

Bird Sales



This fact sheet gives guidance on running a Bird Sale.

At all times the welfare of the stock offered at the sale should be the primary concern of the organisers and visitors to the event. Everyone at the sale has a responsibility to report to the organisers any issue they feel is detrimental to the health and welfare of the birds offered for sale.

Information relating to the Sale Day should be provided in a written Guide to the Sale document. It should include the address of the Organisers and their telephone number, a warning that smoking is not allowed, details of a Complaints Procedure, names addresses and telephone numbers of all traders attending, a plan of the Halls cross referenced to the stand numbers of the traders, and a letter from the Sale Organisers.

1 WELFARE OF THE BIRDS

Organisers must ensure that birds have both fresh food and water, appropriate for the species, provided in separate containers, and easily accessible to the birds throughout the sale. All Sales must be open to inspection by DEFRA or its appointed representatives. At events with more than 45 stall holders selling birds, a Veterinary Surgeon should be in attendance for the entire length of the Sale. At smaller events it is recommended that the organisers arrange to have a veterinarian on call should they be required.

Cages must not be overcrowded, dirty, or sited at ground level or next to threatening species. Provision should be made at the Sale for a holding area to house bought birds—"Bird Crèche".

2 SALE OF SURPLUS "HOBBYIST" STOCK

Sales Days play an important part within aviculture, they are events where fanciers can meet and exchange information, and where newcomers to the hobby can seek guidance on all aspects of aviculture from the many society and club stands in attendance. They also provide the opportunity to make purchases whether it be an outcross for their existing collection or equipment for their own birdroom. They also provide a vehicle for aviculturalists to sell their

surplus stock to other fanciers.

3 UN-WEANED BIRDS

Under no circumstances should un-weaned birds be on display or offered for sale. Only birds that are independent (i.e. feeding themselves) should be placed for sale.

4 CAGE SIZES

For many species of birds a standard show cage for the species concerned should be used. Alternatively a cage that is large enough to allow the occupant to open its wings and stretch; enabling the outstretched wings to beat; and the bird to stand tall on its perch, would also be suitable.

5 EXPORTATION

Birds purchased at Sale Days can be exported to Eire and the Channel Islands, but they require a health certificate signed by a qualified veterinary surgeon. Birds going outside the UK require certification, issued by prior arrangement with DEFRA, to be given to the vet doing the inspection.

6 DISEASE CONTROL

The control and potential spread of disease at bird sales rests in three areas.

Vendors

The *vendors* should ensure that they take only healthy stock to the sale, and they should make every effort to ensure that the transport and carriage of the birds is done as efficiently and with as little stress as possible. Cages and boxes should be clean and not overcrowded; rest stops on a long journey should be taken, with an opportunity to check the birds and give food and water where necessary.

Probiotics and/or electrolytes may be given in the few days before the

sale to boost the birds' immune systems. Sellers should be prepared to discuss with potential purchasers the housing, environment, and diet to which the bird is accustomed. A written receipt with some form of agreed guarantee period should be given with the bird. No one in fairness can guarantee a bird will not fall sick for nine months, but an acceptable period would be perhaps 4 - 7 days. Stalls or tables displaying the birds should be uncrowded and clean, with fresh food and water available to the birds. Any individuals showing signs of distress should be removed from display, and if necessary checked by the vet.

Organisers

The *sale organisers* have a responsibility, to outline in advance the requirements for cage size and cleanliness, together with warnings about overcrowding and smoking. These requirements then need to be enforced on the day by inspections on admission, and regular checks by a team of stewards. Any transgression of these requirements should be treated seriously - at least with a warning, followed by expulsion from the sale and a ban from attending future sales for a persistent or serious problem.

At large events a vet should be in attendance for the entire length of the sale, and a room set aside for the quiet examination and isolation of birds. An event, which has more than 45 stall holders selling birds, is considered a large event. At smaller events it is recommended that the organisers arrange to have a veterinarian on call should they be required.

Any birds appearing obviously distressed or sick should be taken to the isolation room for examination by the vet.

Purchasers

The *purchaser* has a responsibility, to look at his/her potential purchase with a critical eye, and choose only the bird that looks alert, bright-eyed, and with tight, clean plumage. Do not choose a bird that looks subdued, fluffed-up, and hiding in the corner. Do not smoke while peering into the cage to make your selection. Ask the seller about age, sex, husbandry, diet, and breeding history before you make

your decision.

When you have made your choice, remember who sold the bird and where he/she was - preferably a name and a table number. It is no good complaining to the sale organisers three months later, that you bought a pair of Java Sparrows from *"the chap just inside the third door on the right"*, and the bird has just died. Get a receipt and some form of guarantee from the seller.

Now that you have made your purchase you have a responsibility for their care and welfare. Keep them isolated from existing stock until you are happy that they have settled and recovered from the journey, and are showing no signs of illness. To guard against every possible infection that may occur, you would be quarantining new birds for over a year, which is obviously impractical. However, 30 days will allow most common infectious diseases to show themselves, and give the birds time to settle in their new home.

You need to warn the vendor immediately of a potential problem so that he/she may be aware of trouble, and check their remaining stock. It is no good complaining three months later that *"the bird was sick two days after I got it home, and then it died"*. If the bird unfortunately dies, then consider arranging a post-mortem examination. A conclusive result is unfortunately not always possible, but in most cases a diagnosis will be made that will pinpoint the cause of the bird's demise, and give some clue as to the origin of the problem.

If you take the simple precautions outlined above, you should end up with a successful and healthy purchase. However, if you expect to buy cheap to get a bargain, or take short cuts in the care and management of your new charges, then you have only yourself to blame.

7 DURATION OF SALE

Sales usually last for one day only.

8 LICENSING

The organisers should comply with current legislation in respect of any licenses that may be required. They should ensure that all Traders who attend these sales are aware of the current legislation in respect of what can and cannot sell.

9 SMOKING

No smoking signs should be prominently displayed in the hall at Sale Days and clearly displayed on paper work sent to members renting sale tables. Announcements should also be made over the public address system informing attendees that there is a No Smoking Ban in force.

10 DEALERS

Dealers (more often known as Traders) are a prominent feature of most large Sale Days. Usually only one third will be selling birds, the majority will be selling all the equipment and food that are so important to aviculturalists.

11 ISSUE OF CARE SHEETS

Organisers should ensure that advice/care sheets are available, giving basic information on housing, feeding and general welfare.

12 SUPERVISION

Easily identifiable staff responsible to the Sale Day organisers should circulate the Sales hall watching out for any action that could have an impact on bird welfare. A central Organisers Stand should also be present where the public can report anything they feel deserve attention.

13 VETERINARY WELFARE

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14 CITES

The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species has a list of some 40 parrotlike birds that are on Schedule 1A and are birds that should not be traded without exemption certificates. All Sales should ensure that there are no Schedule 1A birds being offered for sale that have not obtained the relevant exemption certificates. It is a skilled task to identify the 40 species that fall into this legislation and to check that the relevant paperwork is correct, however it must be done, and an appropriately experienced person must be appointed for each event to carry out this work. People selling Schedule 1A birds must bring their paperwork to the sale; if it is not available the birds must be removed.

15 SECURITY

The organisers have a responsibility to ensure that adequate security measures are in place for the duration of the event.

16 AUCTION

Buying and selling birds at auction is not recommended.

This fact sheet has been produced for:
The NCA —Spring Gardens, Northampton NN1 1DR
www.nca.uk.net