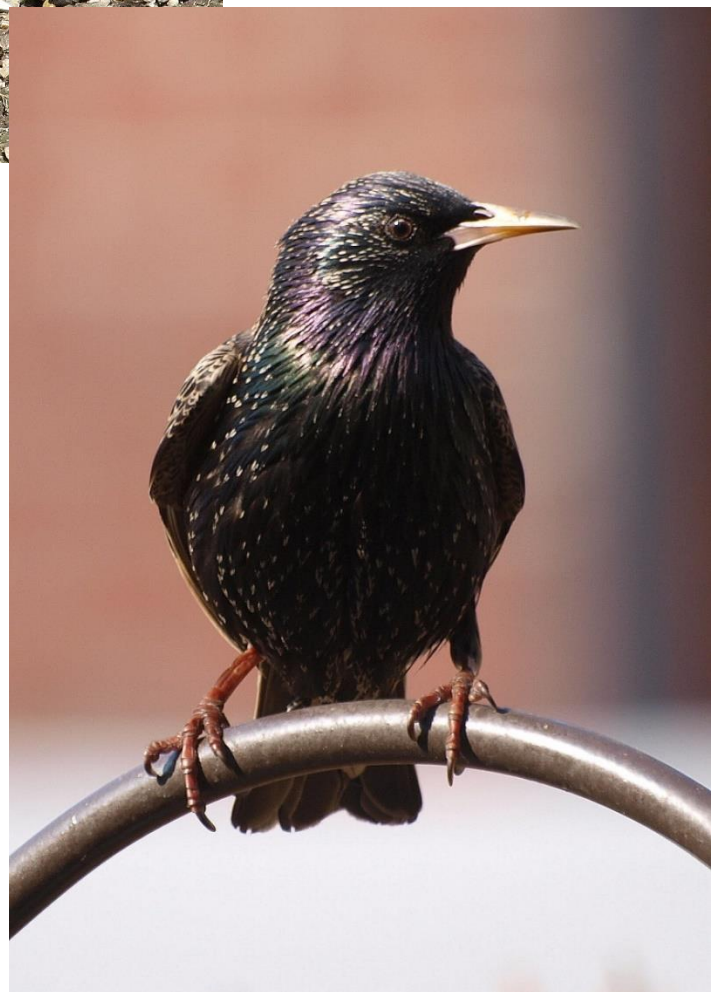




The introduced (invasive) species still has colorful plumage as this male shows on an April day. Look closely at the base of the beak - it's bluish. That makes him a boy!

Now look at the base of this starling's beak - it's pinkish. That makes her a girl!
Is that stereotyping or what?



Look closely at this starling. Is it a male or a female?

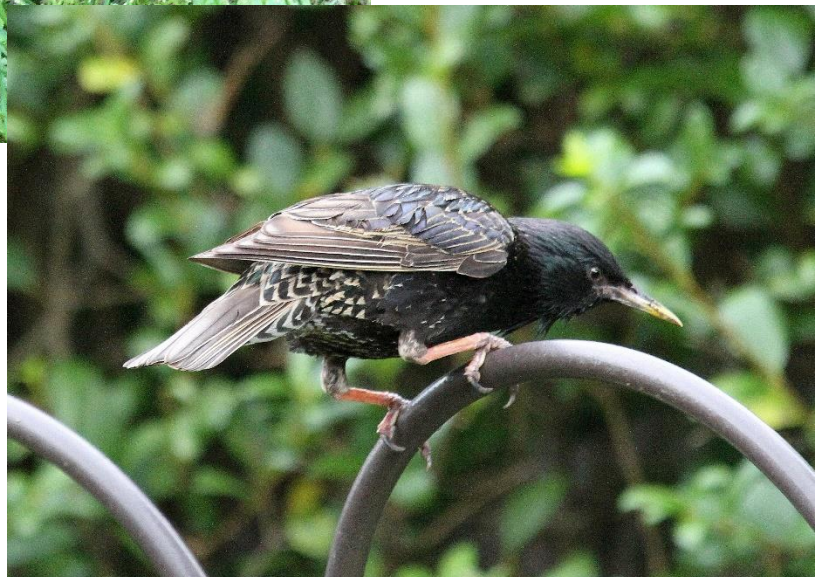
Just what a farmer with a newly seeded field or a homeowner with full bird feeders does NOT want to see – a tree on their property filled with starlings.



A dull looking starling in July with white feather tips worn down and flight feathers almost a brown color. Yet, some iridescence shows through on the body plumage.

The same July bird from a different angle, showing even more pronounced brown in its wing feathers.

Why?





Because she's a mother, scurrying about trying to feed her very demanding fledgling. Her feathers have been worn down by time, nesting, brooding, and other parental duties.

Dad has to feed these eating machines too.
Note the piece of food on the fledgling's forehead.
It just gobbles too quickly to notice.
Dad's feathers look worn too.



As can be seen in these three photos, starling fledglings are light gray/brown overall with a gray beak and dark, almost evil-looking eyes.

This juvenile is much darker than expected, probably due to melanism (excessive dark pigment).



Juveniles form their own age-group flocks and learn to fend for themselves. This pair emerged from a dumpster with a ‘meal.’ Note the beak of another on the right.

As summer progresses, the juvenile starlings start to molt from their gray/brown plumage to the distinctive white-tipped feathers of adult plumage.





A fully molted starling in early December with fresh, white-tipped feathers, the gray beak of winter, and crisp outlines on its wing feathers.

Another view of the starling's fine, new plumage.



In spite of their fine looks, they go right back to emptying your feeders.

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