

# 318 Grey Wagtail

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Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male (27-IV).

## GREY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*)

### IDENTIFICATION

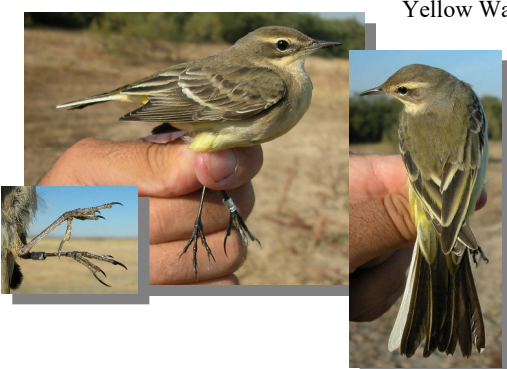
17-18 cm. Grey upperparts; white and yellow underparts. **Male** in **breeding** plumage with black bib and deep yellow underparts; **female** very similar but with blackish bib; pale legs.



Grey Wagtail. Pattern of upperparts and legs.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls a **Yellow Wagtail**, which has yellow greenish upperparts and dark legs.



Yellow Wagtail

### SEXING

In **spring**, with **breeding** plumage, **adult male** and few **2nd year males** with black bib (sometimes tipped whitish); blackish lores; usually with forehead and crown grey, with some feathers tipped green. **Adult female** may have white throat, sometimes with a blackish tinge, or black throat with a whitish mottling; greyish lores; forehead and crown green-grey; **2nd year male** usually with a white mottled on throat similar to **adult female**; **2nd year female** always with whitish throat (**CAUTION:** some **females** have black throat like **adult males** and few **2nd year males** may have whitish throat similar to **adult females**). In **winter**, although **males** tend to be more yellow than **females**, both sexes are so similar and the overlap is so great that a safely sexing is not possible using plumage pattern. **Juveniles** cannot be sexed.

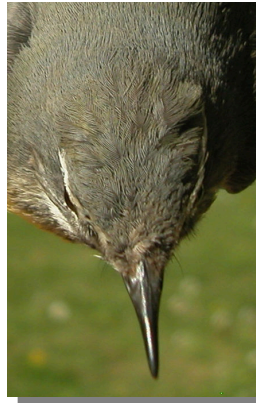
**NOTE:** due to variability, sexing is very complicated using only plumage characteristics, so techniques such checking the brood patch or cloacal protuberance can often be a decisive help. Sex of **2nd year** birds can be determined only confirming before the age using the study of moult.



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of head and throat: top male; middle female with dark throat; bottom female with pale throat.

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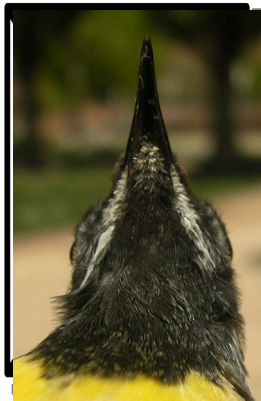
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Grey Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of crown: left male; right female.



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Adult. Pattern of throat: top left male; top right female with dark throat; left female with pale throat.



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Pattern of throat: left male; right female.

## AGEING

4 age groups can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with fresh plumage; underparts buff-white; base of bill pale.

**1st year autumn/2nd year winter** with moult limit between moulted fresh inner greater coverts and worn paler outer **juvenile** retained; if none greater covert has been moulted then moult limit is between lesser and median wing coverts; if all greater coverts have been moulted then moult limit may be within tertials, within alula feathers or tail (**CAUTION:** the inner greater coverts have a different pattern and simulate a moult limit); flight feathers will be always **juvenile** and more decolored than in **adults**.

**2nd year spring** only in birds with wing with three feather generations; flight feathers decolored brown and tail, if unmoulted, quite worn.

**Adult** with yellow underparts; black bill. In **autumn** without moult limits on wing; in **spring**, after **prebreeding** moult, have two ages of feathers (**CAUTION:** the innermost greater coverts have a different pattern and simulate a moult limit); flight feathers dark and tail quite fresh. **CAUTION:** after **prebreeding** moult ageing is not always possible; birds with two generations of feathers may be **adult** or **2nd year** birds.



