

# 417 Spotless Starling

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Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Male (22-III).

**SPOTLESS STARLING** (*Sturnus unicolor*)

## IDENTIFICATION

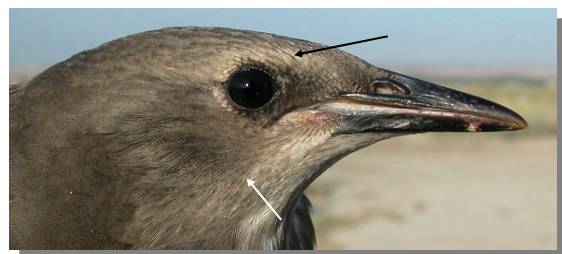
20-22 cm. Black plumage, glossy and unspotted in **summer**, duller and with pale spots in **winter**; yellow bill in **breeders**, dark in **winter**; short tail. **Wing formula**: the 8th primary is the longest (sometimes 8th and 9th similar). **Juveniles** are grey brown; pale supercilium quite pronounced; cheek poorly mottled dark .



Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Pattern of wing, breast and upperparts.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Wing formula and pattern of breast and upperparts.



Spotless Starling. Juvenile. Wing formula and head pattern.



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## SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls that of a male **Blackbird** which has longer tail and lacks glossy plumage or white spots. **Common Starling** is very similar but has green and purple gloss in **breeding** plumage and wing feathers have buff edges. **Juvenile** of **Common Starling** is almost indistinguishable by plumage but with pale supercilium poorly pronounced and cheek mottled dark; wing formula is different being the 9th primary the longest.



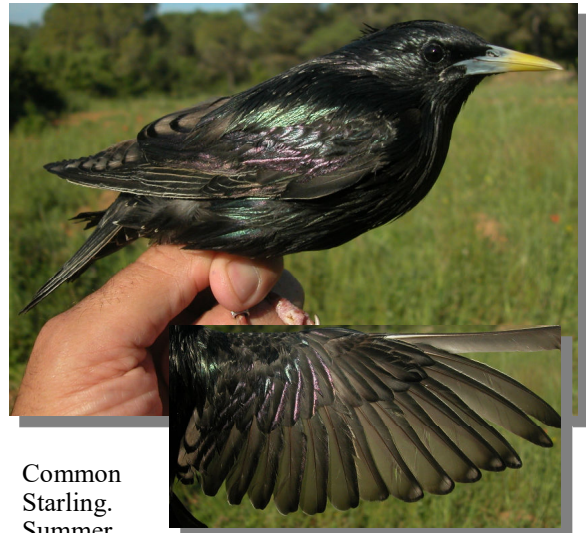
Blackbird. Male.



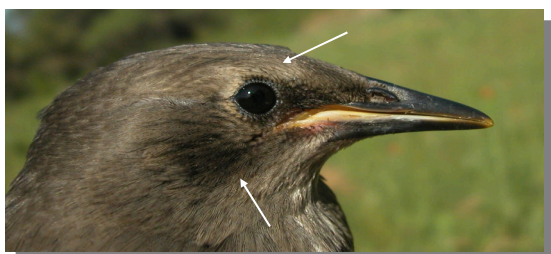
Common Starling. Wing formula.



Common Starling. Winter.



Common Starling. Summer.



Common Starling. Juvenile. Wing formula and head pattern.

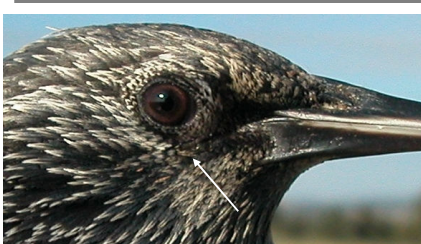
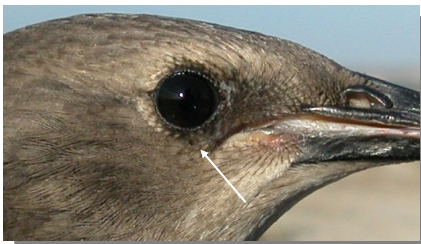


