



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Male (07-V).

### EUROPEAN BEE-EATER (*Merops apiaster*)

#### IDENTIFICATION

27-29 cm. Reddish chestnut crown and upper mantle; rump golden yellow; green tail and underparts; yellow throat and eyes covered by a black band; black and curved bill; reddish iris.



Bee-eater. Adult. Pattern of head and upperparts.



#### SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable.

#### SEXING

**Male** with central greater, median and lesser coverts rufous chestnut on both webs of the feather; chestnut reddish upperparts. **Female** without chestnut on wing or with only a little (usually confined to greater and median coverts); central greater coverts with chestnut only on outer webs which have greenish blue edge, inner webs green; chestnut green upperparts (**CAUTION:** some birds cannot be sexed due to colour overlap; in **summer**, after **postbreeding** moult, both sexes have greenish body feathers). Some extreme **juvenile** birds can be sexed: **male** with chestnut crown and nape; golden upperparts; central wing coverts and secondaries tinged chestnut. **Female** with greenish crown and nape; greenish upperparts; central wing coverts and secondaries dull green.



Bee-eater. Adult. Sexing. Pattern of wing coverts and secondaries: top male; bottom female.



Bee-eater. Juvenile. Sexing. Pattern of wing coverts and secondaries: top male; bottom female.

### AGEING

3 age groups can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with dull green feathers on nape and upperparts; all tail feathers with the same length, so the central pair without elongated tips; dark brown or red brown iris.

**2nd year** similar to **adults** (including elongated central tail feathers), but can be recognized by their retained **juvenile** primary coverts, which will be worn and bluish contrasting with the greenish neighbouring feathers; always all primaries with the same wear and colour.

**Adult** with chestnut feathers on nape and upperparts; central pair of tail feathers with well developed elongated tips; greenish primary coverts without contrast with neighbouring feathers; reddish iris; primaries of birds which started their moult in breeding areas with differences in wear and colour.



Bee-eater. Ageing. Colour of iris: top adult; bottom juvenile.



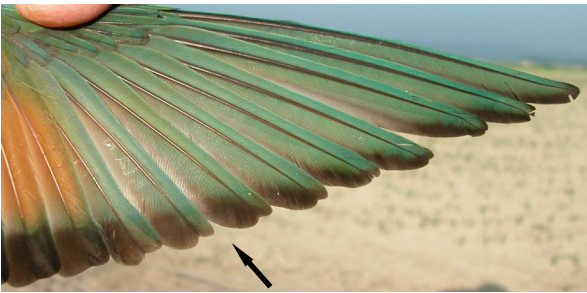
Bee-eater. Ageing. Pattern of upperparts: left adult; right juvenile.



Bee-eater. Ageing. Length of central tail feathers: left adult; right juvenile.



Bee-eater. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: top adult; bottom 2nd year.



Bee-eater. Ageing. Pattern of primaries: top adult with suspended moult; middle adult with no suspended moult; bottom 2nd year.

**MOULT**

Complete **postbreeding** moult, starting in July with body feathers; some birds change some inner primaries in their breeding areas, suspended before migration and then finished in wintering sites; others do not start wing moult until arriving in winter quarters. **Postjuvenile** moult is almost complete but all **juvenile** primary coverts remain unmoulted; flight feathers are never moulted in breeding areas. Both age classes have a **prebreeding** moult confined to body and wing coverts acquiring breeding plumage.

**PHENOLOGY**

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

- Summer visitor
- Resident
- Wintering
- On passage



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Female (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Male (07-V).

**08400** European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)



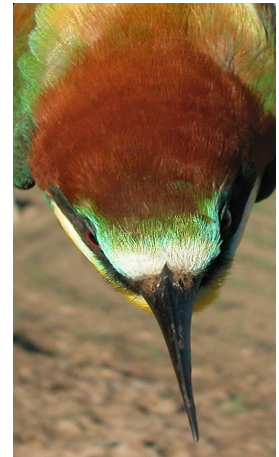
Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Female (07-V).



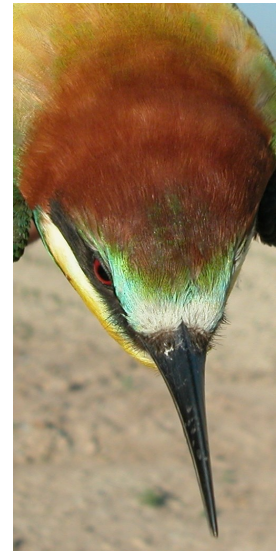
Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Head pattern: top male (07-V); bottom female (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Head pattern: top male (07-V); bottom female (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (07-V); right female (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Crown pattern: left male (07-V); right female (07-V).

