

# TRAFFIC (International) BULLETIN

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## *in this issue:*

BEAR FARE  
Bearburgers and bear bourguinonne  
on Manchester menus

1

TURTLE CONFERENCE REPORT  
by Sue Wells

2

BIG TIME BIRD SMUGGLER GETS  
SIX MONTHS INSIDE

7

ZAMBIAN POACHERS KILL HUMANS TOO

8

SEA WOLF SWIMS INTO FASHION

10

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

9

NEW PUBLICATIONS

9

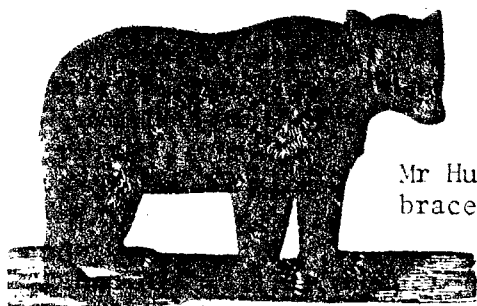
Editors: Shirley Bennett and  
John A. Burton

TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce) is a specialist group of the Survival Service Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. Its function is to monitor the international trade in wildlife.

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## *Bear Fare*

Diners in the north of England are being offered bear meat. Sold through a Cheshire specialist food suppliers it has already appeared on Manchester tables as bearburgers and bear bourguinonne for between £6 and £7 a portion. In December two 750 lb bear carcasses arrived at Mr Richard Hunt's firm: Lomber Hay Farm, High Lane, Cheshire.



Mr Hunt, the man who introduced dormice at £60 a brace to wealthy gourmets two years ago, and installed a tank to keep turtles for the restaurant trade has added Himalayan bear (at £4 a pound) to his list of meat and game.

Apparently Mr Hunt gets his bear supplies from a private animal collection in Scotland. When there are too many male bears they cull them, and if there are too many females they are sold for breeding purposes. (Yorkshire Post, 1.12.1979).



TELEX

We had to wait nearly a year for our telex (see Vol.I No.2), but it is now installed and functioning. No. 8952261, TRAFIC G.

## *Turtle Conference Report* by Sue Wells

More than 300 representatives from over 40 countries met in Washington DC at the end of November 1979 to discuss and present papers on many aspects of marine turtle biology and conservation.

Six of the seven species of marine turtle are endangered; very few populations remain undiminished and the majority are depleted. At least three species are seriously threatened by trade: the hawksbill (taken for tortoiseshell), the green and the olive ridley (taken for leather and meat). Marine turtles are one of the most valuable resources of many tropical countries and if their populations could be maintained at a reasonable level and rationally managed, controlled exploitation could benefit generations of humans to come.

At the end of the conference a conservation strategy was drawn up, with some 90 action projects, many of which were concerned with controlling international trade; a standing committee is being set up to help implement these plans.

TRAFFIC International and TRAFFIC USA opened the session on commercial exploitation with a paper outlining the main problems. 45 countries are known to have exported raw tortoiseshell in the last three years (see Table 1). Most of this probably comes from the hawksbill, and world trade in 1978 may have represented between 100,000 and 500,000 turtles.

The main exporters have been Indonesia, Thailand, India, the Philippines and Fiji; smaller quantities are exported from the Caribbean, Central America and East Africa. Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan are the main importers (see Table 2).

In many of these countries the volume of trade has increased dramatically since the early 1970s. For instance, Indonesian exports increased from less than 10 tonnes in 1970 to almost 220 tonnes in 1978; imports into Taiwan increased from less than 5 tonnes in 1974 to almost 130 tonnes in 1978.

Most tortoiseshell is carved in the Far East; and Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan export large quantities. Japan has a long tradition of tortoise-shell carving but most is consumed internally rather than exported. Trade in worked tortoiseshell has also increased significantly over the last few years.

Trade in turtle skins and leather became important with the introduction of controls on the crocodile and alligator skin trade. Ecuador and Mexico are the two major exporters. Ecuador exported over 161,000 kg olive ridley skins in 1978 (representing over 80,000 turtles) and over 140,000 kg in the first seven months of 1979. Since 1975 it has been illegal to export raw skins from Mexico (all exports should be in the form of leather), but Japan records imports of 9,000 kg of raw turtle skins from Mexico in the first seven months of 1979. Mexico exported nearly 24,000 kg turtle leather in 1976 (most recent figures available). Cayman Turtle Farm (CTF) exports green turtle skins - Japan imported over 23,000 kg turtle skins from CTF in 1978. Smaller quantities of turtle skin and leather, probably from green turtles, are exported from South East Asia.

