



Dear Citizens of Windsor,

It is with great pleasure that I, the eminently knowledgeable Professor William Starling, have the distinct opportunity of informing you of my recent visits of investigation to your fair city. I have been fortunate, on numerous occasions, to secure handsome lodgings in this city's centre and it has been my intention to initiate and engage in various forms of inter-species dialogue, to share my extensive knowledge of (and ongoing research on) adaptation to changing environments, the phenomenon of "invasive species" and habitat loss. It is my hope that my presence is welcomed and that some of you will wish to be my guide as I explore the city and that you will even deem it proper to share with me your thoughts in response to the following query.

Dear Windsorians, your official city motto states "The River and the Land Sustain Us" yet I have been set to wonder if this statement still rings true to you or if you require something more? What would this new element of sustenance be? You may respond to my question in one of two ways, by sending me a message at [professorstarling@gmail.com](mailto:professorstarling@gmail.com) or by visiting **SB Contemporary Art** where the good people of **DodoLab** have kindly designed and provided for us some lovely black paper starling silhouettes. I would like to request that you take the opportunity to record on said silhouettes that which you feel truly sustains this city today and for the future. Your Starling will be added to a rather unique exposition that opens this coming **May 5th and continues through June 9th.**

**On Sunday May 6th,** it is my intention to take a stroll through Riverfront Park from the Ambassador Bridge to the Art Gallery of Windsor, to learn more about the city from citizens engaged with activities of leisure and respite. I am pleased to say that I have also been invited on this day to share my impressions of the photographic exhibition **Landmarks** at the **Art Gallery of Windsor.** Please join me for my public talk at the gallery at 1pm, admission is free of charge.

Now a little more about myself. As you are no doubt aware, my line of the family *Sturnus Vulgaris* emigrated, with some assistance from your species, to North America in the early 1890s, landing in New York City's Central Park at the invitation of a rather unusual and eccentric individual, one Eugene Schiefelin. It seems that Mr. Schiefelin desired that all of the songbirds appearing in the works of William Shakespeare be brought to American shores. He also believed that the introduction of my species would be of great benefit to agriculturalists – a belief that was at the heart of the formation of the Acclimatization Society, which Mr. Schiefelin had become local president of. Whether we have been of benefit remains open to debate. However, North America is a land where we have thrived and flourished; and we have adapted to a wide variety of landscapes and habitats including dense urban areas and your sprawling suburbs with their lawns and gardens. In the Windsor/Detroit area, we are particularly fond of your Ambassador Bridge and its environs.

While my kind is in shocking decline in our home range of Northern Europe and the United Kingdom, we have spread widely and remain ubiquitous across North America where our vast undulating flocks (called murmurations) can be a common occurrence. While I currently reside in Hamilton, my travels are extensive and I must say unique for a European Starling, as I regularly venture back and forth across the Atlantic and maintain a link with Starlings where ever they continue to flock. I have most recently returned from a delightful visit to the United Kingdom where I was able to undertake a series of perambulations of inquiry in Norfolk, London and Oxford. I am grateful to DodoLab (Lisa Hirmer and Andrew Hunter) for their ongoing support of my scholarship and travels. With their assistance, I have made arrangements to return to Central Park in New York City this coming autumn and will be out and about in the City of Hamilton in the coming months.

I thank you for your interest and welcome your correspondence. My presence in Windsor would not be possible without the kind invitations of Sarah Beveridge (SB Contemporary Art), Srimoyee Mitra (Art Gallery of Windsor) and Justin Langlois (BrokenCityLab). If you wish to contact me, you may do so care of DodoLab's various channels of communication.

With Kindest Regards,

*Professor William Starling*