

# 319 White Wagtail

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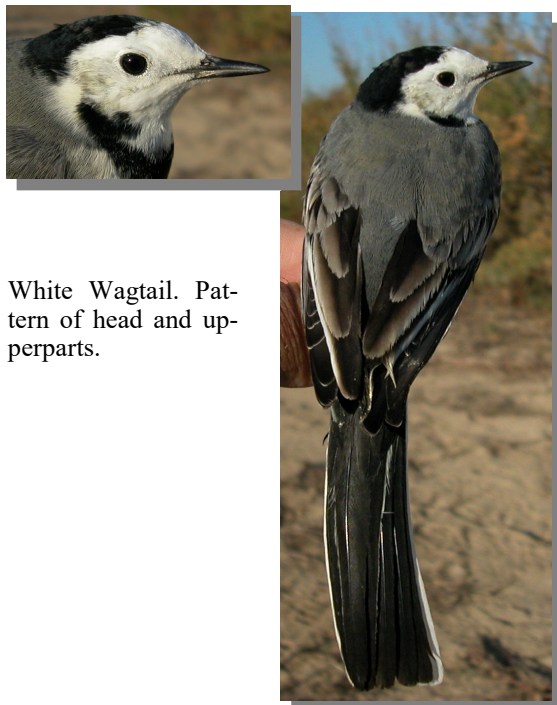


White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male (30-IV).

## WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*)

### IDENTIFICATION

16-19 cm. Plumage grey, white and black; long tail black and white. In **breeding** plumage, black crown and white forehead; black bib and breast. In **winter**, grey crown and white throat with a dark band only on breast.



White Wagtail. Pattern of head and upperparts.

### SEXING/AGEING

In **Spring**, with **breeding** plumage, **adult male** with pure black and white colours on head; black on crown reaching nape; black throat almost always without white feathers admixed; wing coverts with a large white patch; with two ages of feathers on wing.

**Adult female** with black on crown but with smaller extension than **male**; sometimes with pale feathers admixed in black throat; wing coverts with a small white patch; with two ages of feathers on wing.

**2nd year male** very similar to **adult female** but with three ages of feathers on wing if some **juvenile** feathers have been retained; moulted wing coverts with a large white patch.

**2nd year female** usually with crown and nape grey, with little or no black; chin and throat black with white traces; with three ages of feathers on wing if some **juvenile** feathers have been retained; moulted wing coverts with a small white patch.

**Juvenile** with very fresh plumage; head largely dull greyish; grey-brown breast band; chin whitish tinged buff. **Juveniles** cannot be sexed using plumage pattern.

In **autumn**, **adult male** with a lot of pure white on forehead; crown and nape with an extensive black colour mixed with grey; wing coverts with a large white patch; with only one age of very fresh feathers on wing; flight feathers deep grey.

**Adult female** usually with grey forehead; crown and nape usually grey without black or with hidden black traces; white face more tinged cream-yellow than **male**; wing coverts with a small white patch; with only one age of fresh feathers on wing; flight feathers deep grey.

**1st year male** with crown and nape grey tinged black, sometimes with white on forehead; with two ages of feathers on wing; moult limit between moulted fresh greater coverts, with dark centre, and pale worn **juvenile** retained; if all greater coverts are unmoulted or all have been moulted, check then **juvenile** brownish flight feathers; moulted wing coverts with a large white patch.

**1st year female** with crown and nape olive grey; forehead greyish or whitish tinged olive; with two ages of feathers on wing; moult strategy similar to **1st year male**; moulted wing coverts with a small white patch; with **juvenile** brownish flight feathers.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

319 White Wagtail

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



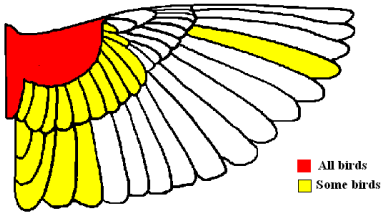
White Wagtail. Ageing. Pattern of head and breast: left adult; right juvenile.

MOULT

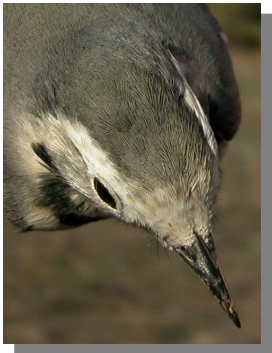
Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in September. Partial **postjuvenile** moult including body feathers and lesser and median coverts; there are birds moulting none, some or all greater coverts; some birds extend their moult to tertials, tail feathers and some flight feathers; usually finished early October. Between February and April, both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult acquiring the breeding plumage, changing a variable number of median and inner greater coverts, tertials and tail feathers.



White Wagtail. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of nape: left male; right female.



White Wagtail. Extent of postjuvenile moult.



White Wagtail. Autumn. Sexing. Pattern of crown: top left adult male; top right 1st year male; left female.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident. Widely distributed throughout the Region with contribution of wintering European birds.



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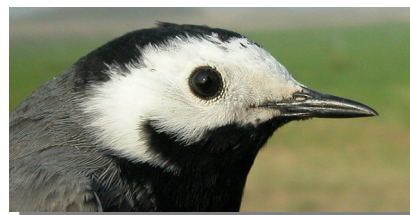
White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile (10-VIII).