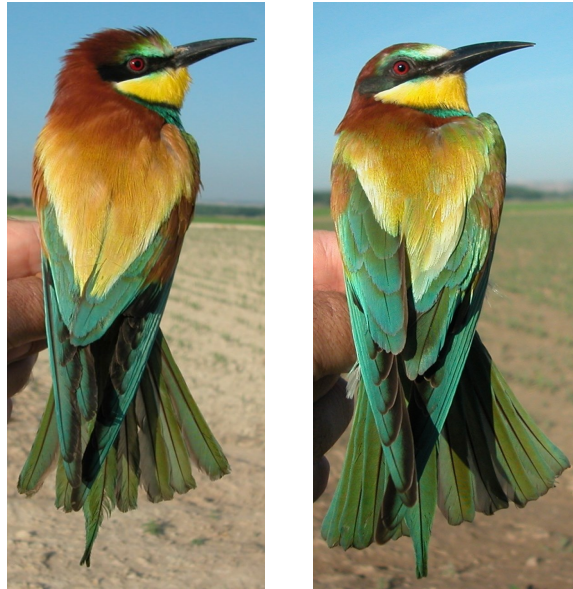


Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (07-V); right female (09-V).

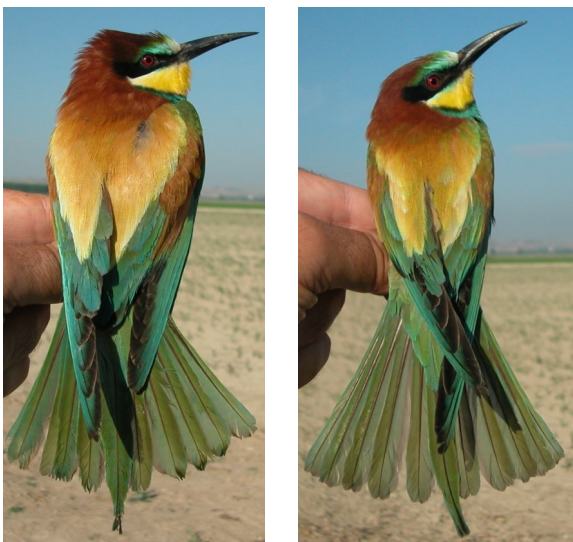
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Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Breast pattern: left male (07-V); right female (07-V).



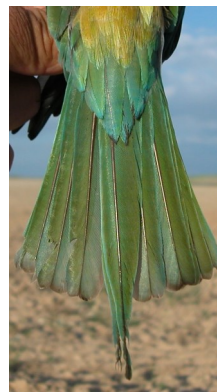
Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (07-V); right female (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Upperpart pattern: left male (07-V); right female (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (07-V); right female (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Tail pattern: left male (07-V); right female (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of primary covers (07-V).



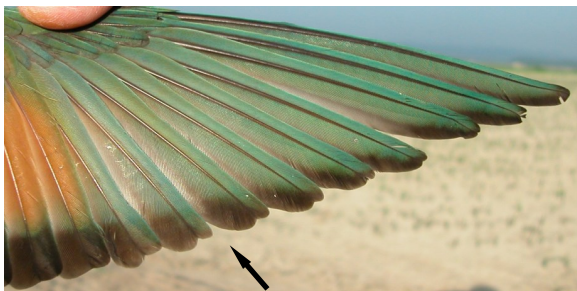
Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of primary covers (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primary coverts (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primary coverts (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries in bird with suspended moult (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries in bird without suspended moult (09-V).



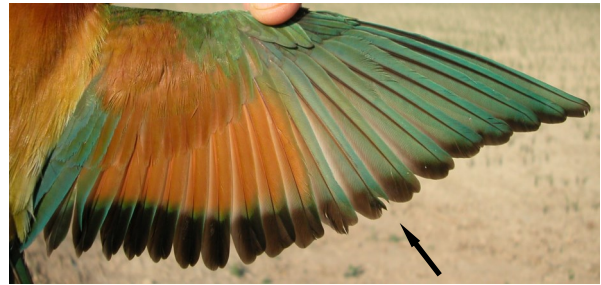
Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primaries (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primaries (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of secondaries (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing in bird with suspended moult (07-V).

Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of secondaries (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing in bird without suspended moult (09-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of secondaries (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of secondaries (07-V).



Bee-eater. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (07-V).

**08400** European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Male (20-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Male (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Male (16-VIII).



