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\$1,000 offered for capture of elusive, stork-like bird

Associated Press
MCALLEN, Tex. — Interest in the mysterious "Big Bird," a reported stork-like creature with gruesome features and massive wings, was heightened Tuesday with the offer of a \$1,000 reward for its capture.

A search for the elusive creature, which one observer described as from another planet, has been under way since December in this Lower Rio Grande Valley area.

Even policemen and children have reported seeing the animal. There also was an unconfirmed report that the bird ransacked a tavern in a nearby county.

Radio station KRIO of McAllen announced a \$1,000 reward Tuesday for its capture. To collect, "Big Bird" must be delivered alive to the station here.

Large, three-toed tracks were found Jan. 2 in a field in the back of the Stanley Lawson home on the outskirts of Harlingen. The tracks, about a foot long and six to eight inches wide, continued into the field 80 yards before they vanished.

Two children said they saw a hairy, ape-like creature making the tracks.

Early the next morning, San Benito policemen Arturo Padilla and Homero Galvan sighted a huge bird with a wing span of perhaps 15 feet gliding over a canal in that nearby city.

Padilla described the bird as similar to a stork or a pelican.

A few hours after the police sighting was publicized, an area television station showed a science fiction movie called "The Flying Serpent." More sightings of "Big Bird" followed.

Late that same evening, someone reported seeing an unidentified flying object between San Benito and Olmito. They said it appeared to disappear into a canal.

Alverico Guajardo, who lives in a mobile home on the outskirts of Brownsville, said he heard a noise one night the following week and went outside his trailer to investigate.

When Guajardo turned on his car headlights, he said he was confronted by a bird-like creature about four feet tall with a huge wing spread.

The creature had a bat-like face and eyes the size of a silver dollar, he said.

"His face was horrible and he had real big eyes," Guajardo told authorities. He said the animal had a skinny beak "three of four feet long."

"It's got wings like a bird, but it's no bird," Guajardo said, adding, "That animal is not from this world."

"I was scared," he said.

Guajardo said the creature walked away within a few minutes.

Near Rio Grande City, about 8 miles west of San Benito, there have been reports of sightings of a half-bird, half-man creature, Star County Sheriff Ray Alvarez said.

Sewer study shows lower protein waste

Texans may be wasting 20 per cent less protein now than at the beginning of the meat shortage three years ago.

Texas A&M scientists have been monitoring waste water at two plants in Dallas since 1972. One of the primary checks is organic nitrogen and ammonia produced by the breakdown of protein in the waste.

"Over the last three years we have noted a slow but steady decrease in Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen of 20 per cent," explained Dr. Harold Wolf, head of environmental engineering at A&M. "The start of this slide links up with the beginning of hikes in meat and food prices."

"The reasons for the decrease are very likely the high cost of beef and the resultant decrease in dietary protein," he said.

Dr. Karl Mattil, director of the Food Protein Research and Development Center, said this doesn't mean that people are buying less meat.

"On the contrary, consumption nationwide has been up in this period," Mattil said.

"I think possibly two things are happening," he said. "First, people are overeating less because of the prices. They eat less at each setting so that their body uses more of the available protein and less is excreted by the body."

"Secondly, people are cooking more frugally, eating more leftovers and throwing a lot less down the drain," Mattil said. "In the past, a large amount of good protein was wasted this way. I think the average citizen has just become more astute in the preparation and use of food."

Wolf said the protein decrease was just one of the number of social incidents that have come to light from the daily observations of community water users.

He recalled one of the first was associated with television and the popularity of the "I Love Lucy Show" in the 1950s. No one would leave the show to go to the bathroom, but during the commercials there would be a peak water flow from the water treatment plants.

Prof predicts growth boom

Population trends have Texas' real estate industry looking to the future with optimism, says Dr. Robert L. Skrabanek, a sociologist at Texas A&M.

Texas is currently adding more people than any states except Florida and California, said Skrabanek who is also a professor for the Texas Real Estate Research Center here.

In the 12-month period ending July 1, 1974, Texas registered an increase of 222,000 persons.

"It is not unreasonable to expect the addition of over one million people between Jan. 1, 1976, and Jan. 1, 1980," he said. "And all of these will have to be housed and provided with additional services, thus guaranteeing a growing volume of business for Texas realtors."

He said by 1980 the number of 17-to-20 year-olds forming new households will be 100,000 greater than the 1970 figure. There are 140,000 couples in Texas now setting up house each year, compared to 90,000 in 1960.

The Texas Real Estate Research Center sociologist also said a big expansion could be expected in the number of singles living alone as this type of lifestyle becomes more acceptable socially.

Texas had 336,000 more people move into the state than left during 1970-74, and the net number of immigrants to Texas between 1970 and 1980 will be double that of the preceding 10-year period, Skrabanek predicted.

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