



To Export or Not to Export That is the Question?

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By Sidney W Gale

As we are all aware the world population is continually on the increase, and as such an ever increasing supply of food is required to support this increase. Subsequently more areas of forest, open plains, etc., are being cultivated to produce food requirements and some of these areas are the natural feeding grounds of various cockatoos, as well as other avian fauna. Unfortunately it is the cockatoo that is branded a pest, because of the damage it can cause to the crops which have replaced its natural feeding grounds. The end result being these birds are destroyed in thousands by either shooting or poisoning, more acceptable methods (imitation hawks, air guns, etc.), seem to have little or no effect.

In my opinion there are four ways the problem maybe attacked.

1. Trap and export the offending birds.
2. Carry on with the present system of shooting and poisoning.
3. Trap and transfer to other areas remote from where they are a problem.
4. Harvest the young birds in the nest, hand rear and then export.

Trap and export: With this method the person or persons directed to carry out the trapping should be paid sufficient to cover all costs, a better than average wage. These birds would then be exported via a government agency which would again cover the running costs and make a profit which would be channelled back into conservation projects. Sure the end product is not suitable as a pet bird, age selections would not be used when trapping, so the consumer may not get what they expected. However, this must be better than killing the birds.

Carry on as is - shooting and poisoning: Surely there must be something better. Shooting always leaves some wounded birds, which may linger on for hours, days or even weeks, before they finally die. Poisoning; unfortunately this method is not selective as to the type of birds which eat the affected food; as a result possibly hundreds of innocent victims suffer by this method. Maybe even species which are endangered in the wild.

Trap and transfer: This method could possibly be a solution; however somebody would have to be paid to carry out this operation; where does the money come from? Where are the birds transferred to? Maybe someone with the expertise could answer as to where.

Harvest the young: Once again somebody would have to be paid for the collection and hand rearing of the young cockatoos. When they are finally feeding themselves, they are then exported by a government agency for a profit. There could be no argument as to these birds being unsuitable for the pet market or the cockatoo breeders market, they would be ideal. However, the costs and time involved would be enormous; hand rearing experts would have to be found. If we look at the end result and the profits to be made it would surely cover all expenditure. Some of these birds would acceptable to the local market.

These suggestions are not necessarily the only solutions, but I would suggest that whoever decries these for one reason or another should try and provide an alternative solution that they feel may work. I personally feel that item four is the best, but the work load would be horrendous. However, it may be work for someone in these times of unemployment. Under supervision anybody could be taught to hand feed the young birds.

Item one is probably the easiest and cheapest to execute and would have a greater immediate impact on the large flocks in the affected areas. Don't sit back and talk, put pen to paper and write your thoughts on these subjects.

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