

*Media release*

# Giant exotic bird market is toppled

**Britain's biggest bird market, the 'National Cage & Aviary Birds Exhibition', due to take place on 4th and 5th December 2004 at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, has been halted by the Animal Protection Agency (APA). Less than 48 hours before a permission stage judicial review hearing, IPC Media, organisers of the event, advised that the bird market would not go ahead. Most people imagine that abusing and inhumane wildlife markets only happen in remote, foreign bazaars! But bizarrely such events occur here too, and are unlawful.**

Last year the IPC event took place at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham and was wrongly licensed to sell 100,000 birds. An ornithologist who visited the market, estimated that around half of the birds would have been captured from the wild. Several animal protection organisations monitored the event and found many breaches of animal welfare legislation.

Warwickshire resident and life of supporter of APA, Aileen Vania, initiated legal proceedings when she discovered that the event had moved to her area. Soon after, APA joined the legal battle to stop the market going ahead. Warwickshire District Council acknowledged that any bird sales that took place at the event would break the law but were non-committal about taking action to prevent the illegal market or about prosecuting offenders afterwards.

APA has now homed in on the Stafford Bird Show, which is probably the largest remaining event of its kind in the UK. Meanwhile it is working with other local authorities to close down smaller bird and reptile markets.

Says Elaine Toland, Director of APA; ***"We are winning our battle against illegal pet markets, which is good news for animal welfare, protection of species and public health. The sickening abuse of animals at the IPC market - hailed as the bird industry's flagship event - was particularly shocking and hopefully the organisers will not attempt to stage this event again."***

However, disturbingly a draft Bill is now being considered in parliament, which proposes to legalise exotic pet markets and undo the progress that has been made by APA, Birds First, the Captive Animals' Protection Society and many other animal welfare groups in opposing these events. ***"Legalising pet fairs would set us back twenty years."*** Says Toland.

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