

ARTICLE 10 UPDATE MARCH 2023

In May 2018 we published an article in our magazine setting out the new requirements for Article 10 certificates for African grey parrots, following the inclusion of that species in Annex A of CITES endangered species. An update of this information was published in October 2020, but it was agreed at a recent Council meeting by PSUK trustees that this information should be set out again for the benefit of members keeping these iconic birds. This up-listing from the species Annex B status means that it is now endangered in the wild, and its captive breeding and movement must be tightly controlled.

This update hopefully will both remind owners of African grey parrots of their obligations, and also clarify what many see as a complex process. It is an amalgam of previous information available in our magazine and on our website, with some updated comments.

GUIDE TO PARROT REGISTRATION

1 The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is an international body responsible for the regulation of international trade in wild animals and plants, to ensure that their survival is not threatened.

2 Nearly 6000 animal species and 30,000 plant species are protected by CITES against over- exploitation, and they are listed in three **Appendices**. *Appendix III* includes the least endangered. *Appendix II* already includes the majority of parrot species, and as such they are protected, and documentation is required, although rarely policed. *Appendix I* contains the severely endangered species, and as far as parrots are concerned, *since 4th February 2017* these now include the **African grey parrot** (*Psittacus erithacus*) and the **Timneh grey** (*P. timneh*).

3 Nomenclature is complicated in the European Union (EU) (isn't it always?!) by replacing Appendices I-III with **Annexes A, B, C and D**. So, for routine use, Appendix I and Annex A are the same thing. Since Brexit, CITES documentation is now required to move both Annex A & B species between the EU and the UK. In the UK, CITES applications are dealt with by-

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Centre for International Trade, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol BS1 5AH. Tel: 03000 200 301. Email: wildlife.licensing@apha.gov.uk

With regard to African grey Parrots, an APHA statement says – “Any Appendix I-listed parrot will require a CITES licence in order to be used commercially within the EU, or imported/(re)exported out of the EU. **No** CITES licence will be required to keep an African Grey Parrot as a **pet** and they will **not** be required to be registered. For CITES purposes, commercial use is defined as: The purchase, offer to purchase, acquisition for commercial purposes, display to the public for commercial purposes, use for commercial gain and sale, keeping for sale, offering for sale or transporting for sale of specimens of the species listed in Annex A”

Such a licence is commonly known as an **Article 10 certificate** – something that has been required for birds of prey for many years.

4 Thus owners of these birds as pets need *do nothing* at this stage, except get their paperwork in order. However, if you have 'just a pet' AGP, don't sit back thinking, "I need do nothing, I have nothing to worry about". What if your circumstances change? These are long-lived birds, and job loss, moving house, relationship breakdown, or death may all result in a sudden need for the bird to move on. If this involves selling the parrot, then an Article 10 certificate would be needed, and this can take time to acquire. At the very least you should ensure that you have all necessary paperwork in place, and where family members can find it – purchase receipts, insurance and microchip certificates, or veterinary invoices to support your ownership of the bird and the length of time it has been in your possession. It will not be possible to *sell* it or use it for breeding without certification. The parrot may, however, be *given away* if no money changes hands. In other words, '*Be prepared!*'

5 If, however, you wish to buy or sell an African grey parrot (AGP), or move the bird out of the UK, or breed from a pair and sell their offspring, then you will need to apply to the above office for an Article 10 certificate. Application and communication by *email* is preferable to standard post or telephone calls. It is quicker, and there will be an audit trail on both sides. Paper documents may be 'lost in the post', while telephone conversations may be 'mis-remembered'. The applicant will receive an email confirmation of receipt, so you will know that it has got there and when. An email message will be sent once the application has been processed and the certificate has been sent out, so you will know to expect it within a couple of days.

Members have expressed concern about the 'complicated nature' of the application form. APHA's guidance notes state "We know the form can be difficult to complete but unfortunately its format is set out in the EU CITES Regulations and cannot be changed". To that end we thought it might be useful to reproduce a sample application form to show what is required. APHA officials agreed with us that the government website is difficult to navigate, and provided us with the following direct link, that will take you straight to the application form and guidance notes. All relevant information may be obtained from this page –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-commercial-use>.

They also offered a direct-line telephone number to the correct department of **0117 372 3700**, which is far easier and more direct than the published 03000 200 301 (above). The latter will take you through various automated options before you get to the right person, which can be frustrating for the caller.

Troublesome though the process may be, the fact remains that any person involved in the trading or exhibition of an African grey parrot for money is *legally required* to register that bird for an Article 10 certificate. A *single pet* AGP that goes nowhere does *not* require registration. No matter what you may read on the Internet about "selling an African grey parrot just as a pet bird does not require paperwork", these people are *wrong*, and are breaking the law if they attempt to do so. There are many dodgy on-line sites at which one can buy such a parrot, but both seller *and purchaser* could be open to prosecution for the offence.

