

LONG-EARED OWL SNAGGED ON BARBED-WIRE FENCE

Recent summaries of bird deaths on barbed-wire fences, while listing many species of diurnal and nocturnal raptors, fail to mention that the long-eared owl is "locally common in woods near open country." They often exist in close association with such fences and some snagging- or hanging-related deaths would be expected.^{1,2}



Long-eared Owl

Wayne Lynch

On 16 July 1993 we discovered a dead long-eared owl hanging from a barbed-wire fence near Villa Grove, along U.S. Highway 285, in the San Luis Valley of south central Colorado. The owl was caught on a barb by its left wing and apparently hung, suspended freely, until its death. We estimated the bird had been dead 5-7 days. This specimen, although collected, was later lost to scavengers, precluding sex determination or aging. Given the season and the inex-

perience of young of the year, however, it is reasonable to suspect that the owl was a recent fledgling.

As owl authority Denver Holt has pointed out (personal communication), wildlife deaths due to encounters with fences are really no different from other forms of human-related mortality such as electrocution, poisoning, collisions with automobiles, power lines, or windows, etc. The significance of barbed-wire related deaths, while likely minor, would more fully be appreciated with quantifiable data from surveys similar in design to those used for assessing power line- and radio tower-related mortality.

Special thanks are extended to Robert Nero, who thoughtfully provided information on barbed-wire fence related deaths, and to Richard Reynolds and Denver Holt for manuscript review.

1. Allen, George T. and Pedro Ramirez. 1990 A review of bird deaths on barbed-wire fences. *Wilson Bull.* 102(3):553-558
2. Nero, Robert W. Northern flying squirrel and red bat caught on barbed-wire. 1993. *Blue Jay* 51(4):215-216

- JAY W. TISCHENDORF* AND CHARLES L. JOHNSON, United States Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, 240 West Prospect Road, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526 U.S.A.

*Present address: American Ecological Research Institute, — AERIE, Post Office Box 380, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522 and Colorado State University, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523