



## ÂGA (Mariana crow) *Corvus kubaryi*

Endangered Species

Endemic to Guam and Rota

The âga, or Mariana crow, is endemic to Guam and Rota, which means it is found nowhere else but on Guam and Rota. Once occurring throughout most of Guam, only about 20 now survive in forests at the northern end of the island, with another 300 to 400 crows on Rota. It is listed on the federal and local endangered species lists.

At one time, farmers shot the âga because it raided corn fields and ate baby chickens. Now, there are too few of them to do any damage to farms. Snake predation is responsible for the decline of this species.

Âga sometimes fly in groups for long distances. Some Chamorros believe that if you hear its call, someone is about to become ill. These birds closely guard their territories and will chase and scold you or other birds with a loud "râh" squawk. Âga are social birds and groom each other by pecking insects off each other. They are omnivorous, which means they eat both plants and animals, including insects, lizards, flowers and berries. They use their beaks to hammer small chunks of bark from trees to expose and eat the insects.

Âga often nest in the tops of *Elaeocarpus* or "yogga" trees, where they build heavy nests. Both parents build the nest and sit on the eggs. Young âga follow their parents, watching them closely and copying what they do. When they are hungry, they squawk and beg to be fed.

Since 1992, the Department of Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) has been experimenting with different techniques to allow the âga to nest successfully. One method involved the retrieval of an egg from an active nest and replacing it with a "dummy" egg to keep the adult âga incubating until the real chick could be returned to the nest. Biologists were able to successfully hatch the egg in captivity, but other problems developed. When the chick was returned to the nest, it died nine days later when it fell from the nest. Biologists believe the nest was disturbed during the night, forcing the parent birds to fly off, leaving the chick unattended. In 1996, the DAWR successfully hatched two chicks in captivity both of which will be released back into the wild.