Japan is almost certainly the main consumer of turtle skin and leather, importing over 122,892 kg in the first seven months of 1979. In Europe Italy may be the main importer - Ecuador exported 25,000 kg skin to Italy in 1977. The FRG, Spain and France are also important consumers; the FRG imported 2,603 kg green turtle skins from CTF in 1978 (CITES report).

Few countries now take turtles primarily for commercial exploitation of the meat. Ecuador has exported large quantities of olive ridley meat as a secondary product to the skin; over 81,000 kg meat was exported in 1977. However since the introduction of controls on turtle products by importing countries many markets are now closed.

The main exporter of green turtle meat, calipee and offal is now CTF, since a number of countries are still allowing imports of farmed turtle products. The FRG imported 2,370 kg turtle meat in 1978 (CITES report), and the UK imported 1,088 kg tail and neck bone (CITES report). Between January and November 1979 licences for the import from CTF of 375 kg steak, 4,082 kg neck and tail bone, 6,019 kg calipee/calipash and 2,728 kg skinned flipper had been used in the UK - a big increase on the 1978 figure.

All species of marine turtles (except some Australian populations) are on Appendix I of CITES and if the Convention were to be fully enforced by all parties it could play a major role in curbing the turtle product trade. The recent increases in the quantity of turtle products involved in trade may largely be due to the fact that a number of turtle trading nations are introducing controls; traders are therefore either unloading stocks or stockpiling before the introduction of new legislation. For example Indonesia and Tanzania have recently ratified CITES; and the USA, which has had stricter controls than most countries for some time (the import of hawksbill products was banned in 1969), prohibited the import of farmed products in June 1979, having been the main importer of CTF goods. Most CITES parties still allow the import of CTF products under the exemption for 'farmed' stock.

Although the introduction of controls may appear encouraging, analysis of customs statistics suggests that a number of parties to CITES are not enforcing their legislation effectively. Hong Kong, as a dependent territory of the UK, should be complying with CITES, but in 1978 it imported over 100,000 kg of raw tortoiseshell and re-exported over 10,000 kg. The FRG recorded the import of only 55 kg tortoiseshell in 1977 and none in 1978 in its CITES reports, but FRG customs statistics recorded the import of 8,281 kg in 1977, and Fiji recorded the export of 9,000 kg to FRG in 1978. Comparatively large numbers of seizures of turtle goods have been made in the USA (107 in the first five months of 1979) but customs statistics still show large quantities entering the country: India exported 11,000 kg tortoiseshell to the USA in 1977 and Taiwan exported worked tortoiseshell to the USA in both 1977 and 1978. Furthermore, many third world countries which are parties to CITES still do not necessarily have the means to enforce their legislation.

In Ecuador, which has been a CITES party since 1975, marine turtles come under the jurisdiction of the Fisheries Department which does not feel bound by the rules of the Convention. This is why the huge olive ridley industry for skins and meat has been able to flourish, but the CITES Management Authority in Ecuador is currently trying to solve this problem with the help of a number of turtle biologists.

A major problem with CITES enforcement at present is the mislabelling of turtle products. The flatback turtle *Chelonia depressa* from Australia which is on Appendix II is frequently used on the label of shipments of Mexican and Ecuadorean turtle products. At the conference it was recommended that this species should be put on Appendix I in order to protect other species.

