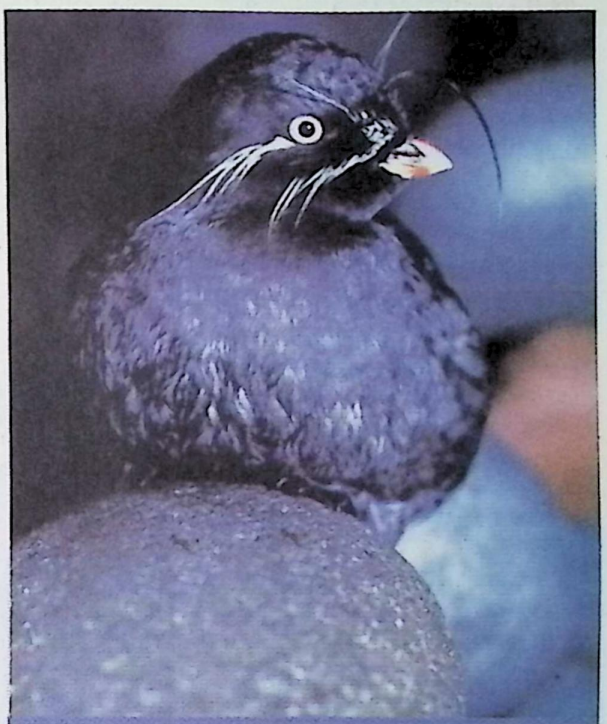
Jealous? Grow up

Jealous lovers may wish they could adjust the height of their heels, as new studies shows the power of the green-eyed monster depends on how tall you are. So say researchers in Netherlands and Spain, who asked 549 men and women to rate how jealous they felt and to identify the qualities in a romantic competitor that were most likely to irk them. Men, who generally felt most nervous about attractive, rich and strong rivals, were less jealous the taller they were themselves. Women were most jealous of others' beauty and charm, but again least so if their own height was average.





The cat's whiskers -- on a bird

Facial feathers are more than just decoration. Fancy feathers on a bird's head are usually thought to be just ornaments, but a pair of Australian biologists has shown that a little seabird uses the plumes on its head like a cat's whiskers to feel its way through dark crevices. The aptly named whiskered auklets (Aethia pygmaea) breed on the volcanic Aleutian and Kuril Islands that rim the north Pacific.

Six degrees of messaging

Yet more evidence has turned up to show that we are only six steps removed from almost anyone else on the planet. Computer scientists at Microsoft Research logged a full month of global instant messaging conversations using, of course, Microsoft Messenger. Crunching their way through a mind-boggling 30 billion conversations between 240 million people, they were surprised to find that the average number of jumps to get from one random user to another was 6.6 -- not so far from the well-known concept of "six degrees of separation."