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Ageing. Pattern of head: top female with pale throat; bottom juvenile.





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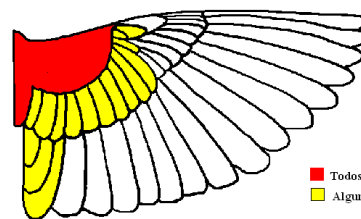
Grey Wagtail. Spring. Ageing. Limit of moult on greater coverts: top adult; middle 2nd year; bottom juvenile.



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Ageing. Limit of moult on greater coverts: top adult; bottom 1st year.

## MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in September. Partial **postjuvenile** moult involving body feathers and lesser and median coverts; there are birds moulting none, some inner or all greater coverts, none to all tertials and often some tail feathers; usually finished in September. Both age classes have a **prebreeding** moult acquiring **breeding** plumage and changing some inner greater coverts, none to all tertials and some tail feathers.



Grey Wagtail.  
Extent of  
postjuvenile  
moult.

■ Todos los ejemplares  
■ Algunos ejemplares

## PHENOLOGY

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

## STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident, breeds in rivers from mountainous areas; widespread in winter.



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female with dark throat (27-IV).

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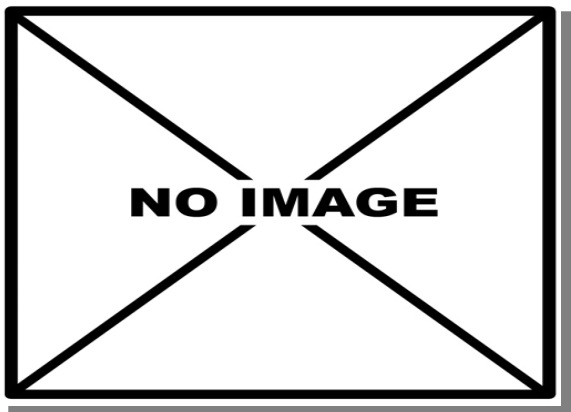
Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female with pale throat (05-V).



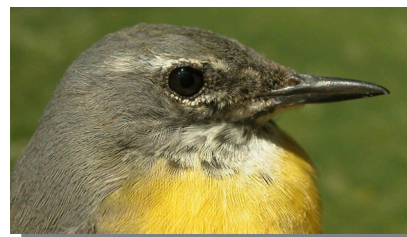
Grey Wagtail. Juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male (05-V).



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female ().



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of head: top male (27-IV); middle female with dark throat (27-IV); bottom female with pale throat (05-V).

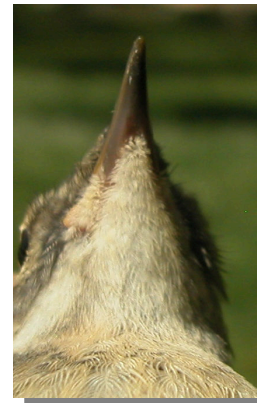
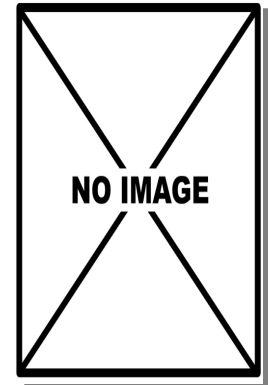
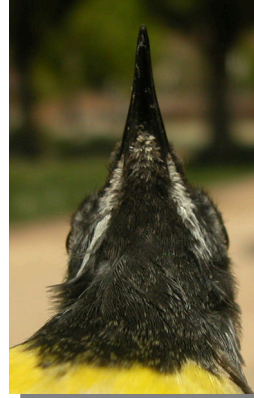
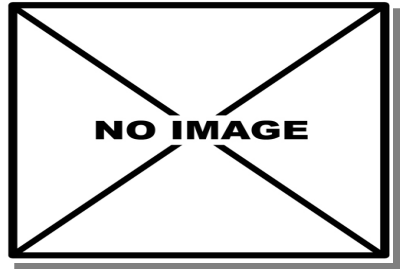


