

319 White Wagtail



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male (30-IV).

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*)

IDENTIFICATION

16-19 cm. Plumage grey, white and black; long tail black and white. In **breeding** plumage, black crown and white forehead; black bib and breast. In **winter**, grey crown and white throat with a dark band on breast.



White Wagtail. Pattern of head and upperparts.

SEXING

In **breeding** plumage, **male** with black on crown reaching nape and ending with a sharp border; black throat always without white feathers admixed. **Female** with black on crown but with smaller extension and ending admixed with grey nape; sometimes with white feathers admixed in black throat. In **winter**, **adult male** and some **1st year** with large white patch on forehead and black on crown and nape. **Adult female** lacks white on forehead or have only a little patch being recognized by lack moult limit on wing. **Juveniles** cannot be sexed using plumage characters.



White Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of crown: left male; right female.



White Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of nape: left male; right female.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

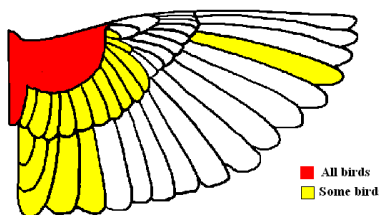
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White Wagtail. Autumn. Sexing. Pattern of crown: top left adult male; top right 1st year male; left female.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished late September. Partial **postjuvenile** moult including body feathers and lesser and median coverts; there are birds moulting none, most or all great coverts and tertials; some can moult flight feathers; finished early October. Both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult taking breeding plumage. changing inner greater coverts and tertials.



White Wagtail. Extent of postjuvenile moult.

AGEING

4 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with fresh plumage and grey head.

1st year autumn with moult limit between moulted fresh greater coverts, with dark centre, and worn pale juvenile retained; if all greater coverts are unmoulted or all have been moulted, check then juvenile brownish flight feathers.

2nd year spring in birds retaining juvenile feathers and with three generations of feathers.

Adult in autumn without moult limits on the wing; flight feathers deep grey; in **spring** with two generations of feathers.

CAUTION: after **prebreeding** moult ageing is not always possible.



White Wagtail. Ageing. Pattern of head and breast: left adult; right juvenile.

PHENOLOGY

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident. Widely distributed throughout the Region with contribution of wintering European birds.



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female (06-V).

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White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male (23-IV).



W h i t e
W a g t a i l .
S p r i n g .
A d u l t . H e a d
p a t t e r n : t o p
m a l e (3 0 -
I V) ; b o t t o m
f e m a l e (0 6 -
V) .



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female (23-V).



W h i t e
W a g t a i l .
S p r i n g .
H e a d
p a t t e r n : t o p
2 n d y e a r
m a l e (2 3 -
I V) ; m i d d l e
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V) ; b o t t o m
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V I I I)



White Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile (10-VIII).



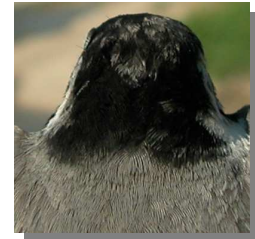
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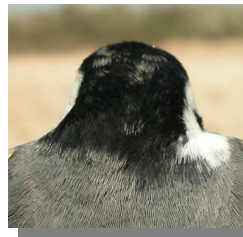
White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of crown and forehead: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Pattern of crown and forehead: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Nape pattern: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)

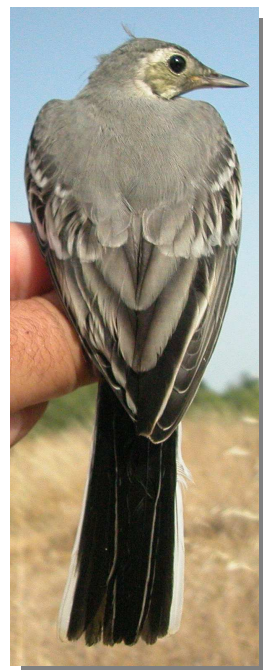


White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).

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White Wagtail. Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (08-VIII)



White Wagtail. Spring. Upperparts pattern: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)

White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing with two ages of feathers (1 postbreeding, 2 prebreeding) (30-IV).

