

# Where have all the starlings gone?

by Hugh Bradshaw



*Starling: painting by Jan Wilczur*

Although it was once common to find starlings nesting in the Park's ancient trees, they have now all but disappeared as a breeding bird. This decline mirrors the national decline in starling numbers.

However, as starlings still nest in the houses of Richmond and Barnes, are other factors contributing to their decline in the Park? Could grey squirrels be preying on the starlings' eggs or are the increasing numbers of parakeets out-competing them for nest sites?

***The Richmond Park Bird Recording Group would like your help*** in finding out why tree-nesting starlings are in such crisis in the Park. When walking in the Park this spring, ***please look out for tree-nesting starlings and send any records to***

**[hughtjbradshaw@gmail.com](mailto:hughtjbradshaw@gmail.com)** noting the location in the Park and, if possible, the species of tree.

Breeding starlings are particularly easy to locate in early spring when the males sit next to their nest holes, delivering their cheery songs and flapping their wings in a bravura attempt to attract passing females.

With your help we can try and reverse the decline in this popular bird.