

**10170 Western Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*)



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male (22-IV).

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla flava*)

**IDENTIFICATION**

16-17 cm. Yellowish underparts; brown-olive upperparts; long tail, brown with white edges; dark legs. In subspecies *iberiae*, **male** in **breeding** plumage with grey head and white supercilium. **Females** and **juveniles** are duller.



Yellow Wagtail. Pattern of upperparts and legs.



**SIMILAR SPECIES**

Recalls a **Grey Wagtail**, but this species has grey upperparts and pale legs.



Grey Wagtail. Winter

**SEXING**

In **breeding** plumage, **male** with grey-bluish crown; white supercilium; underparts deep yellow. **Female** with grey-brown crown; dull white supercilium; underparts dull yellow with some dark spots on breast. After **postbreeding** moult, **male** with bright yellow underparts and grey bluish crown; **female** with throat and breast whitish buff; dull yellow underparts. After **postjuvenile** moult, **1st year male** is very similar to **adult female** so it is necessary first a correct ageing; **1st year males** have underparts more yellow than **1st year females**, which have whitish underparts. **CAUTION:** last hatched **males** moult later and resemble **females**.



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of head: top male; bottom female.



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**AGEING**

4 types of age can be recognized:

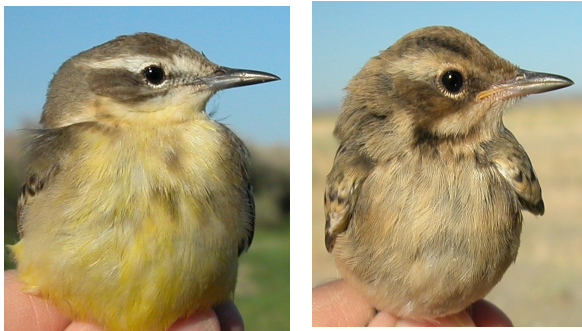
**Juvenile** with fresh plumage; dull colours; dark narrow collar on upper breast.

**1st year autumn** with moult limit between moulted fresh greater covers and tertials and worn whitish **juvenile** retained; if all greater coverts are unmoulted limit is between median and lesser coverts; if all greater coverts have been moulted limit is between tertials; tail feathers worn; sometimes without yellow.

**2nd year spring** similar to **adult**, so ageing is only possible in birds which retaining **juvenile** greater coverts so little worn that they show the white edges on the tip.

**Adult** in **autumn** without moult limits; with fresh flight feathers and greater coverts with olive yellowish edges and tips; in **spring** with greater coverts with diffuse edges and not white.

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



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Ageing. Pattern of head and breast: left adult female; right juvenile.



Y e l l o w Wagtail. Autumn. Ageing and sexing. Adult. Pattern of head: top male; bottom female.



Y e l l o w Wagtail. Autumn. Ageing and sexing. 1st year. Pattern of head: top male; bottom female.



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Ageing and sexing. Adult. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male; right female.



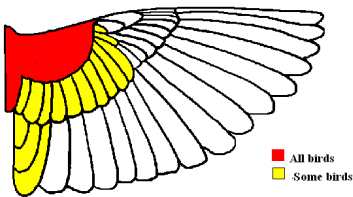
Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Ageing and sexing. 1st year. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male; right female.



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**MOULT**

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished late September; some birds can suspend the moult and finish it in their wintering quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult including body feathers and lesser and median coverts; some birds can change some or all greater coverts and some or all tertials; usually finished early September. Between February and April, both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult acquiring breeding plumage, changing all or some inner greater coverts, tertials and tail feathers.



Yellow Wagtail. Extent of postjuvenile moult.

■ All birds  
■ Some birds

**PHENOLOGY**

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

■ Summer visitor    ■ Resident  
■ Wintering        ■ On passage



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male (02-IV)



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female (02-IV)



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female (26-IV)



Yellow Wagtail. Juvenile (30-VII)

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Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Head pattern: top male (26-IV); bottom female (26-IV).



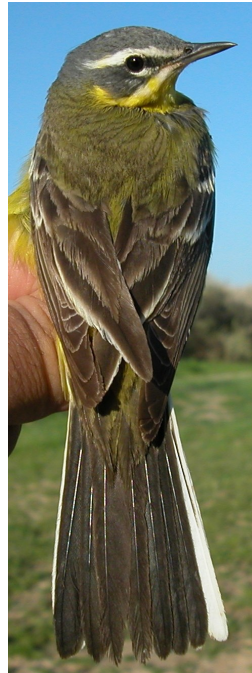
Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Head pattern: top 2nd year male (02-IV); middle 2nd year female (02-IV); bottom juvenile (30-VII).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (26-IV).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (02-IV); top right 2nd year female (02-IV); left juvenile (30-VII).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (26-IV).



**10170 Western Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*)



Yellow Wagtail. Spring.  
Upperparts pattern: top  
left 2nd year male (02-IV);  
top right 2nd year female  
(02-IV); left juvenile (30-  
VII).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring.  
Underparts pattern: top  
left 2nd year male (02-IV);  
top right 2nd year female  
(02-IV); left juvenile (30-  
VII).

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Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Underparts pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (26-IV).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Pattern of undertail coverts: top left 2nd year male (02-IV); top right 2nd year female (02-IV); left juvenile (30-VII).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male (26-IV); right female (26-IV).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (02-IV).





Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (22-IV).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (22-IV).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (02-IV).



Yellow Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing (30-VII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Male (01-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Female (14-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Male (14-XI).



**10170 Western Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*)



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Female (14-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Head pattern: top male (14-IX); bottom female (01-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Head pattern: top male (01-IX); bottom female (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (01-IX); right female (14-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Breast pattern: left male (01-IX); right female (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male (01-IX); right female (27-VIII).





Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male (01-IX); right female (01-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Upperparts pattern: left male (27-VIII); right female (27-VIII).



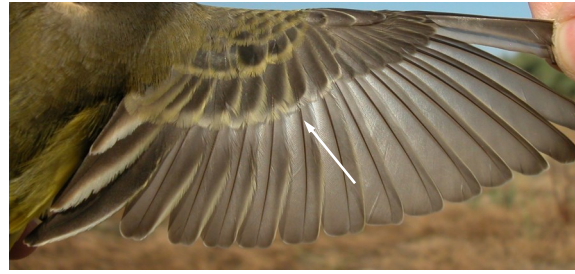
Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (01-IX); right female (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Underparts pattern: left male (01-IX); right female (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Underparts pattern: left male (14-IX); right female (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Male: pattern of wing (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. 1st year. Female: pattern of wing (27-VIII).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (01-IX).



Yellow Wagtail. Autumn. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (27-VIII).