

16/03/2017

RE: UPDATE ON NATIVE ANIMAL LICENSING IN NSW

Hi everyone

Native animal licensing in NSW is changing and soon – maybe this year! We're working on the new scheme right now. Nothing is yet set in concrete apart from a few broad parameters (see below). I've been speaking at many clubs in recent weeks about this matter but I understand many are not members or are unable to attend such meetings, hence this communication.

Consultation has been underway since 2015 during formulation of the new NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. A number of avicultural representatives, Bob Barnes, Graeme Phipps and I, presented the submission *Native Birds in Aviculture: Licensing and Community Involvement - Proposal for NSW from the Avicultural Community* to OEH policy staff as they were designing the Act - http://finchsociety.org/NSW_licensing_proposal.pdf This document provides some background on the parameters and proposals now under consideration.

Representatives from a range of representative groups met last month at NPWS HQ in Hurstville – representatives for birds, reptiles, WIRES, RSPCA, AWL, etc. It was an extremely positive meeting. The views of reptile representatives were different to that of bird representatives. Basically, reptile representatives expressed varying views about whether they wanted more regulation or less regulation, whilst bird reps unanimously preferred less regulation. There will therefore be 2 separate licensing systems developed - one for birds, another for reptiles.

The bird group next meets with NPWS in Parramatta on Saturday April 1st (this is not an April fools joke), so please engage and make your thoughts known now – a list of representatives is included at the bottom of this letter. We want a scheme that will meet our needs, prevent exploitation of wild populations and that will be widely supported by aviculturists.

The following relates to the proposed NSW native BIRD licensing scheme ONLY.

Broad Parameters

There WILL be 3 broad categories - Exempt, Code-based and Licensed (might end up being called something different) roughly mirroring the current Exempt, B1, B2.

Exempt, as one would expect does not require any registration or paperwork. Code-based requires adherence to a code which we are currently working on - it may or may not require any registration with NPWS. And Licensed, which will require records of some sort.

What we WISH to occur (no guarantee but looking possible)

We edit the current species lists. Our starting point is the existing lists –

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/8609F448DCA94264AC0F4A2DB044C85A.aspx>

Some broad brainstormed thoughts on species lists and related matters so far...

- B1 will become the Code-based list. B2 will become the Licensed list.
- Many B1 species move to the Exempt list. Some B2 species move to the Code-based list.
- All species on licence nationally are added to NSW lists.
- An amnesty for species currently held but not in the system – we add them to our list so we can start fresh.
- Meshing of the exhibitor licence system under *The Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986* with the proposed system.
- Species can enter the list system via carers. A system for rehabilitated wild animals that are unsuited to release to enter the system.
- A take-from-wild process is developed to establish new species in captivity based on a thorough documented plan.
- The Code (for Code-based) is to address matters related to preservation of wild populations. Welfare is a separate issue (different Act – *POCTA Act 1979*), although the Code may reference existing welfare codes such as the current DPI code.
- Bird species lists for dealers reflect the lists for private keepers.
- How to prevent unscrupulous online operators. No simple solution – needs more thought and some clever ideas.
- Returns (if required at all -see below) to be a simple list of species and the number of each species held. Maybe number in/out then a total.

There are TWO main overarching proposals currently being thrown about – both reduce paperwork significantly. I personally suspect a combination of the two will emerge.

1. Minimal Regulation

No need for any registration or licence for any of the commonly kept native species. This would include the Exempt and Code-based species. The large majority of aviculturists, such as most finch and parrot breeder/keepers fall in this category so would simply be bound by the Code and of course other legislative restrictions for protected animals generally. There would still be a B2 or licensed list requiring registration and records.

2. Native Animal Keeper Group

A system somewhat like that used for fishing licences. A low fee is charged to purchase a licence which is in the form of a plastic card. The system is more like joining a club than obtaining a licence – it could be called “The Native Animal Keepers Group”. Licences can be obtained on the spot via bird sales, clubs, dealers and of course online. Anyone can join who keeps any native birds, but you must join to keep Code-based or Licensed bird species.

NPWS manages the “group” including regular newsletters and perhaps discounts on park entry. Money collected goes into a central trust for use by native animal aviculture related projects. The aim is to educate keepers, rather than enforce rules. Communicating with keepers is the focus. There would be a formal committee formed to manage this system with various representatives from avicultural and NPWS.

Initial questions so far expressed on the above proposals

- On the surface proposal 1 sounds attractive and has wide support based on a show of hands at a few clubs, but what are the longer-term implications for aviculture of such an unregulated space?
- Is it reasonable to expect NPWS to administer the Native Animal Keeper Group in proposal 2 in an educational rather than compliance-based manner? It’s a big change of focus/culture.
- Registering is a process of formally accepting the Code conditions, so will no formal registration for Code based (B1) species in proposal 1 realistically pass through the bureaucratic and political process?

Bird club/group representatives attending NPWS meetings are listed below. All will welcome and appreciate your thoughts.

Sincerely,



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Bird Club/Group Representatives/Contacts

- CCBFA – Sam Davis, Ian Ward
- FSA – Brian Read, Stephen Hale
- Avi Society of NSW – Murray MacPherson, Graeme Phipps
- Parrot Society of Australia (NSW) – Mark Holland, Ian Sheffield
- NFSA – Bob Barnes, Neville Simmons, Gary Fitt, Steve Porter
- ABA – Craig Jeffery, Errol Wilson