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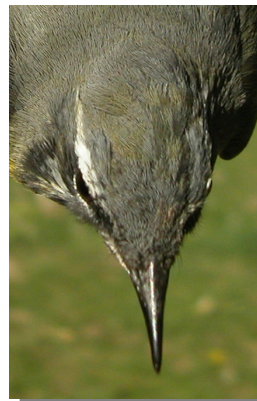
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Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of head: top 2nd year male (05-V); middle 2nd year female (); bottom juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Pattern of throat: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)

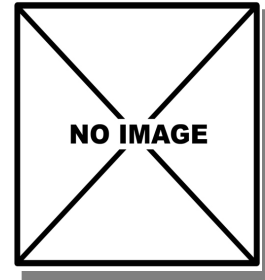
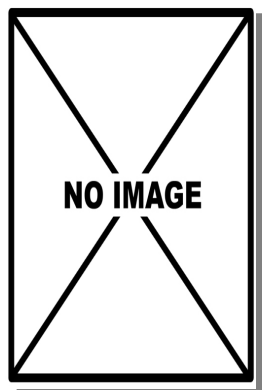
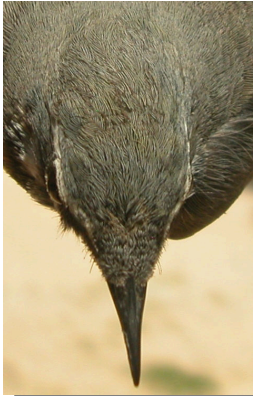


Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of throat: top left male (27-IV); top right female with dark throat (27-IV); left female with pale throat (05-V).

Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (27-IV); right female (27-IV).

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Grey Wagtail. Spring. Crown pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: top left male (27-IV); top right female with dark throat (27-IV); left female with pale throat (05-V).

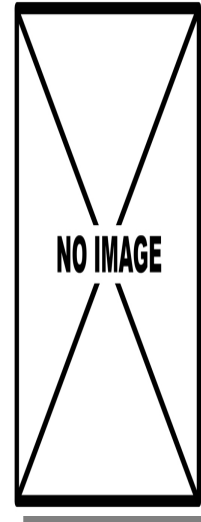
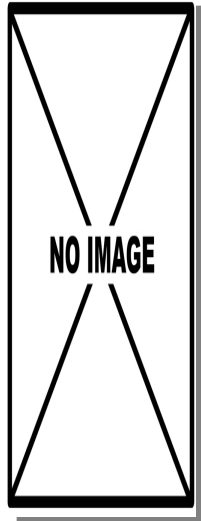
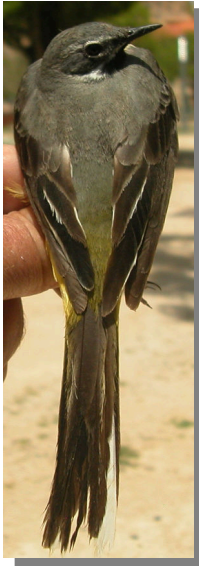


Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (27-IV); right female (27-IV).



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Grey Wagtail. Spring. Upperpart pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Underpart pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



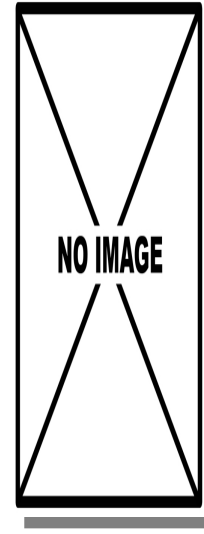
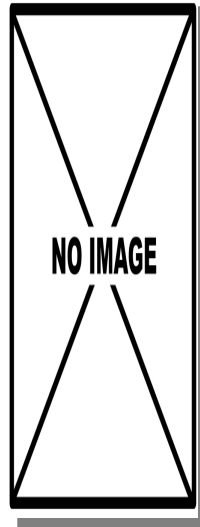
Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Underpart pattern: left male (27-IV); right female (27-IV).



