



Black Kite. Spring. Adult (08-IV).

BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*)

IDENTIFICATION

59-66 cm. Brown upperparts with feathers edged pale; underparts reddish brown, streaked; pale crown with dark streaks; dark brown wings, with whitish patch on base of primaries; barred pale brown tail; black bill; yellow cere.



Black Kite. Adult: pattern of head, breast and tail.

SIMILAR SPECIES

The only raptor with forked tail is **Red Kite** which has paler plumage tinged reddish.



Red Kite.

SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike. Wing length is an useful characteristic only in extreme birds: **male** usually with wing shorter than 430 mm; **female** usually with wing longer than 475 mm. **CAUTION:** overlap in wing length is so large that it is not a completely reliable characteristic for individual specimens.

AGEING

5 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile with very fresh plumage; head and upperparts feathers with largely pale edged; upper and underwing coverts with pale edge; greater and primary coverts with pale tips forming a thin line across the wing; breast feathers light brown with a dark shaft streak; dark brown iris.

2nd year spring with **juvenile** plumage but less contrasted due to wear; body with some **adult**-type feathers; dark brown iris.

2nd year autumn with two ages of feathers, with brownish and worn **juvenile** feathers contrasting with darker and fresh moulted ones; dark eyes.

3rd year only in birds retaining some unmoulted **juvenile** flight feathers, which are very old and worn, or **2nd year** feathers, shorter and pointed than **adult** type; iris light brown.

Adult with greyish head with thin dark streaks; neck and upperparts with grey brown feathers without pale edges; upper and underwing coverts without pale edge; greater and primary coverts without pale tips forming a line; breast feathers dark brown with a dark central streak; pale iris. **CAUTION:** it is necessary more information about when **adults** have pale iris and how important is individual variation.



Black Kite. Ageing. Pattern of head and iris colour: left adult; right juvenile.

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Black Kite. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult; right juvenile.



Black Kite. Ageing. Pattern of wing coverts: top adult; bottom juvenile.

Black Kite. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: top adult; bottom juvenile.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult starting in breeding places, suspended during migration and finished in wintering sites. Partial **postjuvenile** moult in winter, involving only body feathers; the first complete moult takes place in autumn of the **2nd year** at the same time as **adults**.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Resident
- Wintering
- On passage

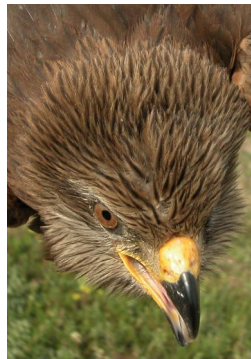
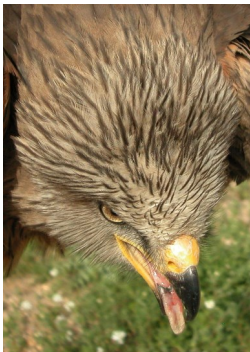


Black Kite. Spring. 2nd year (13-V).



Black Kite. Spring. 3rd year (08-IV).

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Black Kite. Spring. Head pattern and iris colour: top adult (08-IV); middle 3rd year (08-IV); bottom 2nd year (13-V).

Black Kite. Spring. Crown pattern: top left adult (08-IV); top right 3rd year (08-IV); left 2nd year (13-V).



Black Kite. Spring. Breast pattern: top left adult (08-IV); top right 3rd year (08-IV); left 2nd year (13-V).



Black Kite. Spring. Upperpart pattern: top left adult (08-IV); top right 3rd year (08-IV); left 2nd year (13-V).

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Black Kite. Spring. Adult: pattern of primary covers (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 3rd year: pattern of primary covers (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of primary covers 19-V).



Black Kite. Spring. Adult: pattern of primaries (08-IV).

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Black Kite. Spring. 3rd year: pattern of primaries (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of primaries (19-V).



Black Kite. Spring. Adult: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 3rd year: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (19-V).