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## SEXING

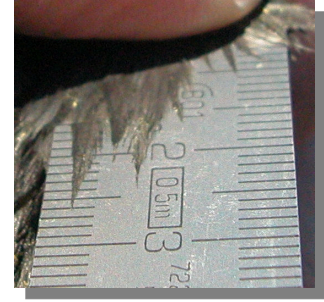
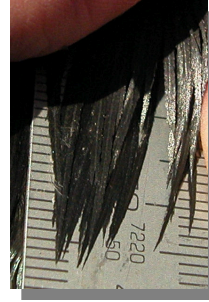
Iris uniformly dark brown in **males** and dark with a narrow pale outer circle in **females**. In **breeding** season, base of lower mandible grey-blue in **males** and white-pinkish in **females** (**CAUTION:** some **adults** retain the colours of sexual identification during the **winter**). Most of the **juveniles** can be sexed by iris colour (**CAUTION:** **males** and **females** may have dark brown iris, but only **females** have it with the pale outer circle).



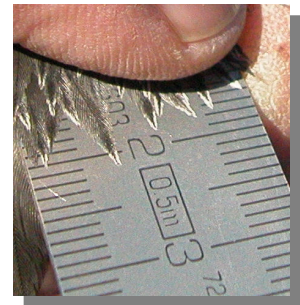
Spotless Starling. Spring. Sexing. Colour of iris and pattern of bill: top male; bottom female.

Spotless Starling. Juvenile. Sexing. Colour of iris: top male; bottom female.

Spotless Starling. Winter. Sexing. Colour of iris: top male; bottom female.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Sexing. Length of the longest throat feather: left male; right female.



Spotless Starling. Winter. 1st year. Sexing. Length of the longest throat feather: left male; right female.

## AGEING/SEXING

4 types of age can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with grey brown plumage; whitish throat; underparts with pale streaks; greyish bill.

**1st year autumn/2nd year winter** with rounded tail feathers; bill always dark. **Male** with dark and moderately glossy plumage; body feathers with white spots; length of the longest feathers in centre of lower throat 24-28 mm. **Female** with duller plumage and more spotted than **male**; length of the longest feathers in centre of lower throat 17-23 mm.

**2nd year spring** difficult to age safely due to wear of tail feathers and the spotted; **2nd year females** usually with white spots (check undertail coverts).

**Adult** with pointed tail feathers. In **winter**, **male** with glossy black plumage without pale spots; length of the longest feathers in centre of lower throat 28-41 mm. **Female** with black plumage, except sometimes some little pale spotted on belly and undertail coverts; length of the longest feathers in centre of lower throat 21-27 mm. In **spring**, ageing is possible as long as wear has not eliminated the shape of the tips of the tail feathers; usually more glossy than **2nd year** birds but this characteristic is not easy to see if both birds are not together to compare.

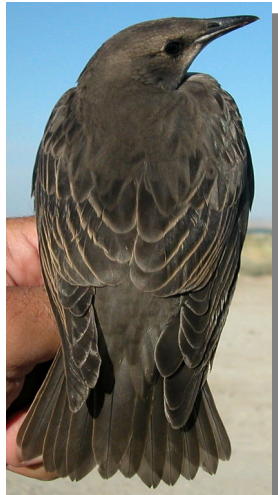


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Spotless Starling. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult; right juvenile.



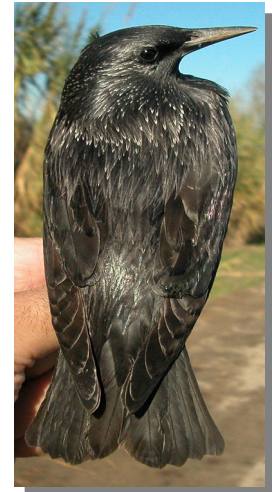
Spotless Starling. Ageing. Pattern of upperparts: left adult; right juvenile.



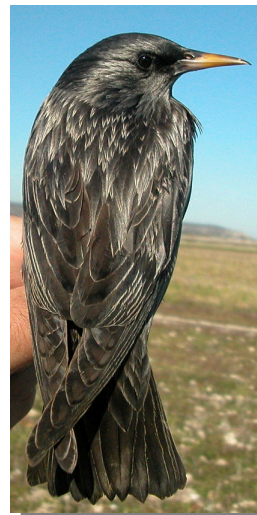
Spotless Starling. Winter. Male. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult; right 1st year.