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (27-IV); right female (27-IV).

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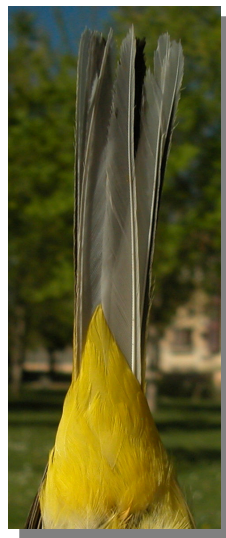
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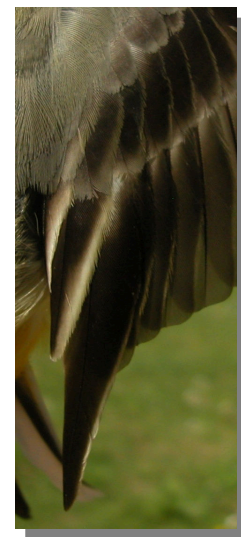
Grey Wagtail. Spring. Tail pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Pattern of undertail coverts: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of undertail coverts: left male (27-IV); right female (27-IV).

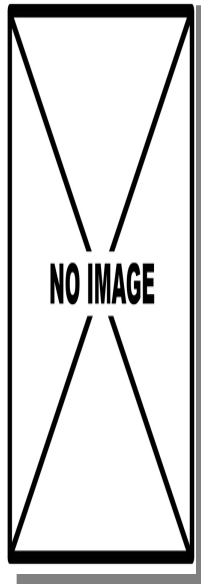


Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of tertials: left male (27-IV); right female (27-IV).

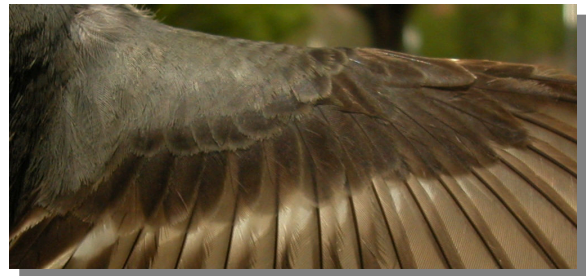


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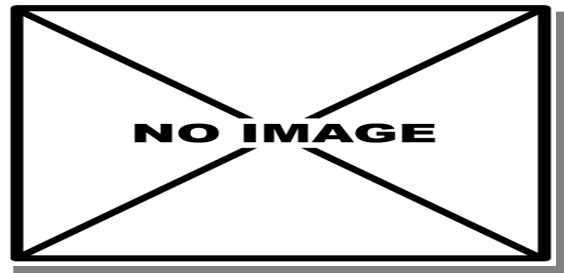
Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing coverts (27-IV).



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing coverts (05-V).



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Pattern of tertials: top left 2nd year male (05-V); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing coverts ().



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing coverts (27-IV).



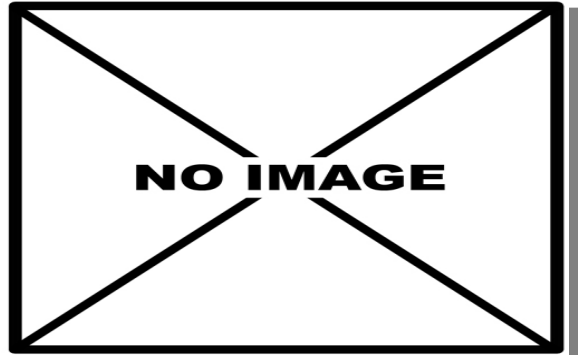
Grey Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing coverts (05-V).

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Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (27-IV).



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing ().



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (27-IV).



Grey Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing (05-V)



Grey Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (05-V).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Adult (08-XII).



