



Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Habitat

Widespread in the UK and a common garden bird. Huge roosts can be found throughout the countryside and urban areas. Young birds will disperse once they have fledged and form large flocks, roaming fields and woodland. In the autumn, many birds from the northern hemisphere will cross the sea to the UK. Roosts can contain several thousand birds and they will gather in reedbeds, farm buildings and trees.

Food

Starlings have a varied diet and are not picky. They will feed on insects, worms, berries, snails, spiders, fruit, scraps and suet. However, they will only feed their young on invertebrates.

Nesting

The male starlings build the nests from grass in a hole or crevice, then the female will line it with feathers, wool and moss. Both male and female will incubate the eggs and a pair will usually have four to six eggs, the chicks will hatch in 12 days. The young will have a more varied diet after 12 days of an invertebrate diet. They will occasionally produce a second clutch if the first is early enough.

Song/call

'Churr'/'Steehh' - the starling will make a short buzzing sound when taking off and a sharp, hoarse sound as an alarm call, often when a predator is in sight.

Beneficial management

- Allow hedges to flower and set fruit for key feeding habitat.
- Maintain grass field margins or unfertilised grassland for foraging.
- Consider planting areas of hedge and reed to provide roosting spots.
- Retain grazed, permanent pasture where starlings can forage for worms, leather jackets and wireworms which are important food items.