The conference strongly recommended that all marine turtle trading nations not yet party to CITES (e.g. Japan, Mexico, Singapore and Thailand) should join without reservations. France should withdraw its reservations on the green and hawksbill turtles and Italy its reservations on the green turtle. Highest priority should be given to ending the leather trade, since it is a new industry and so there would not be any major undesirable cultural or

TABLE 1 DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF RAW TORTOISESHELL (kg)

COUNTRY	1976	1977	1978
<u>Asia</u>			
Indonesia	71,373	85,577	219,585
Thailand	23,859	37,941	(56,928)
India	21,460	94,773*	(568)
Philippines	15,607	27,905	38,145
Malaysia	7,253	8,879	(9,311)+
Singapore	370	2,501	230
Pakistan	(745)	-	-
Maldives	(625)	(317)	(567)
Sri Lanka	2	-	-
Burma	-	(1,100)	(500)
Bangladesh	-	(4,960)	(4,150)
Vietnam	-	(1,854)	-
Indian Ocean	-	(68)	-
Total	141,294	265,875	329,984
<u>Oceania/Pacific Islands</u>			
Fiji	53,587	362	35,343
Solomon Isl.	(873)	(756)	(522)
Australia	(1,087)	(192)	-
Total	55,547	1,310	36,871
<u>Central and South America</u>			
Ecuador	12,323	37,423	-
Mexico	6,334	-	-
Panama	(5,885)	(4,450)	(6,505)
Nicaragua	(1,446)	(2,573)	(1,014)
Costa Rica	1,390	(260)	(47)
Belize	(12)	(40)	-
Honduras	-	(71)	(9)
Venezuela	(1,000)	-	-
Total	28,390	44,817	7,575
<u>Africa</u>			
Somalia	(5,099)	(236)	(30)
Tanzania	1,813	1,836	1,625
Kenya	1,661	872	761
Mozambique	(463)	(290)	-
Madagascar	(164)	-	-
Seychelles	(106)	(577)	(1,198)
Mauritius	(55)	-	-
Reunion	(377)	-	(46)
Cape Verde	(63)	-	-
Total	9,801	3,811	3,660
<u>Caribbean</u>			
Barbados	22	-	(23)
Cuba	(6,985)	(3,984)	(6,600)
Haiti	(1,219)	(1,173)	(1,004)
Cayman Isl.	(4,002)	(3,875)	(7,500)
Bahamas	(532)	(922)	(1,018)
Dominican Rep.	(367)	(1,000)	(62)
Jamaica	(343)	(1,136)	(128)
Puerto Rico	(262)	(264)	(25)
Fr. W. Indies	(152)	(236)	(276)
St. Vincent	(130)	(230)	(144)
Brit. Dominica	(126)	(507)	-
St. Lucia	-	(489)	(349)
Grenada	-	(59)	-
Total	14,140	13,875	17,129
World Total	249,160	329,688	395,219

( ) \*figures estimated from importing countries' data

Source: published government statistics

\* includes January and February 1978

+ may include re-exports

4 economic side effects if it were stopped. Tortoiseshell has had traditional cultural value in a number of countries in the Far East for many centuries, but the conference urged that the trade should cease in all other countries, such as European countries where it is used purely for ornament. The trade in souvenirs made from turtle products should also be stopped, in particular the stuffed turtle trade which has reached enormous proportions in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Two issues provoked hot debate during the conference: the problem in Mexico and turtle farming. In Mexico, the main turtle processing plants are owned by Antonio Suarez. A number of turtle biologists have been working with him to try and persuade him of the damage that will be done to the Mexican olive ridley and green turtle populations if he continues the current rate of exploitation. He attended the conference in person and it is hoped that he will co-operate to produce a more satisfactory management plan for the Mexican turtles, since it is unlikely that exploitation will cease at present.

Turtle farming and its pros and cons has been discussed for many years. Many people feel strongly that it should not be encouraged at present, as exemplified by the recent ban on imports of farmed turtle products by the US. Representatives from CTF at the conference defended their operation, pointing out that they have been independent of wild turtles or eggs since March 1978. However it has taken them 15 years and an enormous financial input to achieve this goal, during which time they were dependent on wild populations, and they still have many problems to overcome.

The existence of farmed turtle products encourages the market for all turtle goods, and products taken from wild stock may easily be labelled as coming from farm reared animals. Few countries have the economic means to set up an operation such as CTF, but a number have already tried and this will exert a considerable drain on wild populations if it continues.

One overwhelming conclusion reached at the conference was that there are still huge gaps in our knowledge of the life cycle, ecology and behaviour of all species of marine turtles. It became clear that many previously held assumptions about turtle biology are not valid for all species or even for all populations of one species, and many of the widely accepted methods of conservation may not necessarily be at all satisfactory. Until much more is known, the best methods of conservation would appear to be to limit exploitation to as little as possible and to concentrate on conserving wild populations in their natural habitat.