6 Registration for this certificate requires significant supporting documentation, as well as some form of *permanent identification of the bird*. A list of suitable supporting documentation includes the following. As many as possible should be provided, to expedite the process, but they are all possible *alternatives*, not each *essential*:

If acquired prior to 04/02/2017

- A dated receipt for your purchase of the bird, and/or
- A signed statement from your vet or copy of your veterinary records, confirming the date that the bird was registered with the practice by you, and/or
- A DNA sexing or microchipping certificate that is dated prior to 04/02/17, and /or
- Copies of pet insurance paperwork in your name that is dated prior to 04/02/17, and/or
- If purchased privately or through sites such Preloved or Bird Trader, then dated copies of the email trail, or screen shot of phone messages detailing the purchase, and/or
- If acquired through a rescue organisation then a copy of the adoption paperwork, and/or
- A signed statement from the previous owner, which confirms the date of acquisition and provides full details on the origin of the bird, and/or
- A copy of the CITES permit used to import the bird to the EU or a copy of a previously issued EC certificate.

If born and bred in captivity

Captive bred specimens should be accompanied by all known details of captive breeding, including

- The name and address of the breeder AND
 - Full details of each parent (origin, name and address of the breeder, hatch date, ring/microchip number, date and details of acquisition, and Article 10 number or import permit number)

7 Permanent identification of the parrot is preferably by **closed leg ring**. Obviously not all AGPs have such rings, which can be applied only within a few days of hatching. However, *future captive-bred AGPs* will be expected by APHA to have been close-rung in order to be accepted for registration. *In certain circumstances*, split ring identification will be accepted, provided it is adequately supported by appropriate paperwork. However, a legitimate alternative is microchip identification. Microchips have been available for insertion into animals for several decades, but the advent of the *mini-chip* has made this process even simpler for use in birds. A unique 15-digit code is contained on a tiny silicon chip, which is encased in a small capsule of biologically inert glass. The capsule is implanted using a trigger device with a hollow needle. This is *not* a remote tracking device: the chip remains totally inert inside the animal, with no power supply, and is simply read using a battery-powered hand-held scanner passed over the animal at a distance of some 2"-4" (5 – 10 cm).

8 I have emphasised important points in *italics* or in **red**. Make sure that you *communicate* with APHA! Let them know for example that the letter from your vet will not be available for another two weeks because your vet is on holiday. In this way they will continue to keep your application file open. If, however, they hear nothing from you within 15 working days, then your file will be closed, certification will be refused, and you will have wasted your processing fee (currently £31 per bird). Their busiest time is the spring and summer seasons, so do not start telephoning to see how they are getting on after just three days! They indicate that they have processed **98%** of all applications within **15 working days** (i.e. three weeks), so allow that time scale.

9 An electronic application form FED1012 is available on-line, so you do *not* necessarily have to physically sign a piece of paper, then scan it or photograph it and convert it to a digital format, and then send it in. Search 'apha gov.uk' – the www.gov.uk website is not the easiest to navigate, while searching apha will

take you straight there. Guidance notes are also supplied on the site. For those not up to speed with computer technology, then enlist the help of younger friends or family, or use the facilities at your local library.

10 Remember: APHA staff resolve to process applications as speedily and efficiently as possible, given the correct information. However, the whole process is an official, legal requirement, and as such cannot be circumvented nor abused. Since AGPs were already Annex B listed, and it was *already* a legal requirement to have paperwork such as proof of purchase or ownership, ring or microchip numbers, so that *in theory* the transition to Annex A is not a fantastic leap compared to some other animal or plant species, so no leeway is expected. However, we know that in practice things are not that simple. Many of our members' birds have been in their possession for decades, with any such paperwork having been lost, or never existing. This is why Defra was *initially* prepared to be flexible by allowing supportive evidence such as a letter from a vet or trusted neighbour (*not* a relative) to identify your birds and your period of ownership, and in most cases all applications have satisfactorily been resolved. However, that leniency in documentary supportive evidence was a short-term arrangement, and AGP owners will now be expected to have had their birds identified by microchip (if not already close rung), and to locate or get copies of original purchase receipts.

The certification process was a steep learning curve on both sides, with the registration being under continual development. Modification of the process is likely in the light of the future volume of applications, but it is *most* likely that requirements will become *more* stringent rather than *less* as time goes on.

11 The above information of course also applies to all other Annex A species, such as Moluccan and Goffin's cockatoos, scarlet macaws, most Amazon parrots, and many others. A full list is available on www.cites.org