# FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY *CONTINUED*

✓ Put your name on your bags, and be prepared to answer questions about who packed your bags and whether you left them unattended. Keep an eye on your bags, and do not accept packages from strangers.

✓ Carry-on as well as checked bags are subject to being hand-searched, so it's a good idea not to wrap your presents until after you arrive at your destination.

✓ Do not joke about having a bomb or firearm in your possession.

✓ Be prepared to turn on electronic devices such as tape players or computers to verify they are what they seem.

Also, keep in mind it is against the law to bring a loaded gun or hazardous materials aboard an airplane, so leave your firearms at home, and do not pack fireworks, flammable materials, household cleaners, or pressure containers.

If you are flying domestically and want to find out if there are any special travel advisories in effect, call the Department of Transportation Travel Advisory Line at 1-800-221-0673.

***—FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION 11/20/96***

## WILDLIFE

### EAGLES ARE BING KILLED FOR PROFIT

■(WASHINGTON) Special agents from the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Thursday carried out Federal search and arrest warrants in New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado, ending a 2-year undercover investigation into the killing and selling of bald and golden eagles, and other migratory birds. In all, approximately 35 individuals and businesses are expected to be charged with selling protected migratory bird parts in a highly profitable illegal market.

Posing as traders of Indian artifacts, undercover agents were able to infiltrate a commercial trapping ring. They were told that in one pueblo during last year's winter migration, more than 60 eagles were intentionally killed either by being shot or caught in leghold traps baited with fresh meat. The agents located trap lines and were sold dead eagles with trap marks on their legs and feet. The Service decided to end this investigation, dubbed "Operation 4-Corners Feather Sales," prematurely to prevent more eagles from being killed. Some of those eagles were offered for sale from $850-$1,000 each.

Undercover agents discovered an illegal market for migratory bird parts in which whole eagle skins, wings, tails, and wing bones; whole hawks, wings, and tails; and owl wings were sold throughout New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Colorado and Utah. The investigation revealed that the illegal feathers were being sold to make popular Native American-style items such as fans, Kachina dolls, and bustles. Many of these items were sold to trading posts, collectors, tourists, and individuals participating in powwows. Items being offered for sale were made with feathers from at least 25 different species, including eagles, hawks, kestrels, magpies, flickers, scissor-tailed flycatchers, and anhingas. These birds are all protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Most are native to the Southwest (the anhinga is a waterbird found in Florida and Louisiana).

Eagles are also protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the bald eagle is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Illegal commerce in eagle feathers and migratory bird feathers is enormously profitable. In recent years, the increased popularity and demand for feathers has resulted in soaring prices. Compared to a similar case from 1988, the price of an intact golden eagle tail, which has 12 feathers, has quadrupled from approximately $100 to $400. During this investigation, special agents learned that in today's market, a single golden eagle feather could sell for about $100; a red-tailed hawk peyote fan, $150; and an anhinga feather fan, $300.

The popularity of Native American items made with migratory bird feathers has resulted in alarmingly high numbers of birds being killed for profit.

This case is being prosecuted by the Department of Justice, United States Attorney's Offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Phoenix, Arizona.

The evidence in this case will be forwarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Eagle Repository near Denver, Colorado. Eagles are available to Native Americans by permit through the Repository. The Service receives nearly 2,000 requests per year to distribute eagle carcasses, parts, and feathers to Native Americans for recognized religious, cultural, and ceremonial purposes.

***—U.S. DEPT. OF INTERIOR 11/21/96***

*"Who's your decorator, Toys-R-Us?"*