

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

EUROPEAN STARLING

(Sturnus vulgaris)



Photo Credit: Pierre Selim, Wikimedia Commons

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ANIMAL?

DESCRIPTION

European Starlings...

- Appear predominantly glossy black in colour, with white tips on feathers, giving a spotted appearance.
- Also show a purple to green iridescent colouration during the breeding season.
- Have a long, pointed bill, which is yellow for most of the year and dark in the fall.
- Have a short tail and pointed wings.
- Gather in large flocks.

PRIMARY THREAT:

European Starlings gather in large numbers, competing with native species for food and nesting sites.

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

Download the App!



www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

SPREAD

European Starlings have been intentionally introduced to several locations worldwide, including South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and North America, typically for aesthetic or cultural reasons. They can spread naturally over long distances and do extremely well in human disturbed areas. Females lay 4-6 eggs per clutch and two clutches per year is common, especially in the lower mainland and Fraser Valley. Their diet consists mainly of seeds, insects, invertebrates, plants and fruit.

European Starlings are found in a variety of habitats with the highest densities found in agricultural and human-settled areas. They are secondary nesters, using cavity or crevice nests created by other species. Holes in fence posts, power poles, buildings, and other manmade structures are often used by starlings.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>



Photo credit: Revital Soloman, Wikimedia Commons



EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*)



Photo Credit: Phil Armishaw, Flickr

DISTRIBUTION & STATUS

European Starlings are native to Europe, Asia and North Africa. European Starlings are widespread throughout B.C., including Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii.

LOOK-ALIKES:

European Starlings may be confused with blackbird, cowbird, or grackle bird species (family *Icteridae*). In comparison to these other species, European Starlings have a **shorter tail, thicker body, white-tan spots on head and body, and a yellow bill (black in the fall).**

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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Do not intentionally feed European Starlings.
- Eliminate potential sources of food, including bird feeders intended for other species.
- Seal any potential openings on building where they can nest and do not allow European Starlings to occupy manmade nest boxes.
- Do not transfer or release Starlings in B.C.
- Note: A control program for European Starlings exists in the Okanagan to protect fruit crops. – Check out the BC Fruit Growers' Association website for more info.

DID YOU KNOW?

European Starlings were first established in New York in 1890 by a Shakespeare enthusiast who wanted to introduce all the birds mentioned in Shakespeare's works. They have since spread all over North America.

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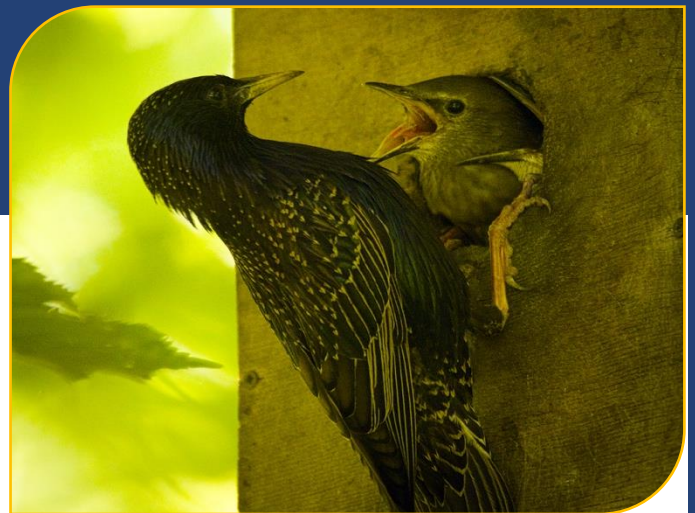


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