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male (23-IV).



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Head pattern: top male (30-IV); bottom female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female (23-V).



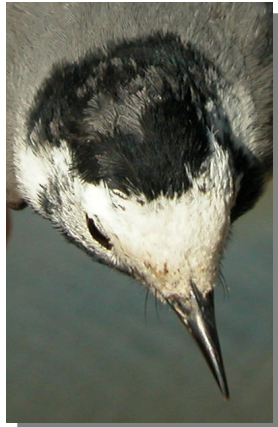
White Wagtail. Spring. Head pattern: top 2nd year male (23-IV); middle 2nd year female (23-V); bottom juvenile (08-VIII)



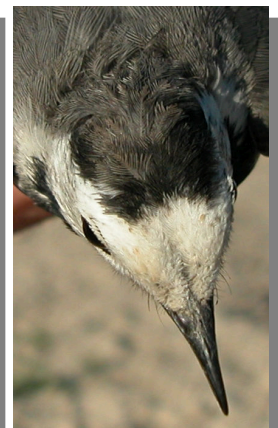
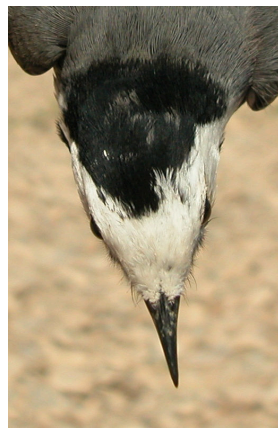


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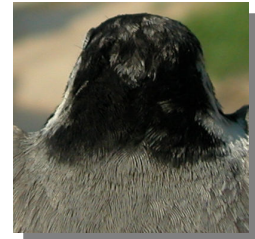
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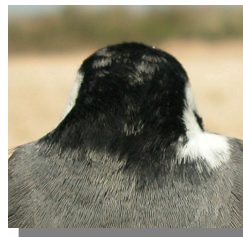
White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Pattern of crown and forehead: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Pattern of crown and forehead: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Nape pattern: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)



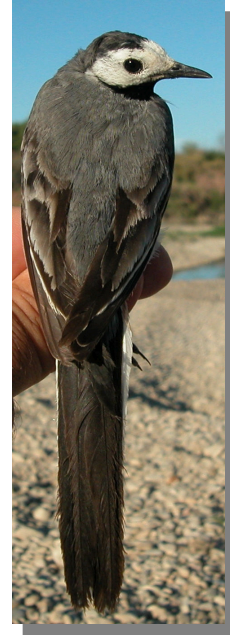
White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).

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White Wagtail.  
Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (30-IV); right female (06-V).



White Wagtail.  
Spring. Upperparts pattern: top left 2nd year male (23-IV); top right 2nd year female (23-V); left juvenile (08-VIII)



White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing with two ages of feathers (1 postbreeding, 2 prebreeding) (30-IV).



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White Wagtail. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing with two ages of feathers (1 postbreeding, 2 prebreeding) (06-V).



White Wagtail. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing (15-III).



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing with three ages of feathers (1 juvenile, 2 postjuvenile, 3 prebreeding) (23-IV).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Male (30-X).



White Wagtail. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing with two ages of feathers (1 juvenile, 3 prebreeding) (23-V).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Female (21-X).



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White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Male (30-X).



White Wagtail.  
Winter.  
1st year.  
Head  
pattern:  
top male  
(30-X);  
bottom  
female  
(21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Pattern of forehead and crown: left male (21-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail.  
Winter.  
Adult.  
Head  
pattern:  
top male  
(30-X);  
bottom  
female  
(21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Pattern of forehead and crown: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).

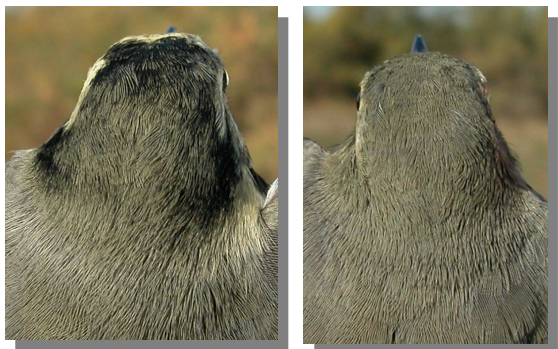


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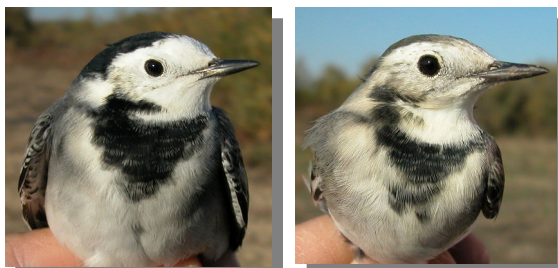
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White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Nape pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Pattern of breast and throat: left male (21-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Pattern of breast and throat: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Upperparts pattern: left male (30-X); right female (21-X).



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White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Male: pattern of wing (21-X).



White Wagtail. Winter. 1st year. Female: pattern of wing (21-X).