



## How Starling Got His Speckles Discussion and Craft Activity Guide

In *How Starling Got His Speckles*, Star the Starling decides not to fly with the other birds, and it almost leads to his downfall. But then the other birds come to his rescue, scaring off the hawk by flying tightly together to form the shape of a giant hawk.

In real life, huge numbers of starlings fly close together during the colder seasons, twisting and turning, making shapes that sometimes appear to be like giant animals. These are called murmurations and contain thousands or even hundreds of thousands of starlings.

### Collective Nouns

A large group of starlings is called a ‘murmuration of starlings.’

Other large groups, or flocks of birds, also have their own special names. These are called collective nouns. Here are some examples:

1. A parliament of owls
2. A pride of peacocks
3. A clutch of chicks
4. A cloud of blackbirds
5. A gaggle of geese
6. A mischief of magpies

The collective noun is often based on a characteristic of the bird, real or imagined. Owls are thought to be wise, peacocks proud, and magpies mischievous!

You can make up your own collective nouns. Make a list of birds and then look at their color, behavior, and personality. For example, blue jays are so blue that you could call a group of them ‘a sapphire of jays.’ They are also so noisy, you could call them ‘a squawk of jays’ — but they are also so smart that you could call them ‘a brightness of jays!’ See what fun collective nouns you can come up with for the birds on your list!



### How Starling Got His Speckles

Written by Keely Parrack  
Illustrated by Antonio Boffa



Illustration © Antonio Boffa  
from *How Starling Got His Speckles*



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## Starling Craft:

Make your own starlings and combine them together to make a murmuration for yourself!

### YOU WILL NEED:

1. Colored paper
2. Scissors
3. Glue
4. Googly eyes
5. One paper bag handle
6. One paper bag handle
7. Marker pens and/or paints.
8. Small sponge cut into a V shape or a white marker pen.

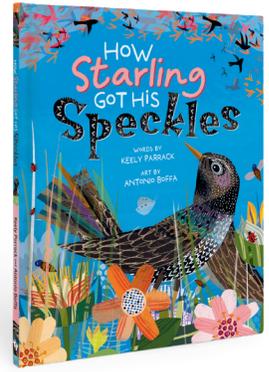


### DIRECTIONS

1. Use any colored paper to cut out a small circle for your starling's head, a larger oval for its body, and a large leaf shape for its wing.
2. Glue the wing onto the body and the head on top of the oval body and the wing – see picture!



3. Glue or draw your eye or eyes where you'd like them to be on the head.
4. Cut off a small piece from the paper bag handle, about an inch long, and cut a V shape into it to make your beak.
5. Cut a three-inch piece from the paper bag handle, and then cut that in half, lengthwise, to make two legs.
6. Cut a small W into the end to make three little toes!



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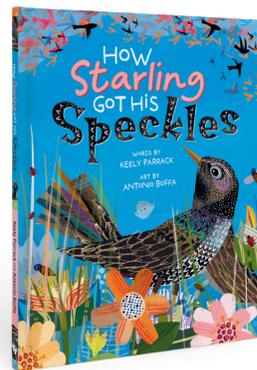


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- 7. Glue the beak to the head and the legs to the body.
- 8. Decorate with marker pens or paints, or finger paints.
- 9. Finally add the speckles! Use a V-shaped sponge dipped into white paint or white markers to add lines of Vs all over your starling's chest and wings.



- 10. Pin up multiple starlings to make a murmuration display on your home or classroom wall!

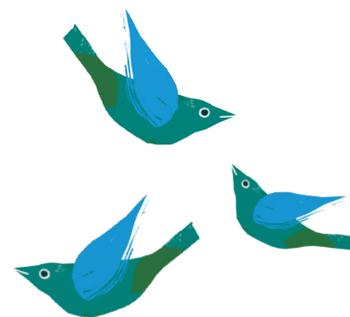


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