

109 Griffon Vulture

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Griffon Vulture. Adult (10-VIII).

GRIFFON VULTURE (*Gyps fulvus*)

IDENTIFICATION

96-104 cm. Whitish unfeathered head and neck; brown buff plumage with darker wings and tail; bill and legs grey.



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of head.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable.

SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike. **Male** usually with smaller size than **female**, but there is so much overlap that it is not a valid characteristic for individual birds.

AGEING

5 age groups can be recognized (**CAUTION:** there are individual factors (different metabolism, food availability, date of birth, e.g.) causing that moult in a so big birds no always fit exactly the annual cycle described here):

Juvenile with pointed greater coverts; body feathers narrow and pointed; underparts with whitish mottled; dark bill; dark brown iris; buff ruff with pointed feathers; flight feathers with uniform colour and wear, without moult limits.

2nd year autumn/3rd year spring with admixed **juvenile** and moulted feathers on upperparts; 2-3 inner primaries, some secondaries and central tail feathers moulted; some wing coverts changed; moulted greater coverts with rounded tips; iris colour, ruff and underparts still **juvenile**.

3rd year autumn/4th year spring with ruff predominantly brown; bill with white tip; most of the wing coverts with adult pattern; flight feathers with three ages of mixed feathers; **juvenile** secondaries recognizable by their uniform brown undersides.

4th year autumn/5th year spring easily recognizable if still maintain some retained **juvenile** outermost primary or some secondary, which will be very worn; most of birds have moulted all **juvenile** flight feathers generally having the outermost primaries very fresh and showing immature bird characteristics in colour of iris, bill and ruff.

Adult with pale brown plumage; all wing coverts with rounded tips; greater coverts with broad pale edge; grey and white bill; white ruff; pale brown eye; underparts without white spotted; the old brown **adult** secondaries recognizable by their undersides with a dark patch on the tip.

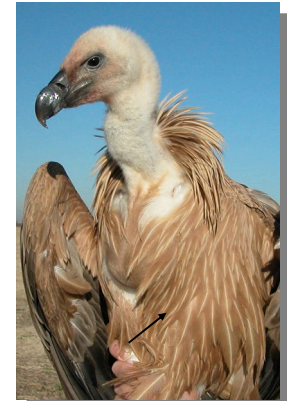
CAUTION: in all age classes, except **juveniles**, there will always be moult limits, so it is necessary to know if the old brown feathers have **juvenile** or **adult** pattern for a correct ageing. Coloration of bill, iris and ruff is not determinant to assign an age accurately since there is a lot of variation in time it takes to acquire the **adult** pattern.

109 Griffon Vulture

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Griffon Vulture. Ageing. Pattern of feathers on ruff and colour of iris and bill: top adult; bottom juvenile.



Griffon Vulture. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult; right juvenile.



Griffon Vulture. Ageing. Pattern of underpart of secondaries: left adult; right juvenile.



Griffon Vulture. Ageing. Pattern wing coverts: top adult; bottom juvenile.

MOULT

Partial **postbreeding** moult changing annually part of body feathers (usually feathers retained mantle) and part of wing coverts; flight feathers usually take several years to be renewed all, changing between three and five every year; moult is active between January and November. Duration of **postjuvenile** moult lasts between three and four years; most of the body feathers and some inner primaries, some secondary and central tail feathers are moulted in **2nd year**; the rest of primaries are moulted in **3rd year**, although sometimes primaries 8 to 10 and some central secondary are retained and changed in **4th year**; moult period is active between April and November.

109 Griffon Vulture

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PHENOLOGY

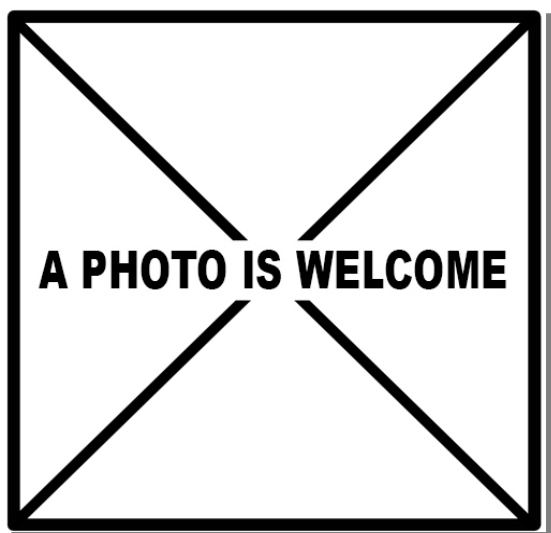
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

STATUS IN ARAGON

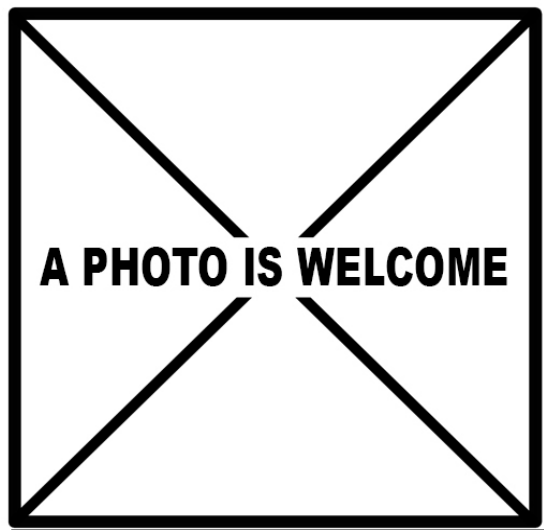
Resident, breeds in all mountainous areas of the Region; it is possible to find this species everywhere.



Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn (17-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn ().



Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn ().



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile (15-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of ruff, iris and bill (10-VIII).

109 Griffon Vulture

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Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of ruff, iris and bill (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of ruff, iris and bill (15-XI).



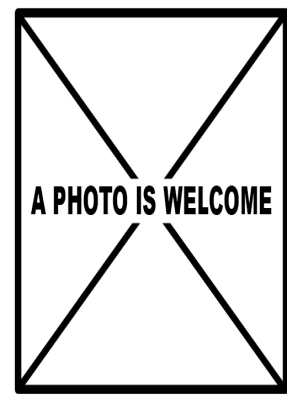
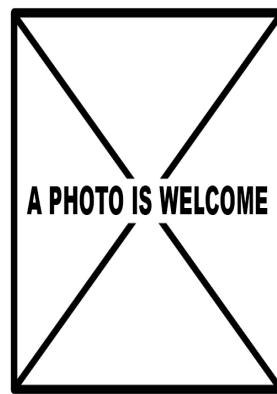
Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of ruff, iris and bill (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Breast pattern: left adult (10-VIII); right 4th year autumn (27-VIII).



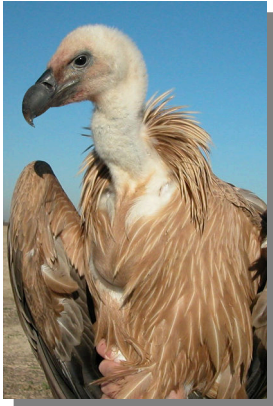
Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of ruff, iris and bill (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Breast pattern: left 3rd year autumn (24-XI); right 2nd year autumn (24-XI).

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Griffon Vulture. Breast pattern: juvenile (15-XI).



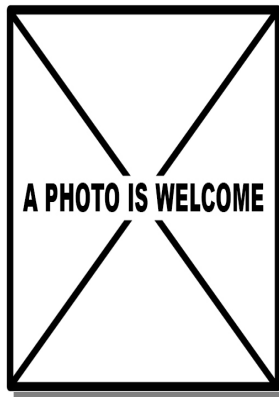
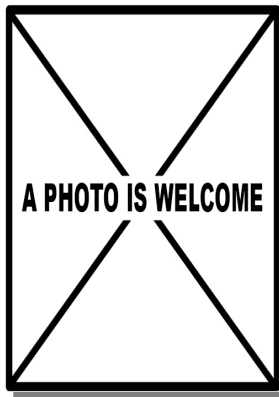
Griffon Vulture. Upperparts pattern: juvenile (27-VIII).



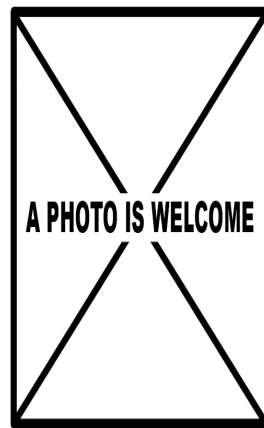
Griffon Vulture. Upperparts pattern: left adult (10-VIII); right 4th year autumn (27-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. Tail pattern: left adult (10-VIII); right 4th year autumn (27-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. Upperparts pattern: left 3rd year autumn (); right 2nd year autumn ().



Griffon Vulture. Tail pattern: left 3rd year autumn (); right 3rd year spring (10-VIII).

109 Griffon Vulture

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Griffon Vulture. Tail pattern: juvenile (27-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of greater coverts (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of greater coverts (10-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of greater coverts (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of greater coverts (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of greater coverts (15-XI).

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Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (10-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of primary coverts (15-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (27-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of underwing coverts (10-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (05-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts (24-XI).

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Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of underwing coverts (15-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of primaries (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of primaries (10-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of primaries (24-XI).

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Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primaries (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of secondaries (10-VIII).



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (15-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of secondaries (24-XI).

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Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of secondaries (24-XI).

Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (15-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Adult: pattern of wing (10-VIII).

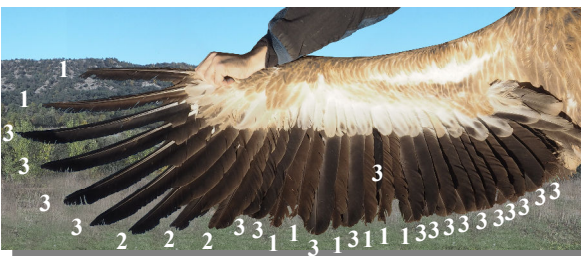
Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of secondaries (24-XI).

109 Griffon Vulture

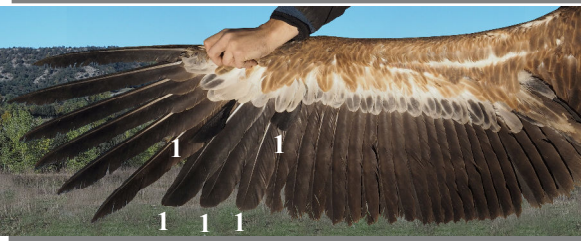
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Griffon Vulture. 4th year autumn: pattern of wing (1: juvenile feather; 2: 2nd year feathers; 3: 3rd year feathers; 4: 4th year feathers) (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 3rd year autumn: pattern of wing (1: juvenile feathers; 2: 2nd year feathers; 3: 3rd year feathers) (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. 2nd year autumn: pattern of wing /1: juvenile feathers) (24-XI).



Griffon Vulture. Juvenile: pattern of wing (15-XI).