

THE EUROPEAN STARLING IN ILLINOIS

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The presence of a small flock of European starlings at Urbana, Illinois, during the past winter, naturally leads to a desire to know something of the characteristics of this recent alien addition to our bird fauna. During the two decades following their first successful introduction into this country, in 1890, starlings did not extend their range much more than 200 miles from New York City where they were originally introduced. During the past decade they have made much more rapid progress, and have been reported from Nova Scotia, Canada, Ohio, Alabama, Georgia, and intermediate states, and have become abundant in various parts of New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. They seem destined to become abundant in the Mississippi Valley.

They are very valuable aids in the destruction of a great variety of insect pests, but, when abundant, do extensive damage to fruit. They nest in holes and interfere seriously with various kinds of birds using such nesting places. Like the English sparrows, they are more commonly to be found about the habitations of man. A considerable part of the starling population is ordinarily migratory, going southward for the winter. They need and should receive no legislative protection.