*The TRAFFIC paper will be published in the conference proceedings. Photocopies of the 100 page final draft may be obtained from the TRAFFIC office, 1 Marshall Street, London W1V 1LQ, price*



TABLE 2. IMPORTS OF RAW TORTOISESHELL (kg)

COUNTRY	1976	1977	1978
<b>ASIA</b>			
Taiwan	52 427	37 704	128 846
Japan	46 060	45 818	44 039
Hong Kong	26 620	42 788	102 275
Malaysia	9 133	30 060	-
Singapore	4 140	21 002	18 469
Korea	6 100	6 100	7 333
China (Mainland)	(3 911)	(3 381)	(3 827)
Vietnam	(2 700)	(647)	-
Thailand	1 238	2 231	-
Nepal	-	(1 699)	-
Kuwait	-	(50 000)	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152 329</b>	<b>241 430</b>	<b>304 789</b>
<b>EUROPE</b>			
West Germany	3 937	8 281	(9 309)
Netherlands	3 000	3 000	-
Italy	2 500	3 000	(784)
Spain	1 531	824	1 080
France	1 000	1 000	(240)
Belgium	400	100	-
UK	320	26	-
Switzerland	126	39	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12 814</b>	<b>16 270</b>	<b>11 413</b>
<b>AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN</b>			
USA	(5 160)	(11 853)	(164)
Mexico	18 021	-	-
Canada	-	-	(50)
Barbados	-	(22)	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23 181</b>	<b>11 875</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>PACIFIC</b>			
Fr. Pacific Islands	(425)	(352)	(150)
New Hebrides	-	-	(102)
New Caledonia	-	(302)	-
Australia	(975)	(60)	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14 000</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>WORLD TOTAL</b>	<b>202 324</b>	<b>270 189</b>	<b>316 648</b>

( ) = figures estimated from exporting countries' data

Source: Published government statistics.



Queen of Bavaria conures, worth £500 each, are targets of wildlife crooks.

## Rare birds in danger

by JUDITH JUDD

A MASSIVE international wildlife racket will go on despite the jailing last week of Britain's leading rare bird smuggler, Gordon Cooke.

Eighteen people have been charged or brought to trial in Canada, the United States and Britain after a conspiracy that spanned the world from Rome to Tokyo, first revealed in *THE OBSERVER* in January last year.

But some of their contacts in Europe are still at large, and with a single bird fetching as much as £3,000 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is certain that smuggling has not been stopped.

Cooke, 48, of Wigston Field, Leicestershire, who was jailed for six months, had escaped detection for at least 10 years.

Customs officers in Nottingham who investigated Cooke's activities found that he had evaded Customs checks by the simple device of describing birds wrongly.

He wrote to a Rome bird dealer instructing him to mark a consignment of two rare Leadbeater cockatoos

just 'two cockatoos' so that they would not be opened by Customs. Leadbeaters are worth about £2,500 each.

A Japanese dealer was told to label a crate of exotic birds as 'green-headed marsh birds,' a species which does not exist.

Cooke employed other devices to get his birds through Customs. In 1973 he wrote to Ken Clare, a Canadian dealer, about some rare North American buffleheads:—

'I am wondering if it would be possible to send a few snakes in the front of the crate and mark the crate as if it contained all live snakes, which would mean it would not be examined very carefully.'

In that case, however, Cooke had hurriedly to countermand his instructions a week later, when he discovered that Customs had been alerted to crates of drugs marked 'poisonous snakes.'

Provided birds have a licence, granted by the Department of the Environment, they can be checked through on the computer at Heathrow airport without further

inspection by a Customs official.

Even when they do examine birds, Customs and Excise officials point out, they cannot be expected to know a blue-headed conure from a spix macaw.

Cooke described a pair of spix macaws, worth £6,000, as blue-headed conures worth only a few hundred pounds each. Both birds have blue heads, but there are only about six pairs of spix macaws left in the world.

Customs officials visited Cooke after the Royal Canadian Mounted Police discovered Ken Clare smuggling birds across the Canadian/American border.

