

## *Media release*

# **Council receives pat on back from Animal Protection Agency**

**The Animal Protection Agency (APA) has praised Dacorum Borough Council for taking swift action to prevent further unlawful exotic bird auctions or markets in the area. APA investigated one such market on 15<sup>th</sup> August at a Scout Hut off Durrants Hill. Filmed evidence was gathered of illegal trading and appalling levels of animal husbandry.**

Sales of pet animals in public places were outlawed in 1983 and yet it is estimated that somewhere in the region of 350 bird and reptile markets take place each year, often unknown to the authorities.

Apsley & Hemel Hempstead Bird Club has been warned by Dacorum Borough Council that further events will result in prosecution. The Bird Club, however, has advised the Council that it will now close down. The Council will also be writing to all village halls and similar venues advising them not to permit their premises to be used for unlawful sales of this nature.

Says Elaine Toland, Director of APA:

***“Exotic birds suffer terribly at these markets – especially those captured from the wild. At this particular market cages were filthy, too small and overcrowded. Many animals had no access to food or water and sick birds were offered for sale. Fish and rabbits were also kept in very poor conditions. I’m delighted that Dacorum Borough Council has acted so quickly and effectively to enforce the law.”***

The Animal Protection Agency is a brand new organisation to fight the trafficking of wild animals for pets. As well as working to close down illegal pet markets around the country, APA is lobbying hard to persuade the Government not to lift the ban on pet markets in its forthcoming Animal Welfare Bill.

Experts in exotic animal health maintain that conditions at pet auctions and markets cannot attain even minimal standards of animal welfare because of their makeshift and transient nature. Animal suffering is inevitable, as is the risk to public health when exotic animals trapped from all corners of the globe, and still stressed from their capture and journey, are kept in close confinement. Many diseases carried by birds are transmissible to people.

- For more information, please contact Elaine Toland on 01273 674253

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