



Press Release

Embargo: Not for publication before Wednesday 27th April 2005

Wildlife Team Launches Major Garden Bird Care Project

Garden bird feeding has become very popular in the UK and many other countries. The Garden Bird Health Initiative (GBHi), formed from a working group established by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW), aims to promote the conservation and welfare benefits of the supplementary feeding of garden birds in two ways. These are through publishing science-based best practice guidelines on feeding garden birds and through promoting research to support future improvements. Disease outbreaks occur quite commonly in garden birds and the research will begin by investigating the causes and prevention of these diseases.

The Group includes representatives from the Institute of Zoology, the British Trust for Ornithology, the RSPB, Liverpool University, The Scottish Agricultural College, the bird care industry and Defra. The first product of this initiative is a booklet: '*Feeding Garden Birds: Best Practice Guidelines*', which has just been published, and a free leaflet summarising the key principles has also been produced. These publications are available from UFAW (www.ufaw.org.uk).

Ben Bradshaw, Minister for Animal Welfare and Nature Conservation, said 'Garden birds enrich our lives and, since we share and frequently control their habitats and can greatly influence their lives, we need a better understanding of their biology and needs. I am delighted that these leading veterinary, ornithological and bird care organisations are working together on this initiative and I wish it every success'.

The Group has raised over £240,000 towards its target of £360,000 for a three-year research project to investigate key factors that can affect garden bird health. As a result it has been possible to begin this project which involves a consortium of vets and scientists across the country and which is being coordinated by the Institute of Zoology.

UFAW is seeking further funds towards the £360,000 target needed to cover the costs of the full research project into causes and prevention of common diseases of garden birds. ENDS

SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Notes to Editors

The GBHi consortium comprises individuals from UFAW, British Trust for Ornithology, RSPB, DEFRA, Institute of Zoology, Scottish Agricultural College, University of Liverpool, The Wildlife Veterinary Investigation Centre, CJ WildBird Foods Limited, Gardman Limited, Cranswick Pet Products and JacobiJayne & Co.

The research project has received support from CJ WildBird Foods, Gardman Ltd, Cranswick Pet Products, the Birdcare Standards Association, the Institute of Zoology, UFAW, RSPB and the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation.

Copies of the booklet on best practice guidelines and the free leaflet are enclosed.

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (www.ufaw.org.uk) is an internationally recognised, independent, scientific and educational charity. It promotes high standards of welfare for all animals including wild, captive, farm, laboratory animals and pets. It depends on members and supporters for all funding. UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarship schemes; by public education especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, articles, technical reports and in its quarterly scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to government departments including the drafting of legislation and guidelines, and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals.

“Improvements in the care of animals are not now likely to come of their own accord, merely by wishing them: there must be research and it is in sponsoring research of this kind, making its results widely known, that UFAW performs one of its most valuable services.” (Sir Peter Medawar, CBE, FRS, 8th May 1957 – Nobel Laureate (1960), Chairman of the UFAW Scientific Advisory Committee 1951-1962)

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