, existing conservation programs in their countries of origin are having an effect and most species are experiencing a comeback.

I am fearful that these same groups will eventually try to get all parrots onto the ESA list, so that there will be none left in captivity. In suing the Fish and Wildlife Service, they have stated they want to end the captive bird trade. It is their mantra that animals should be free. My pets are free as free as I am. They are not prisoners, they are non-human family members. Please do not let them take my pets away from me. If any more parrots are added to the ESA list then there should be a special rule that allows for continued interstate trafficking, as has been done for the Salmon-crested Cockatoo and the Yellow-Billed Parrot, whether they are considered threatened or endangered.

Please review this situation with your colleagues. These are tragedies that do not need to occur! The Endangered Species Act should not apply to foreign species, especially foreign species that are very successfully bred in this country. If we want to help conserve species then we should donate to support successful conservation programs, not prevent captive breeding. It makes no sense to me, does it to you?

Sincerely,