

Porcupine Quill Fatal to Jay.—The Steller Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) shown in the accompanying photograph was found dead in an apple orchard near Paonia, Colorado, on April 7, 1952. The yellow-haired porcupine (*Erethizon epixanthum*) quill, of which the posterior portion is visible, penetrates the skin at the commissural point of the bill (fig. 1) and runs under the skin to the point indicated by the arrow.

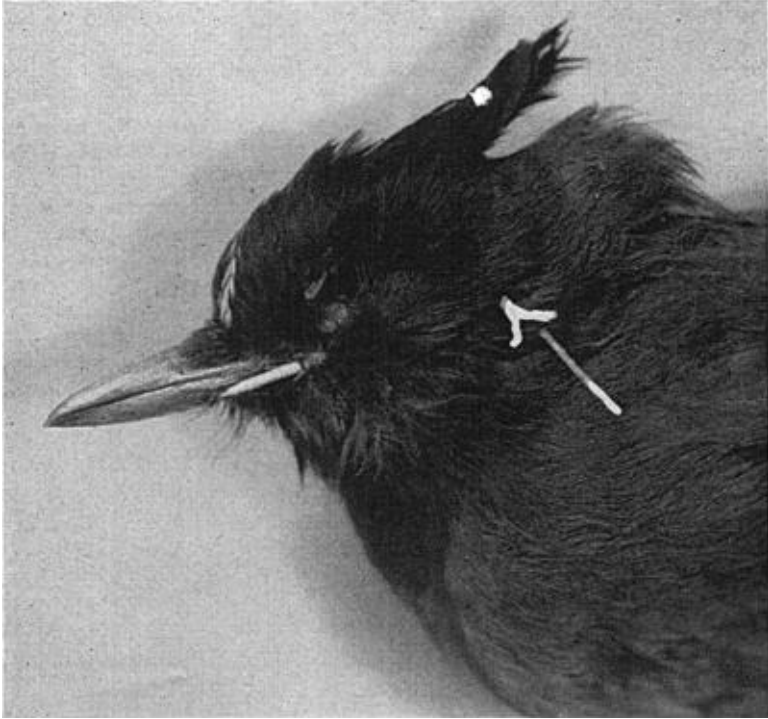


Fig. 1. Steller Jay found dead with porcupine quill penetrating skin and reaching point indicated by arrow.

indicated by the arrow. The quill does not pass through a vital organ which suggests that starvation was the cause of death. I examined the gizzard and found it nearly full of small grain husks, but there were no kernels. Decomposition made it impossible to determine the condition of the bird, but the body appeared to be emaciated.

Presumably the jay picked up the quill while scavenging on or near a dead porcupine or harassing a living one. Lano (*Auk*, 39, 1922:258-259) reported a similar condition in a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) which had several quills in its breast and mouth and apparently had starved. The photograph was taken by M. F. Fountain.—HOMER V. GRIFFIN, *Paonia, Colorado, April 28, 1952.*