



Animal Protection Agency

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Giant Bird Market is Axed

Wildlife campaigners were heartened today on learning that a huge bird market, proposed for 27th February 2005 at the Yorkshire Event Centre in Harrogate, has been cancelled. The Animal Protection Agency (APA), a national organisation campaigning against the trade in wild animals for pets, is delighted that the Yorkshire Event Centre has now dropped the bird market from its list.

The Parrot Society UK has historically held two annual bird markets – one in Harrogate and the other in Stafford. APA investigators gathered evidence at the Parrot Society's previous event in Stafford on 10th October 2004. It was estimated that there were more than 30,000 birds on sale, many in conditions so shocking that harrowing undercover footage headlined regional news. Sick birds were on offer, some with blood visible on the inside of their cages.

The Pet Animals Act 1951 outlaws the business of selling pet animals in markets or public places. The Parrot Society, however, had attempted to run their event as 'private' and 'members-only.' Harrogate Borough Council sought an independent barrister's opinion and was advised that any sales of birds, whether to members of a club or to members of the public, would constitute offences. The Council then advised the organisers and the venue that Council Officials would be present to monitor proceedings.

Says Elaine Toland, Director of APA;

"We were so sickened by the sheer scale of bird suffering at the last Parrot Society event that we were determined to ensure that it was never allowed again. We don't believe that people who visit these events are genuine bird lovers otherwise they would be truly horrified at the callous treatment of the birds and the volume of wild-caught species on sale."

The Animal Protection Agency will continue its campaign against pet markets until they are stamped out altogether. The group believes that through their campaign of awareness, local authorities are now much more familiar with the relevant legislation and the powers that it affords them.

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

* We have an ISDN line for broadcast quality interviews.

* A film of the Stafford Bird Market is available to view at www.apa.org.uk/apatv/index

Issued: 17 February 2005