

# Starling



## Appearance:

The starling is a dark chunky, muscular bird. It is distinguished from other blackbirds by its short tail and its longer, slender bill. Starling plumage varies depending on the season. In winter, the bird displays a highly speckled iridescent coat and a dark bill. In summer, the bird's coat dulls and has far fewer speckles.. The adult starling will measure 7½ - 8 ½" in height, and weigh 1-2 ounces. Pigeons can live 5-7 years in the wild up to 13 years in captivity.

## Habitat:

Like the house sparrow, the starling was introduced from Europe in the 19th century. It did not spread as fast and only reached the western coast within the last few decades. Starlings are well adapted to urban life which offer it an abundance of food and nesting sites. It is a muscular bird about eight inches long with long wings and a short squared tail. Starlings are very aggressive and will drive native birds out of their territory, much to the dismay of local bird watchers. Starlings are well noted for their flocking habits. They often gather in the tens of thousands, creating a nuisance when roosting in populated areas.

Starlings rank just behind pigeons and sparrows as an urban bird pest. Starlings can be a nuisance in both urban and rural areas due to their nesting, eating and living habits. When the bird is in its flocking phase, thousands of starlings often overwhelm buildings and trees. Large scale buildup of feces from these flocks can lead to structural damage. The uric acid in the feces can corrode stone, metal and masonry. Gutters and drainage pipes clogged with starling nests often backup, causing extensive water damage. The bacteria, fungal agents and parasites in the feces also pose a health risk.

## Nesting:

The Starling is a nesting bird. Their nests are in enclosed areas with at least a 1-1/2 inch opening. Look for their nests in old trees, church steeples and other holes and crevices. Due to their bullying nature they will take any suitable site, evicting any previous owner. They sometimes watch other birds build a complete nest before forcing them to leave.

## Breeding:

Starlings have two broods a year with four to five eggs a brood. They average eight offspring a year. The eggs are white, pale blue or green-white. Incubation of the eggs takes twelve days. The fledglings leave the nest after 25 days. The young leave to join other juveniles and form huge flocks that move on to other territories.

## Cycles:

Not a true migrating bird, starlings may move from rural trees to warm city buildings in winter. The daily cycle is one of leaving the nest at sunrise to travel up to sixty miles to feeding areas before returning for the evening. They disperse to mate in the spring. After mating season, they will often coalesce into huge flocks with defined feeding and roosting areas.

## Diet:

Insects, wild fruit seeds and grain.

## Solutions:

**What you can do:** Good sanitation practices, such as removal of spilled food or refuse, can do much to reduce the attractiveness of an area to starlings. This depends on the situation and whether or not the food source can be effectively and economically limited. The removal of nests and nest sites also may be included as part of a sanitation program.

Habitat modification is sometimes of value where starlings are roosting in street or park trees. Selective pruning of smaller, inner perching branches to open up the canopy of the trees may make them unsuitable for roosting cover.

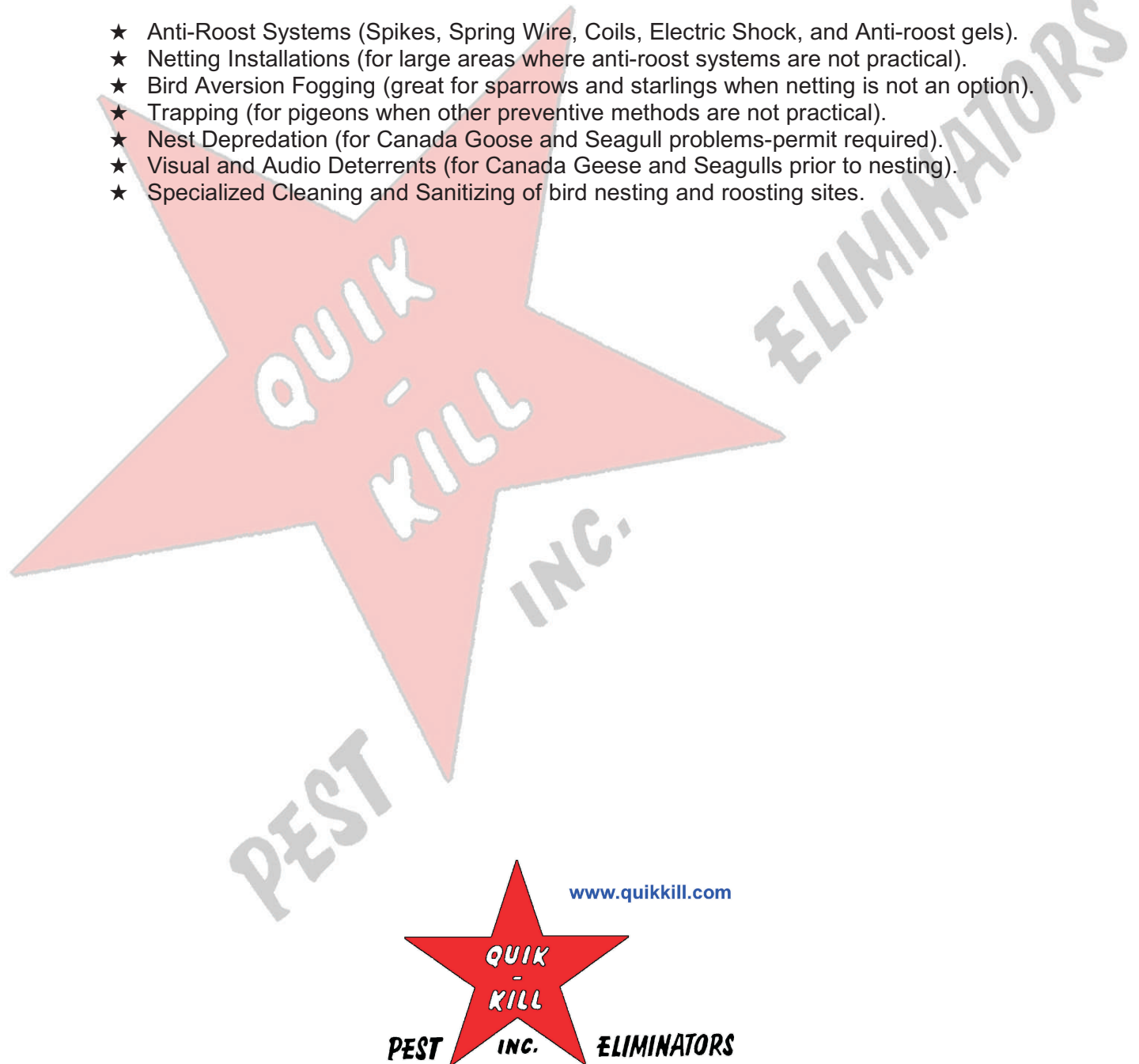
**Professional Solutions:**

There are a wide variety of solutions available for handling a starling infestation. The best solution for starling problems, is complete exclusion.

Quik-Kill provides cleanup, physical removal, and preventive services for starlings.

Our trained bird abatement technicians also specialize in the following services:

- ★ Anti-Roost Systems (Spikes, Spring Wire, Coils, Electric Shock, and Anti-roost gels).
- ★ Netting Installations (for large areas where anti-roost systems are not practical).
- ★ Bird Aversion Fogging (great for sparrows and starlings when netting is not an option).
- ★ Trapping (for pigeons when other preventive methods are not practical).
- ★ Nest Depredation (for Canada Goose and Seagull problems-permit required).
- ★ Visual and Audio Deterrents (for Canada Geese and Seagulls prior to nesting).
- ★ Specialized Cleaning and Sanitizing of bird nesting and roosting sites.



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