



SUPERB STARLING

Passeriformes
Family: Sturnidae
Genus: *Lamprotornis*
Species: *superbus*



Photo by Keith Chadbourne

Range:	N Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda & Tanzania
Habitat:	Open woodland, scrubland, and agricultural fields; often found near human habitation
Niche:	Omnivorous
Wild diet:	Invertebrates, seeds & berries
Zoo diet:	Bird diet, chopped fruits, vegetables, mealworms
Life Span:	(Wild) (Captivity)
Sexual dimorphism:	None
Location in SF Zoo:	African Savanna Aviary

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

These are small, stocky birds with rounded wings, and a strong, straight beak. This multi-hued bird has a black head followed by a metallic blue nape and breast that is separated from the chestnut belly by a white band. Vent and undertail coverts are also white while the wings are a metallic blue-green. The iris is pale yellowish-white.

They forage by probing into the soil and then forcing the beak open, creating an open space where they can search for food.

Weight:

Length: 7-8 inches

STATUS & CONSERVATION

These birds are considered abundant through out their range. Global population trends have not been quantified, but the species is not believed to approach the thresholds for the population decline criterion of the IUCN Red List (i.e., declining more than 30% in ten years or three generations). For these reasons, the species is evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of threaten species

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COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

- Its song is a varied whistling and warbling, its alarm is loud and whining. It often mimics other species.
- They tend to be gregarious ground feeders and have come to see people as a food source.
- They roost during the heat of the day.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

- Courtship behavior involves small jumps on the ground, trailing wings, neck outstretched.
- Breeding season varies within range, and they can lay several clutches in one breeding season.
- Nests can be constructed from grass with a side tunnel entrance protected by thorns or a tree / cliff cavity, all nest are lined with feathers. They may also occupy abandoned nests of weaverbirds.
- Both parents construct the nest, tend the eggs and feed the young.
- Hatchlings are pink with little or no down
- Immature birds are duller black without the breast band and have dark eyes.

Incubation:	13 days w/partners taking shifts	Fledge:	About 3 weeks
# of Eggs:	4 dark blue	Weight at birth:	

MISCELLANEOUS

The genera Lamprotornis / Spreo appear to be interchangeable for this species superbus.

Sources:

Birds of Africa by John Karmali ©1980 p 176-7

Illustrated Ency. of Birds of the World by David Alderton © 2005 p. 379

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

Utah's Hogle Zoo web site

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