At the trial Cooke's counsel denied that he was a rich man or that he had made large sums out of the bird trade, but for one Dutch customer alone in 1977 Cooke was involved in sales worth £30,000.

About five million birds a year are traded on the international market. During the two years after the investigation of his activities began, Cooke was granted 200 licences for hyacinth macaws, worth a total of £250,000.

THE OBSERVER, SUNDAY 31 FEBRUARY 1980

\*

### Illegal Imports

Global Zoological Imports Inc., USA and Kohlitz Trading Corp. of Manila, along with five private individuals, were charged with illegally importing rare and exotic birds from Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines into the United States.

The birds were imported through the use of misrepresentations on US Customs declarations and entry documents, which falsely stated the countries of origin and the values of more than 200 birds, among which were cockatoos, hornbills, eclectus parrots, Chinese starlings and various species of songbirds from Australia, Indonesia, Thailand and Mainland China.

If convicted the defendants could face prison terms and fines ranging from 5 to 19 years, and \$5000 to \$30,000.

Los Angeles Times, 17.11.1979.

## *Zambian poachers kill humans too*

The black rhino and the elephant are being slaughtered on a vast scale in Zambia's Luangwa National Park. The 10,000 square mile reserve is largely unguarded, and an open road for the meat and horn poachers. An aerial survey in October showed about 3,000 rhino compared with 8,000 in 1972. The elephant population has fallen from 90,000 to 50,000.

A recent anti-poaching squad found a poachers' camp set up nine days previously. The tally for those nine days was 15 elephants, one rhino and a selection of smaller animals. The tusks and horn on world markets would have brought about £40,000. The squad caught the hired marksman, five helpers and the 'go-between' whose job was to organise the kill on behalf of the gang's financial backer, allegedly a government official.

The hunter was fined £400, the go-between £450 and the camp workers were jailed for four months each. Their guns were returned. These derisory penalties, easily met from the gang's purse, are the norm in Zambian courts. The law permits five year prison sentences and fines of £16,500, but such punishment is seldom exacted. Unfortunately, poaching is the best form of living a man can make in Zambia. In two weeks he can earn five years salary.

The government's wildlife guards are an increasingly endangered group. Living in ones and twos in isolated posts they are poorly paid, starved of ammunition for their guns, and can offer little resistance to well-armed poaching gangs. Between 1970 and 1977 ten were killed by poachers and, according to a Government spokesman, "a sharp increase can be expected this year". The sale of arms by Rhodesian guerillas based in Zambia, added to the guns still circulating as a result of the civil war in Zaire up to the north, has undoubtedly increased the danger facing the guards. It is hardly surprising to find that a number of guard posts are now abandoned and anti-poaching patrols into and around the park almost non-existent.

Volunteer rangers help to man roadblocks around the edge of the park and occasionally go into the bush in search of the poachers, but their effectiveness is limited. As one put it after a roadblock resulted in the arrest of 13 poachers with their bag of 19 elephant tusks: "This was the first check-point ever set up on that road and it was there for just one weekend."

*(The Observer (UK), Sunday 16 December 1979.)*

### OSTRICH SELLING WELL

According to December's Leather magazine, ostrich skin jackets priced at about R1000 each are selling well. According to the head of Voco Leather Fashions of Cape Town, "there seems to be a demand for jackets with exotic skins". The jackets are also in demand in America and the first delivery of an export order worth more than R100,000 has been freighted. The order for the tailored ostrich-skin jackets was placed by leather merchants in Texas, Riddle Leather Sales. The garments were designed according to the styling required for the American market and were made at the Cape Town factory from the skins of ostriches farmed and tanned in South Africa.

### TOURIST EDUCATION

The Swiss and the US authorities both produce leaflets for tourists informing them on what can and cannot be imported and exported, and The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka produce an appeal to tourists to treat Sri Lankan fauna and flora with respect.



In an article entitled 'Lets Become United' in the February issue of Pet Store Trader, David Dixon appeals to the British pet industry to do everything in their power to "make it impossible for the pet trade to be criticised..... for not presenting a united front to stop any form of abuse or malpractice to the living creatures with which we are associated." This follows a series of articles run by the Daily Mirror last November on the illegal transactions and transportation of animals.