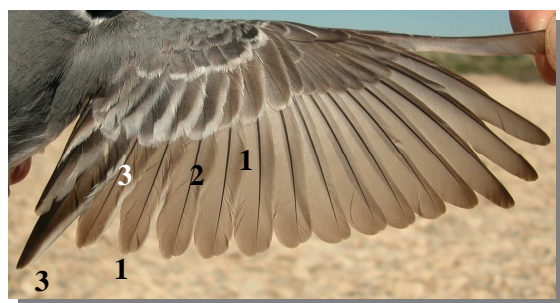
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White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing with two ages of feathers (1 postbreeding, 2 prebreeding) (06-V).



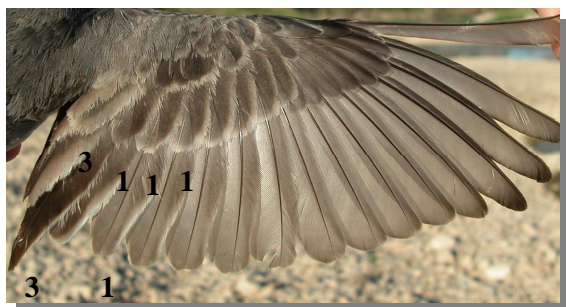
White Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing (15-III).



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing with three ages of feathers (1 juvenile, 2 postjuvenile, 3 prebreeding) (23-IV).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Male (30-X).



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing with two ages of feathers (1 juvenile, 3 prebreeding) (23-V).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Female (21-X).

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White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Male (30-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Head pattern: top male (30-X); bottom female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Pattern of forehead and crown: left male (21-X); right female (21-X).

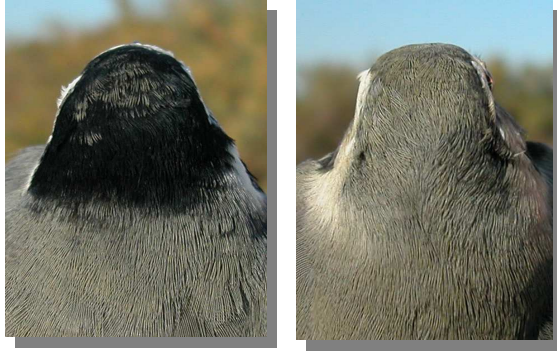


White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Head pattern: top male (30-X); bottom female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Pattern of forehead and crown: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).

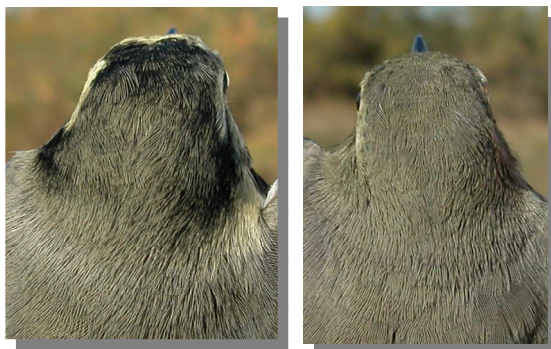
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White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Nape pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Upperparts pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Pattern of breast and throat: left male (21-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Pattern of breast and throat: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).

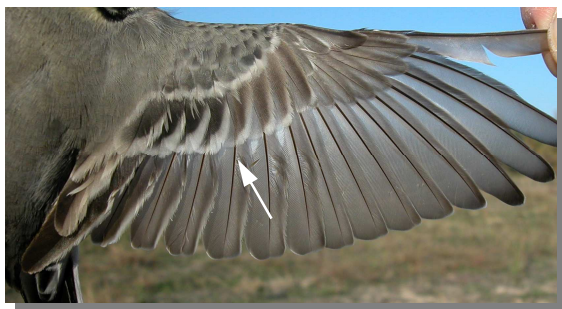
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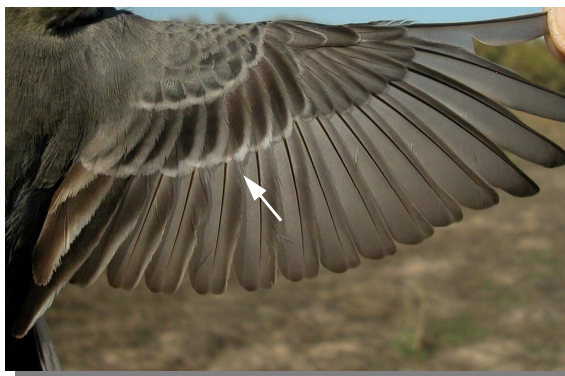
White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Male: pattern of wing (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Female: pattern of wing (21-X).