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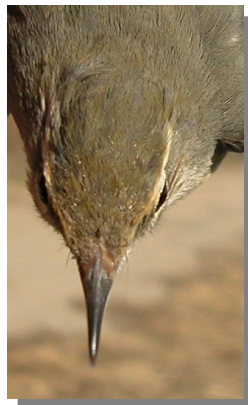
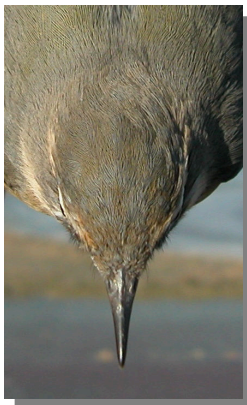
Grey Wagtail. Winter. 2nd year (02-II).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Breast pattern: top adult (08-XII); bottom 2nd year (02-II).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Head pattern: top adult (08-XII); bottom 2nd year (02-II).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Crown pattern: left adult (08-XII); right 2nd year (02-II).

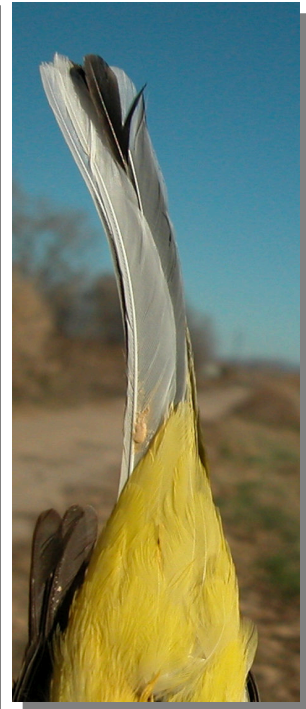


Grey Wagtail. Winter. Upperpart pattern: left adult (08-XII); right 2nd year (02-II).



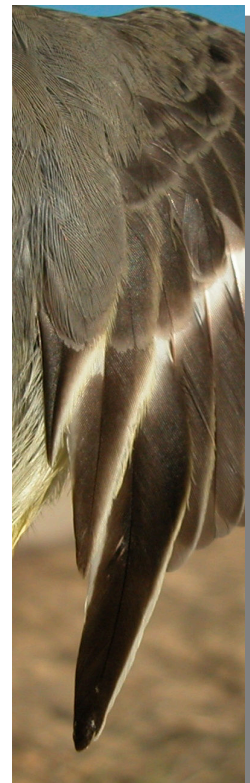
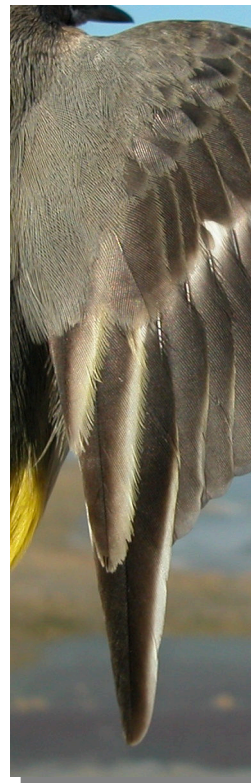
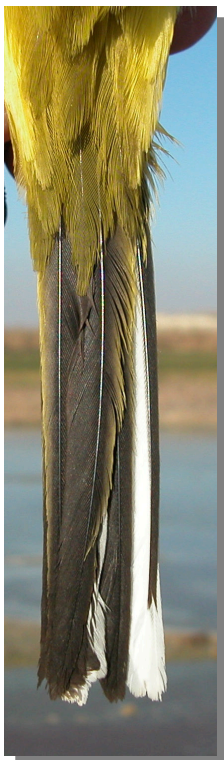
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Grey Wagtail. Winter. Underpart pattern: left adult (08-XII); right 2nd year (02-II).

Grey Wagtail. Winter. Pattern of undertail coverts: left adult (08-XII); right 2nd year (02-II).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Tail pattern: left adult (08-XII); right 2nd year (02-II).

Grey Wagtail. Winter. Pattern of tertials: left adult (08-XII); right 2nd year (02-II).



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Grey Wagtail. Winter. Adult; pattern of wing coverts (08-XII).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. 2nd year; pattern of wing coverts (02-II).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. Adult; pattern of wing (08-XII).



Grey Wagtail. Winter. 2nd year; pattern of wing (02-II).