

# 265 Common Cuckoo

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Cuckoo. Adult. Male (02-VI).

## COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*)

### IDENTIFICATION

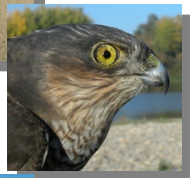
32-34 cm. **Adult** with grey head and upperparts; long tail with white spots on tip; some **females** have chestnut upperparts with reddish head and rump. **Juveniles** chestnut and strongly barred.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

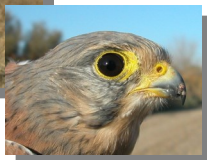
Size and long tail recall a **Sparrowhawk** or a **Kestrel**, both with curved bills.



Sparrowhawk



Kestrel



### SEXING

**Male** with slate grey nape, chin and throat extending well down breast; with clear demarcation line between grey breast and bars on belly; grey median and greater coverts always without buff spots. **Female** with two colour morphs; in **rufous morph** resembles a **juvenile** and is unmistakable; in **grey morph** very similar to **male**, but usually with rufous background colour under bars of breast and sides of neck, without a well defined line of separation; sometimes with rufous spots on grey median and greater coverts (**CAUTION: some females with grey morph are indistinguishable from males**). **Juveniles** cannot be sexed using plumage pattern.



Cuckoo. Sexing. Pattern of breast: top left male; top right female with grey morph; left female with rufous morph.



Cuckoo. Sexing. Pattern of wing coverts: top male/female without spots; bottom female with rufous spots (photo: Marlis Forcher).

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## AGEING

3 age groups can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with fresh plumage; variable plumage pattern going on upperparts from chestnut barred to uniform grey with white fringes; whitish fringes on wing coverts and flight feathers; secondaries and greater coverts barred or spotted chestnut; white patch on nape; grey iris.

**2nd year** indistinguishable if moult has been complete; if wing coverts or secondaries have been retained then with moult limit between barred and worn **juvenile** feathers and unbarred, longer and fresh feathers with **adult** pattern (**CAUTION:** in **juveniles** with barred weakly marked these feathers may be difficult to detect).

**Adult** without white fringes on wing coverts and flight feathers; secondaries without chestnut barred; whitout patch on nape; yellow iris.

**CAUTION:** some **adult** birds arrest their moult and have in spring two generations of secondaries distinguishable by different wear, but old feathers lack **juvenile** barred.



Cuckoo. Ageing. Pattern of secondaries: juvenile.

## MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** and **postjuvenile** moults, starting in wintering sites; **both age classes** can arrest their moult having then in spring two generations of flight feathers.

## PHENOLOGY

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

## STATUS IN ARAGON

Summer visitor. Widely distributed throughout the Region, absent from the highest areas of the Pyrenees and the most deforested zones of the Ebro Basin.



Cuckoo. Ageing. Pattern of iris: top adult; bottom juvenile.



Cuckoo. Ageing. Pattern of secondaries: adult



Cuckoo. Ageing. Pattern of secondaries: 2nd year (photo: Pere Josa)



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey morph (28-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey and rufous morph (18-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with rufous morph (05-V).



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Cuckoo. 2nd year. Male (28-V)



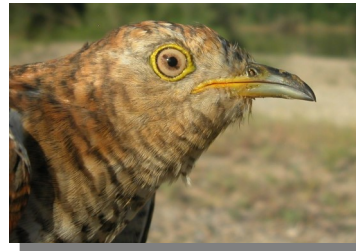
Cuckoo. 2nd year. Female ().



Cuckoo. Juvenile (21-VIII).



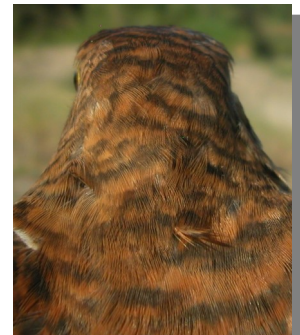
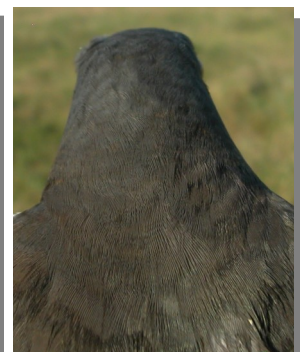
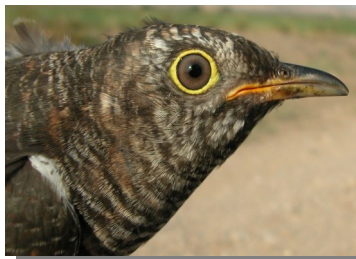
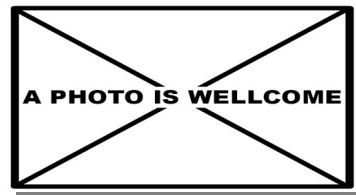
Cuckoo. Adult. Head pattern: top male (02-VI); middle female with grey morph (28-V); bottom female with grey and rufous morph (18-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Head pattern: female with rufous morph (05-V).