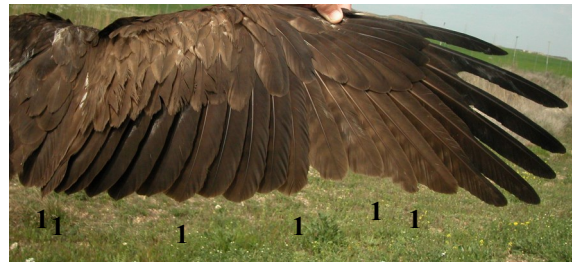
Black Kite. Spring. Adult: pattern of underwing coverts (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 3rd year: pattern of underwing coverts (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of underwing coverts (19-V).



Black Kite. Spring. 3rd year: pattern of wing (1 2nd year feathers) (08-IV).



Black Kite. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of wing (19-V).



Black Kite. Spring. Adult: pattern of wing (08-IV).



Black Kite. Summer. Adult (05-VII).

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Black Kite. Summer. 3rd year (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 2nd year (13-VII).



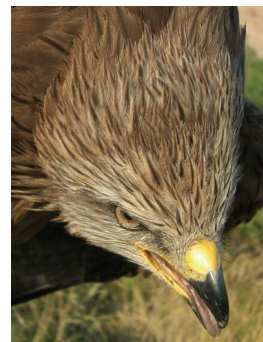
Black Kite. Summer. Juvenile (25-VII).



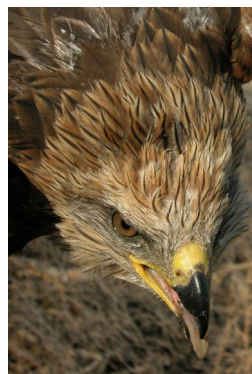
Black Kite. Summer. Head pattern and iris colour: top adult (05-VII); bottom 3rd year (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Head pattern and iris colour: top 2nd year (13-VII); bottom juvenile (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Crown pattern: left adult (05-VII); right 3rd year (22-VII).

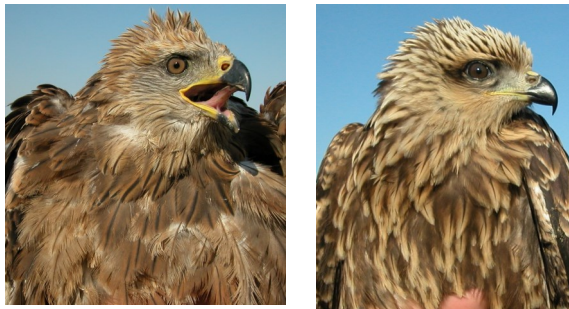


Black Kite. Summer. Crown pattern: left 2nd year (22-VII); right juvenile (25-VII).

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Black Kite. Summer. Breast pattern: left adult (05-VII); right 3rd year (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Breast pattern: left 2nd year (13-VII); right juvenile (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Upperpart pattern: left adult (05-VII); right 3rd year (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Upperpart pattern: left 2nd year (13-VII); right juvenile (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Tail pattern: left adult (05-VII); right 3rd year (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Tail pattern: left 2nd year (13-VII); right juvenile (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (03-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 3rd year: pattern of primary coverts (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of primary coverts (13-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of primary coverts (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Adult: pattern of primaries (03-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 3rd year: pattern of primaries (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of primaries (13-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Adult: pattern of wing covers and secondaries (03-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 3rd year: pattern of wing covers and secondaries (1 juvenile feather; 2 2nd year feather; 3 3rd year feather) (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of wing covers and secondaries (13-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of wing covers and secondaries (25-VII).

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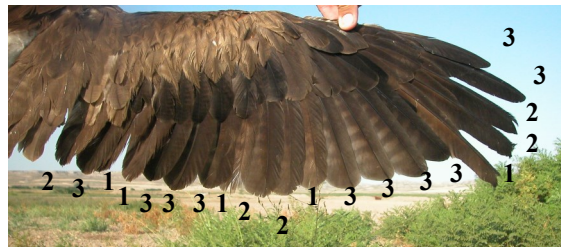
Black Kite. Summer. Adult: pattern of underwing coverts (03-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Adult: pattern of wing (03-VI).



Black Kite. Summer. 3rd year: pattern of underwing coverts (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 3rd year: pattern of wing (1 juvenile feather; 2 2nd year feather; 3 3rd year feather) (22-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of underwing coverts (13-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of underwing coverts (25-VII).



Black Kite. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of wing (13-VII).

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Black Kite. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of wing (25-VII).