Also in Pet Store Trader is a snippet on a new wrinkle in primate imports "- a mix of monkeys and marijuana. Inspectors at Orly airport became suspicious when they noticed two monkeys trying to chew the bars of their cages. A search revealed 45 pounds of marijuana - about \$50,000 worth - hidden inside the hollow bars. The importer, a Zairean student, was arrested."

## Forthcoming Conferences

### WORLD FURBEARER CONFERENCE

To be held in Maryland from 3 to 11 August this year. John A. Burton will be representing TRAFFIC. Details of conference can be obtained from: Worldwide Furbearer Conference, Inc., Gunter Hall, Frostburg State College Campus, Frostburg, Maryland 21532, USA.

### EUROPEAN HERPETOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM

to be held at Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, from 30th March to 2nd April this year. Enquiries to J Coborn, Cotswold Wild Life Park, Burford, Oxon OX8 4JW.

## New Publications

### THE INTERNATIONAL IVORY TRADE

by Susan M. Wells and John A. Burton

The international trade in ivory up to 1977 is described using data published by government statistical offices. Hong Kong and Japan were the main centres of this trade for both raw and carved ivory at this time. Available on request from TRAFFIC International.

### ZOOS - THE NEED FOR A NEW POLICY

by John Barzdo and John A. Burton.

An article published in Vole III 2.

Available on request from TRAFFIC International.

### THE TORTOISE TRADE

This booklet, issued free by the RSPCA, The Causeway, Horsham, Sussex, describes the conditions under which tortoises are caught, crated and exported to the UK. It contains two tables showing tortoise imports from 1965 to 1977 and the declared purpose of importation of tortoises. Copies are being sent under separate cover, by the RSPCA, to the TRAFFIC mailing list.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE

by Sue Wells and Tim Inskipp

100 page illustrated paperback booklet with photos and drawings by Sir Peter Scott, giving history of conservation legislation leading up to CITES; provides text of Convention and Appendices and explains it; describes activities of CITES Secretariat and discusses enforcement of CITES and its failings at present. Also long chapter describing international wildlife trade in a variety of species from kangaroos to cacti.

Available from TRAFFIC price £2 (US\$ 4) surface mail £2.50 (US\$ 5) airmail. Discounts available for 5+ copies.

Regarding the elephant tusks smuggled into The Gambia (see Vol. I No. 10, page 5). The person charged with smuggling the tusks into The Gambia from Senegal was fined 300 Dalasi. This amounts to \$173, a paltry sum easily paid out of the gang's purse.

The tusks were confiscated by the Court and, by mutual agreement between the Republic of Senegal and The Gambia, are to be handed back to the government of Senegal where they will be permanently exhibited in a museum in Dakar, with a tribute to the National Park Guards who have been wounded or killed while trying to protect the African elephant.

## *Sea Wolf swims into fashion*

Sea Wolf is the name given to a new range of leather goods made from the sea catfish. They are to be marketed by Wiggins Thomas Limited in England, and could become popular now that crocodile skin imports have been banned in most countries.

The name Sea Wolf is derived from the scientific name for the sea catfish, *Anarrhicas lupus*, and is used instead of 'catfish' because, according to Mr Fookes, technical director of Wiggins Thomas, manufacturers are cagey about taking on such a venture, as the image of fishskins make it a difficult product to sell, and the skin is normally wasted. However, one manufacturer is including it in his range this year in the UK, and samples have been sent to agents in the US.

TRAFFIC International have met with Wiggins Thomas and may support the marketing of this product if it is approved by the SSC.

### TURKEY SKINS

Mr Rudolf Gramer of Leighton Buzzard, UK, is experimenting with turkey skins, but this venture is still in its early stages.

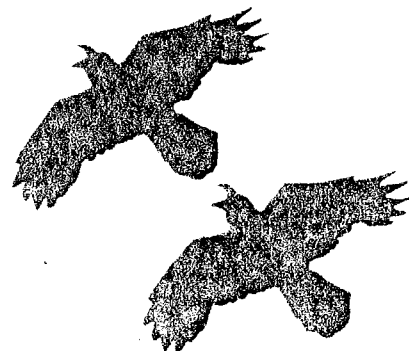
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