

## EAGLES ARE BEING KILLED FOR PROFIT

### From U.S. Dept. of Interior

■(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 leg-hold 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.

"As the agency responsible for protecting this Nation's wildlife, we must put an

end to the commercial killing of eagles and other migratory birds. We decided to move now to stop this slaughter to protect vulnerable eagle populations in the Southwest. By taking this action, we protect birds that are sacred to many Native American cultures," said John Rogers, acting director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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. Killing for profit in New Mexico makes the eagle population vulnerable as these birds migrate south.

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. For example, to make an eagle fan it takes the entire tail from one eagle. To make a single scissor-tailed flycatcher fan, it can take 25 birds.

This case is being prosecuted by the Department of Justice, United States Attorney's Offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Phoenix, Arizona. John J. Kelly, the United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, congratulated the agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service on their superb investigative work. "The United States government has a strong interest in the preservation of these magnificent animals," Kelly said. "This kind of large-scale commercial trapping must end before the resource is depleted entirely."

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.

*"That lies should be necessary to life is part and parcel of the terrible and questionable character of existence."*

Nietzsche

*The Will to Power*  
c. 1885

## DOE AGREES TO SETTLEMENT IN RADIATION EXPERIMENT CASES

### From U.S. Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) In New York this week at the American Public Health Association annual meeting, Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary announced the final settlement in 12 of 18 human radiation experiment cases involving the injection of plutonium and uranium. Family members of 11 persons injected with plutonium and as well as one woman injected with uranium as part of Cold War-era research experiments will share a total of \$4.8 million as part of a settlement agreed to by the Department of Energy and the Department of Justice.

In addition to providing financial compensation, as part of the settlement Secretary O'Leary plans to personally meet with family members of the individuals subjected to these experiments and the one uranium survivor in January.

In October 1995, a Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments recommended that financial compensation be made to the surviving family members of the persons who received these injections. The details of these experiments and hundreds of others were released by

Secretary O'Leary in late 1993, which resulted in investigation, review and recommendations by the advisory committee.

"Our policy of openness, begun during the Clinton Administration, proclaims that we will no longer hide the truth from the American people," said Secretary O'Leary. "This settlement goes to the very heart of the moral accountability the government owes its citizens. We are grateful to these families for the tough lessons they have taught us about trust, responsibility and accountability between the government and the people."

Beginning three years ago, O'Leary made available to the public thousands of documents relating to the 1946-1947 injections of these 18 men and women. Since that time, legal claims have been made against the government and other parties involved in the experiments in 17 of the 18 cases. In addition to the 12 claims resolved in this settlement, one other plutonium claim was settled earlier this summer. The four additional plutonium claims continue to be negotiated by representatives from the Department of Energy and the Department of Justice.