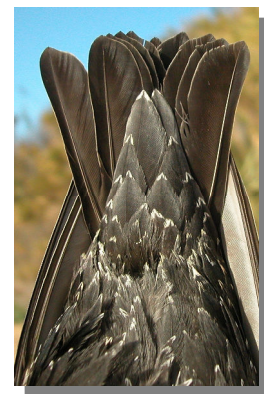
Spotless Starling. Winter. Female. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult; right 1st year.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Male. Ageing. Pattern of upperparts: left adult; right 1st year.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Female. Ageing. Pattern of upperparts: left adult; right 1st year.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Male. Ageing. Pattern of the undertail coverts: left adult; right 1st year.



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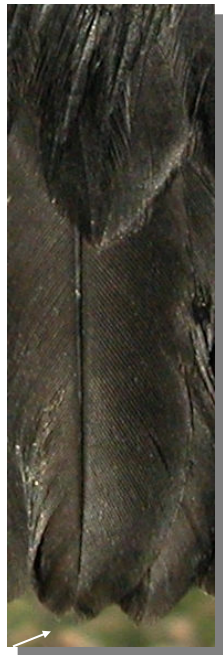
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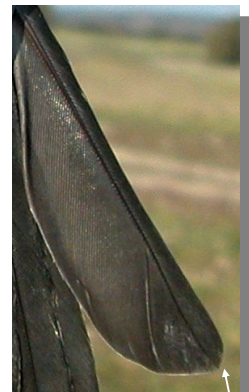
Spotless Starling. Winter. Female. Ageing. Pattern of the undertail coverts: left adult; right 1st year.



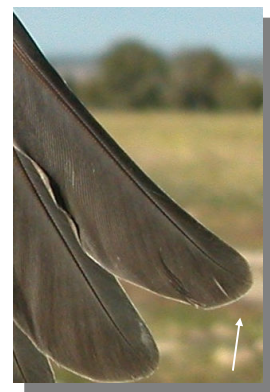
Spotless Starling. Winter. Female. Ageing. Pattern of the central tail feather: left adult; right 1st year.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Male. Ageing. Pattern of the central tail feather: left adult; right 1st year.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Male. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult; right 1st year.



Spotless Starling. Winter. Female. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult; right 1st year.



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**MOULT**

Complete **postbreeding** and **postjuvenile** moults, finished in October.

**PHENOLOGY**

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

**STATUS IN ARAGON**

Resident. Widely distributed throughout the Region, absent only from the highest areas of the Pyrenees.



Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Male/female (30-V)



Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Male (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Female (30-V)



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Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Head pattern and colour of iris and bill: top male (22-III); bottom female (23-IV)



Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Head pattern and colour of iris and bill: top male (23-IV); bottom female (23-IV)



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Head pattern and colour of iris and bill: top male/female (30-V); bottom female (30-V).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (22-III); right female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Breast pattern: left male (23-IV); right female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male/female (30-V); right female(30-V)



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Spotless Starling.  
Spring. Adult. Male:  
tail pattern (12-V).

Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (22-III); right female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling.  
Spring. Adult. Male:  
tail pattern (23-IV).



Spotless Starling.  
Spring. 2nd year. Male:  
tail pattern (23-IV).

Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Upperpart pattern: left male (23-IV); right female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling.  
Spring. 2nd year. Female:  
tail pattern (23-IV).

Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Upperpart pattern: left male/female (30-V); right female (30-V).



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Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Male/female: tail pattern (30-V).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of undertail coverts: left male/female (30-V); right female (30-V).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Female: tail pattern (30-V).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (22-III).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult: pattern of undertail coverts: left male (22-III); right female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of undertail coverts: left male (23-IV); right female (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (23-IV).



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Spotless Starling. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (23-IV).



Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Male (07-I)



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Male/female: pattern of wing (30-V).



Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Female (07-I)



Spotless Starling. Spring. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (30-V).



Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Male (07-I)



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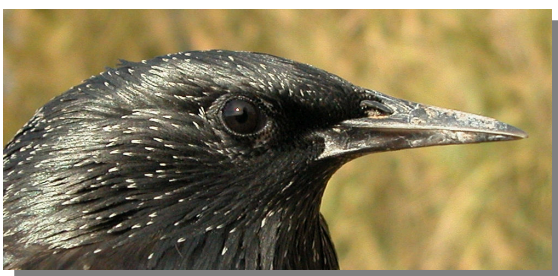
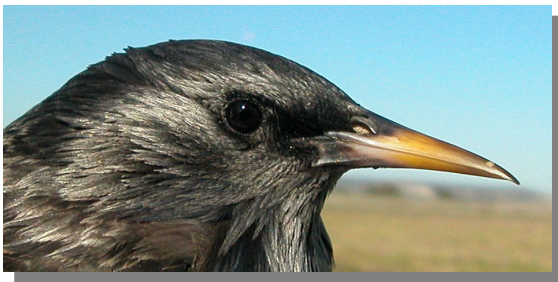
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Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Female (07-I)



Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Head pattern: top male (07-I); bottom female (07-I).



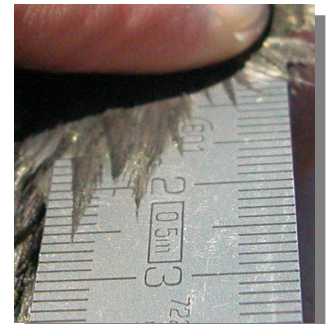
Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Head pattern: top male (07-I); bottom female (07-I).



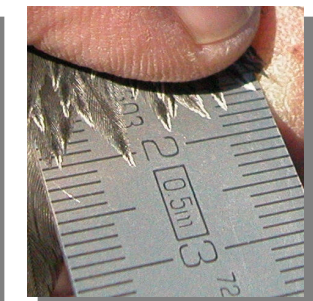
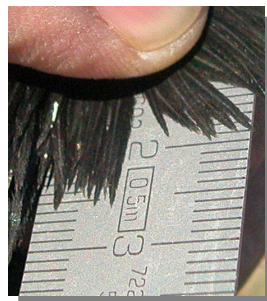
Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Breast pattern: top male (07-I); bottom female (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Breast pattern: top male (07-I); bottom female (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Adult. Length of the longest throat feather: left male (15-V); right female (05-III).

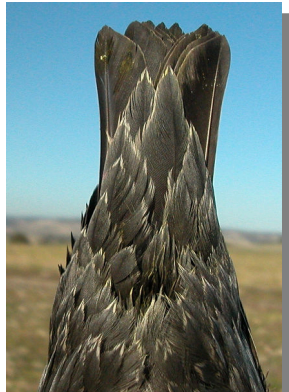


Spotless Starling. 2nd year. Length of the longest throat feather: left male (05-III); right female (05-III).

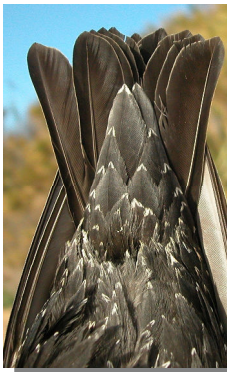


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Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male (07-I); right female (07-I).



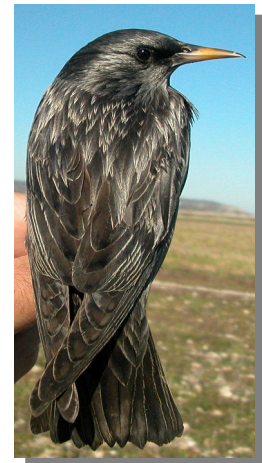
Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male (07-I); right female (07-I).



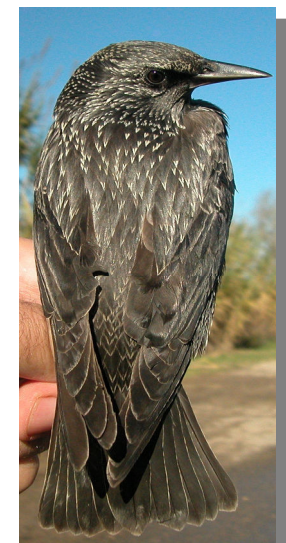
Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Pattern of the outermost tail feathers: top male (07-I); bottom female (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Pattern of the outermost tail feathers: top male (07-I); bottom female (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (07-I); right female (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Upperpart pattern: left male (07-I); right female (07-I).



## 417 **Spotless Starling**

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Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (07-I).



Spotless Starling. Winter. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (07-I).