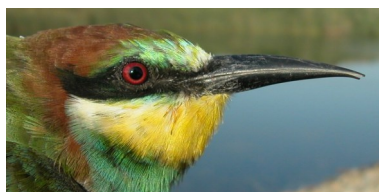
Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Head pattern: top male (20-VIII); bottom female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Head pattern: top male (16-VIII); bottom female (16-VIII).

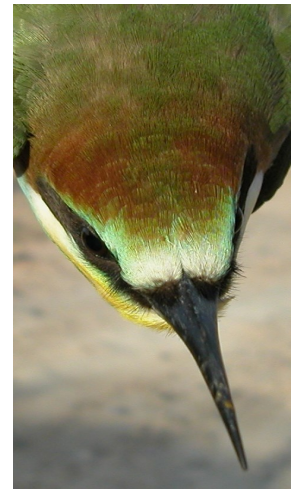




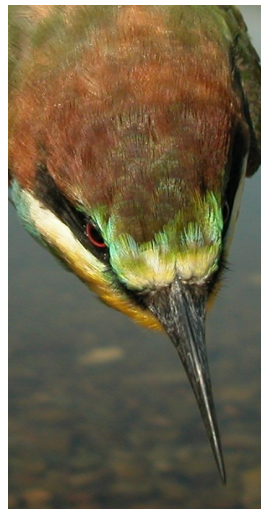
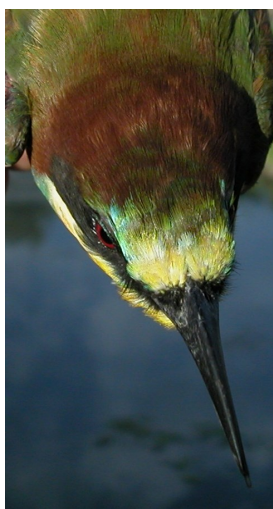
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Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Head pattern: top male (16-VIII); bottom female (16-VIII).



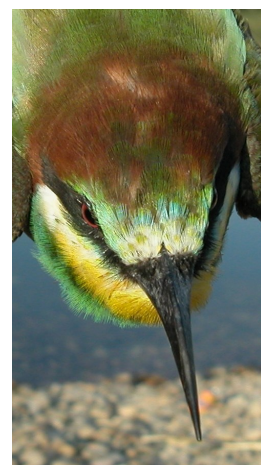
Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Crown pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (20-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (20-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Crown pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



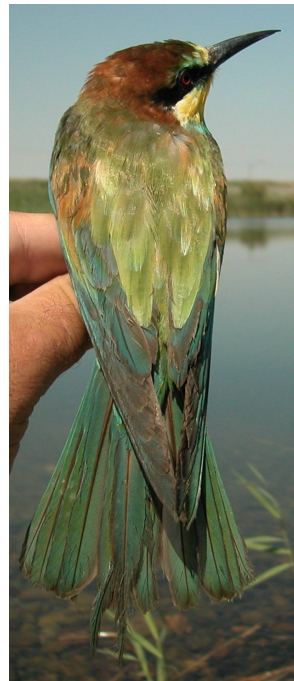
Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Breast pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Upperparts pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (20-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Upperparts pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (20-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Tail pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Tail pattern: left male (16-VIII); right female (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Male: pattern of primary coverts (20-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Female: pattern of primary coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primary coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primary coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Male: pattern of primary coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Female: pattern of primary coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (20-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primaries (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primaries (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Male: pattern of primaries (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Female: pattern of primaries (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Male: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts (20-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Female: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Male: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Female: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts (16-VIII).



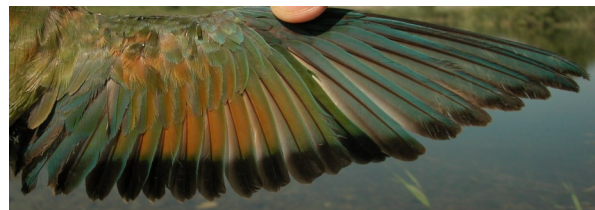
Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Male: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts (16-VIII).



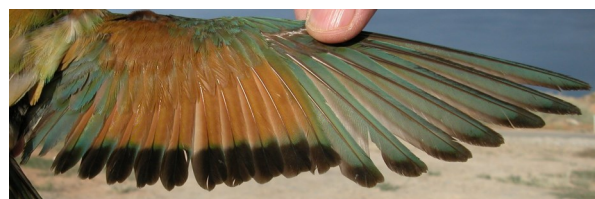
Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Female: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (20-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing (16-VIII).



Bee-eater. Summer. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (16-VIII).