

I am an intern in the Advocacy Department at the Progressive Animal Welfare Society in Lynnwood, Washington. I have previously volunteered as a Bird Nursery Caretaker in PAWS' Wildlife Department and I have worked with a scarlet macaw re-introduction project in Costa Rica.

PAWS' Advocacy Department had received several complaints about the conditions of exotic birds at a couple of aviaries in the Roy area, including the Scudder aviary belonging to Martha Scudder. I wanted to check out the conditions myself to see if any further action needed to be taken so I called Mrs. Scudder. I told her I was looking for a breeding pair of umbrella cockatiels. She invited me out to look at some baby parrots she was hand-feeding in her house but informed me that the aviary itself was "closed for the winter." Donna Diduch, another intern, and I visited Mrs. Scudder at her home located at 2002 at 10013 332nd St. S. on December 19th, 2002. Prior to our visit I spoke with Dr. Tracy Bennett, a board certified avian vet. She informally advised me on signs of distress and disease common to captive birds.

Upon our arrival we entered the ground floor of her home where a caretaker lives with his young daughter. The room next to their bedroom houses approximately 25-30 exotic birds in cages. The room was dark, filthy and cold. It also smelled of feces. In one cage there was a small green parrot supporting its entire weight on its keel. Its mouth was agape and seemed to be gasping for air. Upon inquiry, Mrs. Scudder informed us that the bird was born deformed and had been living in these conditions for 4 years. She asserted that the bird was not in pain or distress and needed no medical attention. The next room was equipped with approximately 5 incubators which held immature, juvenile and injured parrots.

Up a flight of stairs we entered Mrs. Scudder's living area. Bird food, feathers and feces littered the hard wood floors, carpeted stairs and area rugs. A large group of dogs accompanied our movements. Several of the parrots had very unkempt, greasy-looking feathers which Dr. Bennett warned me could be a sign of malnourishment and/or liver disease. Indeed, Mrs. Scudder verified that she feeds the birds a diet consisting mostly of seeds and nuts, which according to Dr. Bennett contain more fat than the birds' bodies can safely handle.

One cage housed a wild mourning dove that she had found with what she thought was a broken wing several months prior and has not released as required by law.

Also, one of the birds bit my finger and broke the skin. We witnessed Mrs. Scudder smack a bird as well.