



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Bournemouth Naturally

The Bournemouth Naturally project aims to build up a picture of biodiversity in Bournemouth through creation of a database of your wildlife sightings. Each month will feature a species, if you have seen it in your garden or local greenspace then please let us know.

Species of the Month: **February**

Starling

Sturnus vulgaris



Photo ©Arthur Grosset

Ecology and Conservation: Although Starlings are generally thought of as one of our most common and familiar birds they have undergone a worrying population decline of over 70% in recent years. This is thought to be due to loss of permanent pasture, use of agricultural chemicals and a general lack of food and nesting sites. Starlings are perhaps best known for their spectacular flocking displays in autumn and winter which can be seen at certain locations around the country including reed beds and city centres.

Starlings feed mainly on invertebrates but also fruit and garden bird foods especially in winter. They have a powerful pointed beak that can be used to stab into the ground in search of invertebrates.

Identification: Starlings are sized between a blackbird and a robin. They appear black from a distance but close up it is easy to see the feathers have a glossy green/purple sheen and pale speckled patterning especially in winter. Starlings are most likely to be seen in small noisy flocks feeding on the ground in areas with closely mown grass. They will readily visit garden bird feeders. In flight the short tail, triangular shaped wings and the fact they are usually found in a small flock during the day all help with identification.

Records: If you have seen Starlings in your garden or your local park/nature reserve in Bournemouth then please let us know.

Please **email** Heather Dixon: heatherdixon@bnss.org.uk

(Or online for those of you who have joined **Living Record** - if you are interested in wildlife recording contact Heather for details of how to join Living Record.)