Cuckoo. Head pattern: top 2nd year male (28-V); middle 2nd year female (); bottom juvenile (21-VIII).

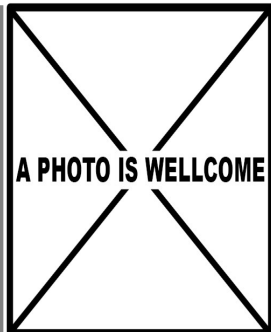


Cuckoo. Adult. Nape pattern: top left male (02-VI); top right female with grey morph (28-V); bottom left female with grey and rufous morph (18-V); bottom right female with rufous morph (05-V).



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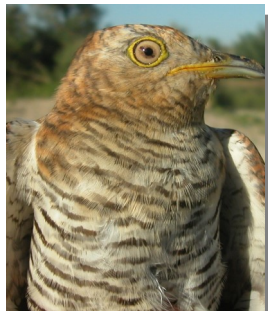
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Cuckoo. Nape pattern: top left 2nd year male (28-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (28-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. Adult. Breast pattern: top left male (02-VI); top right female with grey morph (28-V); bottom left female with grey and rufous morph (18-V); bottom right female with rufous morph (05-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Upperpart pattern: top left male (02-VI); top right female with grey morph (28-V); bottom left female with grey and rufous morph (18-V); bottom right female with rufous morph (05-V).

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Cuckoo. Upperpart pattern: top left 2nd year male (28-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. Tail pattern: top left 2nd year male (28-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. Adult. Tail pattern: top left male (02-VI); top right female with grey morph (28-V); left female with rufous morph (05-V).

Cuckoo. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (26-IV).

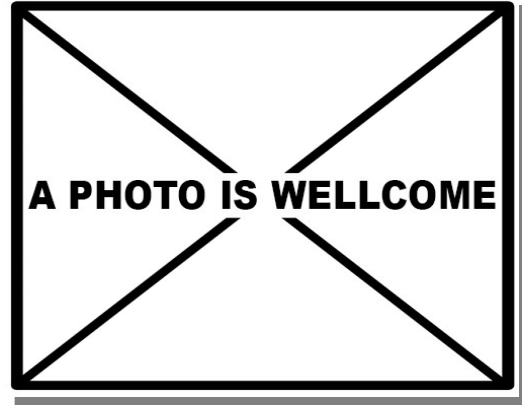


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Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey morph: pattern of primaries (28-V).



Cuckoo. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primaries (0).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with rufous morph: pattern of primaries (05-V).



Cuckoo. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primaries (28-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Male with complete moult: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (26-IV).



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Cuckoo. Adult. Male with arrested moult: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (12-IV).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with arrested moult: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (18-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey morph: pattern of wing coverts without spots and secondaries (28-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with rufous morph: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (05-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey morph: pattern of wing coverts with spots and secondaries (14-VI)  
(Photo: Guillermo López Zamora).



Cuckoo. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (28-V)



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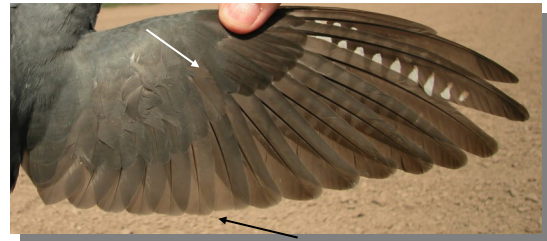
Cuckoo. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries ().



Cuckoo. Juvenile: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. Adult. Male with complete moult: pattern of wing (26-IV).



Cuckoo. Adult. Male with arrested moult: pattern of wing (12-IV).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey morph: pattern of wing without swpots on coverts (28-V).

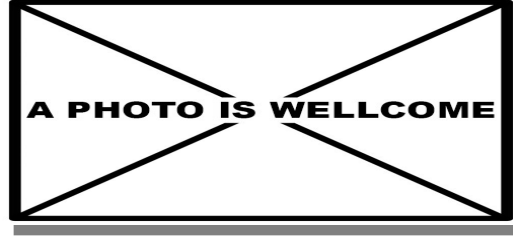
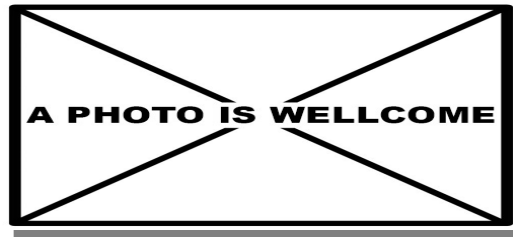


Cuckoo. Adult. Female with grey morph: pattern of wing with spots on coverts (14-VI) (Photo: Guillermo López Zamora).



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Cuckoo. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing ().

Cuckoo. Adult. Female with arrested moult: pattern of wing (18-V).



Cuckoo. Adult. Female with rufous morph: pattern of wing (05-V).

Cuckoo. Juvenile: pattern of wing (21-VIII).



Cuckoo. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (28-V).