

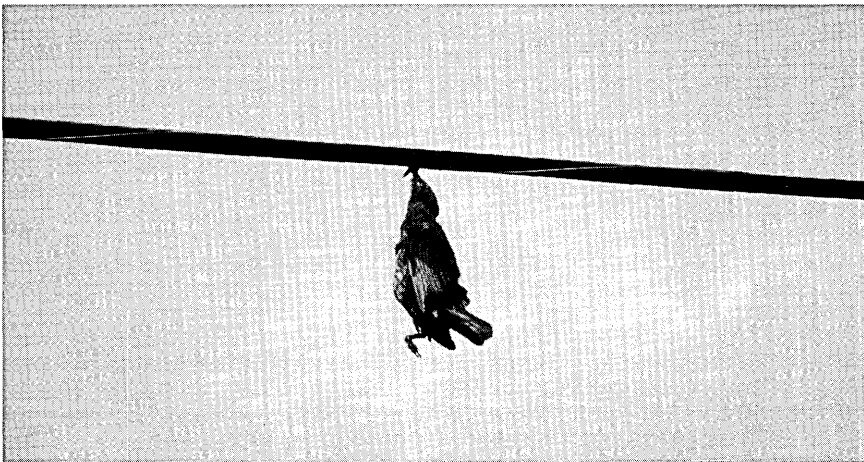
NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

UNUSUAL DEMISE OF A JUVENILE EUROPEAN STARLING.

On 1 Jun 1999 I was driving on Rte. 10 approximately 4 miles north of Sharon Springs in Montgomery County, when I noticed a dead bird dangling head skyward from a wire by the roadside. Despite being struck by how unusual the situation looked and being somewhat bewildered by it, I did not have the opportunity to pull over on that occasion. On 1 Jul 1999 I passed the location again and to my surprise saw that the bird was still in position. Through 8x42 binoculars it was obvious that the bird was a juvenile European Starling.

Its lower mandible was trapped under a thin greenish wire that looked similar to, but considerably thicker than fishing line. The greenish wire appeared to fasten a black electrical wire that wrapped along a supporting steel cable. The mandible was broken about mid way. The distal portion was pinned between the green and electrical wires while the basal portion (including the rest of the bird) swung freely from some dried, flexible membrane. The upper mandible (maxilla) was perfectly intact. I suspect that the lower mandible most likely became caught as the bird wiped its bill. It is hoped that the starling did not have to suffer for long. Having never seen the likes of this before, I took the accompanying photograph.

Gerard Phillips. 12599 Rt. 34 S, Cato, NY 13033. Gphillips@a-znet.com



1 July 99, Montgomery Co., New York Photo by Gerard Phillips