Starlings viciously aggressive

Stopping the starling as those at

Hundreds of thousands of starl-

ings were shot there and trucked

away in an unsuccessful attempt

In other places the story was

much the same. The European

starling, first reported breeding

in Ontario at Burlington in 1922

It was a long range plan de-

the Miner Reserve found out was

a formidable undertaking.

to save the trees.

was here to stay."

endorsed the bird.

By ART BRIGGS-JUDE

A few weeks ago as we watched some remaining crabapples disappear to a horde of hungry starlings, we were reminded of another way in which these alien birds'compete with our native species.

In the early days of their introduction, starlings were looked on with favor in many circles. Studies made and stomach contents examined showed this aggressive new bird to be a superior insect destroyer to the robin or the cat- winter roost. bird.

In fact Bulletin No. 808 issued by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in 1921, advises this bird be protected except in extreme isolated cases of local crop damage.

However, at the time this assessment was made, the starling had not realized its full potential in North America. The fact is that when this publication was released, starlings had only been reported as far west as Lake Erie and were being sighted in many places in New York State for the very first time.

In the years that followed, as the starlings quickly colonized one area after another, many observers began to voice their concern:

Stop the starlings people cried as they immediately launched shooting and trapping programs

4.4 lb. (2 kg)

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signed to prevent the starling's tilized and finally killed all the pines in the plantation. eggs from hatching by setting out

Savings Account

to control their spread.

disastrous results.

By then the main objections to

this chunky newcomer were all

too obvious. It was taking over the

traditional nesting holes of

bluebirds, flickers, and other cav-

ity dependent native birds, and

was swarming into orchards with

This flocking trait also posed a

potential threat to certain ever-

green groves and windbreaks

wherever the noisy birds took up a

ary in southwestern Ontario,

starlings roosted in such huge

numbers their droppings overfer-

At the Jack Miner goose sanctu-

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39 Main Street N., Markham 294-6865 known nesting sites.

These shallow trays were then covered with old crankcase oil and bait such as corn was spread on the surface. As the starlings fed, some of this oil would cling to their legs and breast feathers.

Later at the nest, this oil would come in contact with the eggs and stop the embryo development.

However, any effect this method had on controlling the starling was of a local nature and Among the many control methods advocated at that time with the birds quickly moving in was one by the same U.S. agency from the surrounding countrythat only a few years before had side, it was soon abandoned.

> Today, the starling in this country continues to increase wherever it can find holes in trees and

the lids of large metal drums near crevices in buildings to raise it's young.

People putting up nest-boxes to relieve the bird housing shortage should remember to keep the holes no larger than 11/2 inches to prevent the starlings from entering.

Of course, this is not possible with purple martin houses and wood duck nest-boxes where other methods to deter these pests have to be employed.

And the sinister side of the starling is only evident when you see it devoring the last stands of persistent berries in the spring.

Wild fruit that the hard pressed bluebirds and other arriving migrants need when confronted with a persistent wet cold spell.

Marathoners raise \$3,000

STOUFFVILLE __Three area residents tested their stamina on the weekend at Kellington's Restaurant, Main Street West.

Brian Meharg, Faye Murphy and Louie Figliuzzi participated in a 12-hour dance marathon and raised \$3,000 for the Hospital for Sick Children,

Toronto. The Stouffville threesome took to the dance floor at 9 p.m., Saturday and continued through until 9 a.m., Sunday, with only 10-minute breaks per

hour. A live band provided the music.



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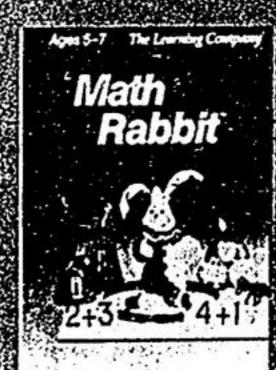
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