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## Insect availability and Parental Care Behavior in a Common Bird

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**Abstract: Title: Insect availability and parental care behavior in a common bird**

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**Abstract:** Populations of aerially insectivorous birds are declining throughout North America. Urbanization may indirectly contribute to this decline through its negative effects on populations of insects, an important food source in insectivores' diets, where low insect availability may be especially challenging for birds during breeding. How fluctuations in insect populations impact various species at higher trophic levels is an important area of current study for future conservation biology. Here, we examine whether nestling provisioning, brooding and guarding behaviors in a breeding bird—the European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)—may be altered depending on the relative insect availability in the environment. We found starling parents showed many behavioral changes in response levels of insect availability: males in particular provided less parental care when insect availability was higher and only increased their effort if insect availability was low. This work contributes to our knowledge of how starlings and other bird species may respond to lowered insect populations, which is important for future conservation efforts.

Key words: insect availability, European starlings, brooding, guarding, urbanization