

417a Identification of Starlings

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IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) AND SPOTLESS STARLING (*Sturnus unicolor*)

NON JUVENILE BIRDS

Wing formula and length of the longest feather in the lower part of the throat.



Common Starling. Wing formula: the 9th primary is the longest (sometimes 8th and 9th similar).



Spotless Starling. Wing formula: the 8th primary is the longest (sometimes 8th and 9th similar).

Length of the longest feather in the lower part of the throat (mm)

	♂ ad.	♀ ad.	♂ 1st year	♀ 1st year
Common Starling	20-26	15-20	15-20	13-17
Spotless Starling	28-41	21-27	24-28	17-23

SPRING. ADULT MALE

With some differences in pattern of plumage and spotted on tail coverts.



Common Starling. Adult. Male: with obvious metallic gloss, clearly divided in green and purple.



Spotless Starling. Adult. Male: with subdued metallic gloss, uniformly-shaded greenish and purple.

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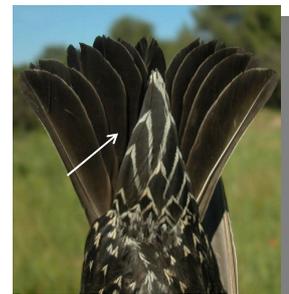
Common Starling. Adult. Male: unspotted by wear but at least upper and undertail coverts usually with some pale spots.



Spotless Starling. Adult. Female: adult female and 2nd year birds without pale spots on body feathers.



Spotless Starling. Adult. Male: all plumage unspotted even the undertail coverts.



Common Starling. Adult. Female: adult female and 2nd year birds with evident and large pale spots on upper and undertail coverts.

SPRING. ADULT FEMALE AND 2ND YEAR BIRDS

With some differences in spotted on body feathers and tail coverts.



Common Starling. Adult. Female: adult female and 2nd year birds with some small pale spots on body feathers.



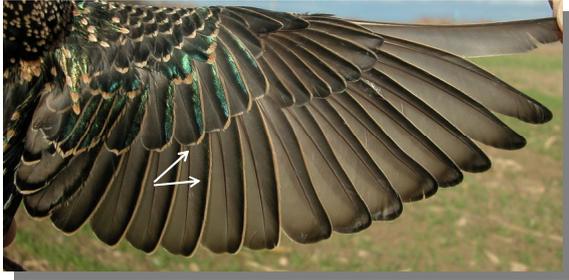
Spotless Starling. 2nd year. Male: adult female and 2nd year birds with unspotted uppertail coverts; if undertail coverts are spotted then with very small spots.

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WINTER. ALL AGES AND SEXES

Pattern of the wing feathers.



Common Starling. Broad and prominent pale fringes on wing feathers.



Spotless Starling. Narrow pale fringes on wing feathers.

WINTER. ALL AGES AND SEXES

With differences in pattern of plumage and spotted.



Common Starling. 1st year. Female: all ages and sexes with obvious green metallic gloss; with strongly spotted body feathers.



Spotless Starling. Adult. Male: with subdued metallic gloss; all feathers unspotted.



Spotless Starling. 1st year. Male: adult female and 1st year male with subdued metallic gloss; spotted with very small pale spots.

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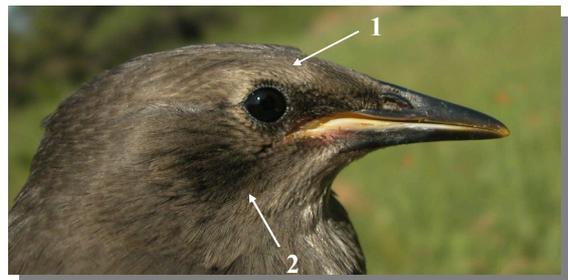
Spotless Starling. 1st year. Female: with little metallic gloss; strongly spotted with very small pale spots.



Spotless Starling. Juvenile. Wing formula: the 8th primary is the longest (sometimes 8th and 9th similar).

JUVENILES

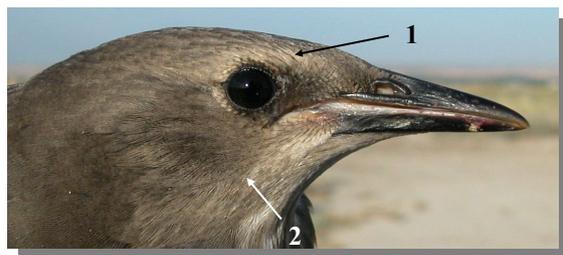
Wing formula (**CAUTION:** only with full grown feathers) and subtle differences in plumage pattern (**CAUTION:** very variable characters useful only in very fresh plumage and better in direct comparison with both species).



Common Starling. Juvenile: pale supercilium poorly pronounced (1); cheek mottled dark (2).



Common Starling. Juvenile. Wing formula: the 9th primary is the longest (sometimes 8th and 9th similar).



Spotless Starling. Juvenile: pale supercilium quite pronounced (1); cheek poorly mottled dark (2).