

PARROT RUSTLING

Parrots and macaws have become so (01)..... that special varieties of these birds are (02) up to £9,000 each on the black market in Britain. Macaws from Brazil cost from £1,000 and parrots from Australia can cost £7,500 a pair.

The demand for parrots, cockatoos and macaws has led to a (03)..... increase in thefts from zoos, wildlife parks and pet shops. London and Whipsnade zoos are among the many places from which parrots have been stolen. Some thefts have not been (04)..... in an effort to prevent further (05)..... Parrot rustling, as it is known among bird fanciers, has increased rapidly in Britain since 1976 when imports and exports of (06)..... birds became (07)..... controlled.

Quarantine controls, (08)..... with the scarcity of many types of parrots in the wild in Africa, Australia, Indonesia, and South America, have caused a shortage of birds which can be sold legally under (09)..... This has sent prices to (10)..... levels.

Working at night and equipped with wire-cutters, nets and substances to dope the birds, the rustlers are prepared to (11)..... serious risks to capture the parrots they want. At Birdworld, a specialist zoo, thieves (12)..... two parrots after picking their (13)..... through an enclosure containing cassowaries. The cassowary is a large flightless bird, related to the emu, which can be extremely (14)....., and has been (15)..... to kill humans with blows from its powerful legs.

01. A. costly B. extinct C. outlandish D. rare
02. A. raising B. reaching C. lifting D. fetching
03. A. acute B. peak C. sharp D. high
04. A. published B. publicised C. advertised D. told
05. A. happenings B. incidents C. acts D. activities
06. A. unusual B. uncommon C. exotic D. strange
07. A. tightly B. hardly C. toughly D. grimly
08. A. coupled B. doubled C. attached D. accompanied
09. A. warranty B. guarantee C. licence D. law
10. A. unknown B. unheard C. record D. highest
11. A. sustain B. assume C. take D. make
12. A. thieved B. robbed C. misappropriated D. stole
13. A. way B. road C. path D. lane
14. A. aggressive B. fighting C. bad-tempered D. rough
15. A. heard B. known C. considered D. able