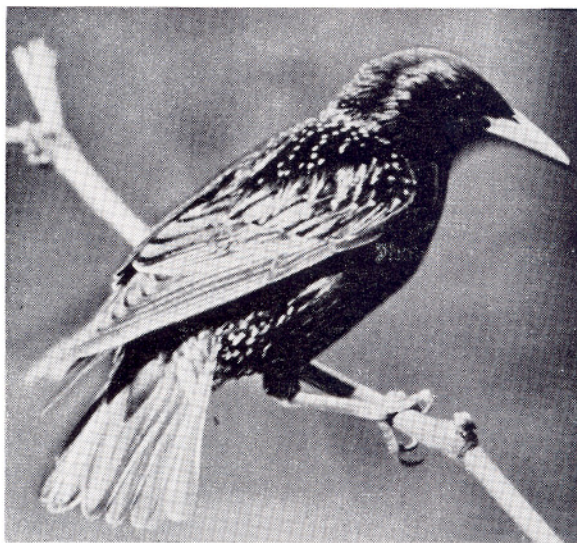


EUROPEAN STARLING



- *European Starling (adult in breeding plumage).*

Photo: G. S. Chapman

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Breeding Plumage

Adult Male

Bill: Yellow, base of lower mandible blue or blue black.

Throat hackles: Long and narrow. Iridescence covering half to two-thirds of feather.

Iridescence: Well-marked on back, flanks, belly, greater coverts and sometimes secondaries.

Underside and Tail feathers: Buff margins on feathers well marked and distinct from rest of feather.

Adult Female

Bill: Yellow, base of lower mandible pinkish or pinkish white.

Throat hackles: Short and more rounded. Iridescence covering less than half of feather.

Iridescence: None on belly, sometimes on flanks, little or none on greater coverts and secondaries.

Underside of Tail Feathers: Buff margins not well marked, merging with rest of feather.

Non-breeding Plumage

Both Sexes

Bill: Dark.

Upperparts: With many buff spots.

Underparts: White tips to feathers.

Sex differences: The sexes can still be distinguished by the characters given under breeding plumage. The white tips to the throat hackles are excluded when measuring the extent of iridescence.

Juvenile

Sexes similar. Grey brown with chin and throat streaked whitish or brown and whitish.

Bill: Brown.

At about three months a complete moult takes place, the new plumage being similar to that of the adult. After the body and wing moult has been completed the young bird may still be distinguished for some time by its brown juvenile head feathers, which are the last to be replaced.

NOTE: *The above characters were taken from the B.T.O. Guide to Ageing and Sexing (1964), and checked against specimens from the Sydney district. However, there is evidence from skull pneumatization that starlings in this district may breed when less than a year old. The first post-juvenile moult appears to be into a plumage which is very similar to that of the adult. In Europe the white tips on first winter birds are rather broad with very slight or no central dark streak. All first winter birds examined here have*

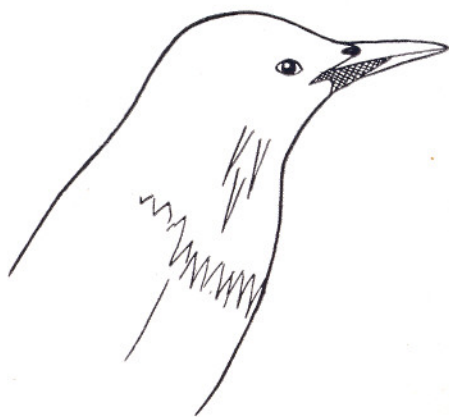
definite dark centre streaks and rather narrow white tips—the character for adult birds in Europe.

However, a first winter plumage may occur in higher latitudes or colder areas.

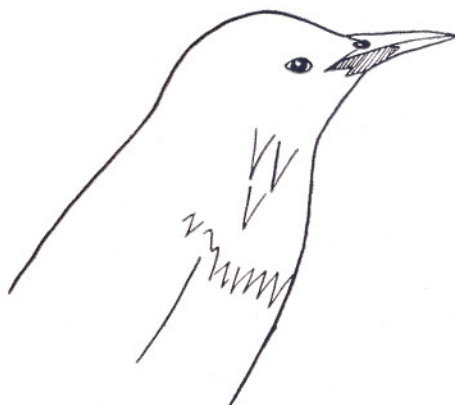
Reference

Davis, P. (1964), 'B.T.O. Guide to Ageing and Sexing', Field Guide No. 10, p. 33.

Drawings by S. Beresford



BREEDING MALE



BREEDING FEMALE

THROAT HACKLES



MALE

TAIL FEATHERS



FEMALE



MALE



FEMALE



MALE
(tip enlarged)



FIRST YEAR
WINTER
(English Specimen)



FEMALE (WINTER)



JUVENILE

