

**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Male (16-IV).

**WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*)

**IDENTIFICATION**

12-13 cm. Brown upperparts, spotted dark; head with white supercilium, white in **male**, yellowish in **female**, brown wing, with white patch on inner coverts; dark tail with white base.



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Pattern of head of male (top) and female (bottom) and tail.



Whinchat. Juvenile. Pattern of head and tail (Photos: Ottenby Bird Observatory).

**SIMILAR SPECIES**

Similar to **female** and **juveniles Stonechat**, without white supercilium and lacks white patch on base of the tail feathers.



Stonechat. Female



Stonechat. Juvenile.



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**SEXING**

In **breeding** plumage, **male** with brown-black ear-coverts; pure white supercilium; tail feathers with a distinct separation between white base and dark tip; without dark spots on breast; one or more inner median coverts and one or two inner greater coverts pure white. **Female** with brownish ear-coverts; buff whitish supercilium; tail feathers with a diffuse separation between white base and dark tip; most of birds (but not all) with dark spots on breast; inner median and greater coverts never completely white, often edged or tipped white. In **autumn**, both sexes with quite similar plumage but can be sexed at any age by pattern of inner greater coverts and tail: **male** with one or a few inner median coverts all white (**CAUTION**: sometimes only white edged); 3-5 inner greater coverts much white basally. **Female** with inner median coverts never all white; inner greater coverts less white basally or without white; tail pattern like in **breeding** plumage.

(**CAUTION**: some birds have intermediate wing and tail pattern and cannot be sexed).



Whinchat. Sexing. Pattern of tail feathers: left male; right female.



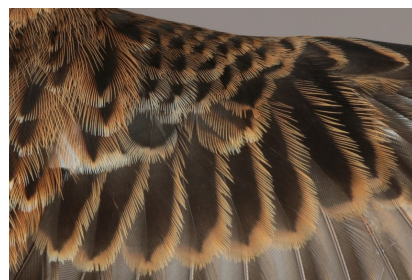
Whinchat. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of head: top male; bottom female.



Whinchat. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of wing coverts: top male; bottom female.



Whinchat. Spring. Sexing. Pattern of breast: left male; right female.



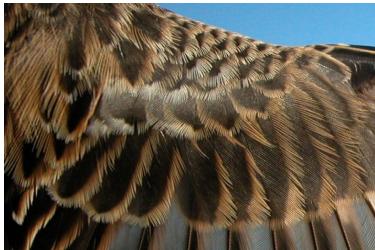
Whinchat. Juvenile. Sexing. Pattern of wing coverts: top male; bottom female (Photos: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Autumn. Sexing. Pattern of wing coverts: top male; bottom female.



Whinchat. Ageing. Pattern of head: top adult female; bottom juvenile (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



**AGEING**

5 types of age can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with fresh plumage; inside of upper mandible pinkish or yellow.

**1st year autumn** with moult limit within darker moulted inner greater coverts and paler retained **juvenile** outer (**CAUTION:** if none greater covert moulted, then limit is within median coverts); iris colour dark grey; pale colour inside of upper mandible. **Male** with moulted inner median coverts almost all white; inner greater coverts buff-white but sometimes limited to shaft streak. **Female** with median and greater coverts without white or only at base.

**Adult in autumn** without moult limits on wing; iris colour brownish to clear brown; dark colour inside of upper mandible. **Male** with one or more inner median coverts completely white. **Female** sometimes with some white on inner median coverts but then not completely white.

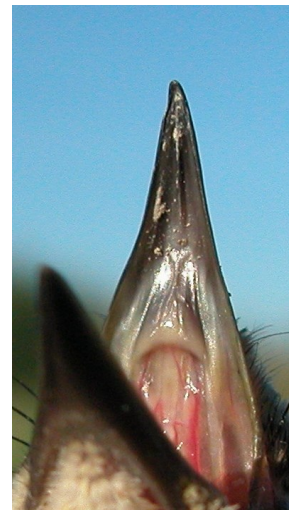
**2nd year spring** with worn flight feathers; iris still grey with only a trace of brown; some birds keep pale colour inside of upper mandible; both **adult** and **2nd year** have wings with two generations of feathers due to **prebreeding** moult, but in **2nd year males** moult contrast between moulted inner greater coverts and **juvenile** retained outer and primary coverts is very distinct (**CAUTION:** in **females** this moult limit is very difficult to see).

**Adult in spring** with flight feathers slightly worn; both sexes have moult limit between inner greater coverts and outer and primary coverts but is only slight in **males** and very difficult to see in **females**.

**CAUTION:** ageing **females** in **spring** is sometimes imposible.



Whinchat. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult female; right juvenile (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Autumn. Ageing. Colour inside of upper mandible: left adult; right 1st year.



**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Autumn. Ageing. Pattern of tips of tail feathers: left adult; right 1st year.



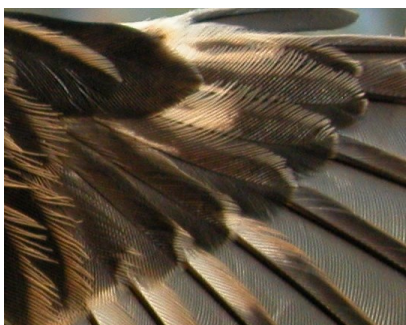
Whinchat. Spring. Ageing. Colour inside of upper mandible: left adult; right 2nd year.



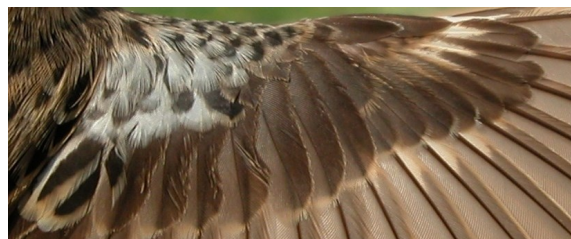
Whinchat. Autumn. Male. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: top adult; bottom 1st year.



Whinchat. Spring. Male. Ageing. Pattern of wing coverts: top adult; bottom 2nd year.



Whinchat. Autumn. Female. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: top adult; bottom 1st year.



Whinchat. Spring. Female. Ageing. Pattern of wing coverts: top adult; bottom 2nd year.



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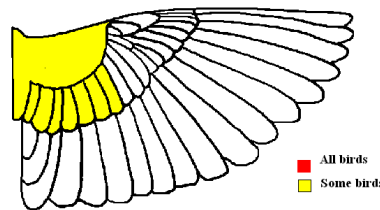
Whinchat. Spring. Male. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: top adult; bottom 2nd year.



Whinchat. Spring. Female. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: top adult; bottom 2nd year.

**MOULT**

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in September before migration. Partial **postjuvenile** moult very variable involving body feathers, all or part of lesser coverts, all or part of median coverts, none to 7 inner greater coverts and, exceptionally, some tail feathers; generally finished in September. Both age classes have a **prebreeding** moult including body feathers, lesser and median coverts and often some inner greater coverts.



Whinchat. 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



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Female (16-IV)



**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Male (16-IV)



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Female (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory)



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Female (16-IV)



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Head pattern: top male (16-IV); bottom female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Male (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory)



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Head pattern: top male (16-IV); bottom female (16-IV).



**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Head pattern: top male (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory); bottom female (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory); right female (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Breast pattern: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Upperpart pattern: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



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Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Upperpart pattern: left male (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory); right female (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2d year. Tail pattern: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Male; tail pattern (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Female: tail pattern (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



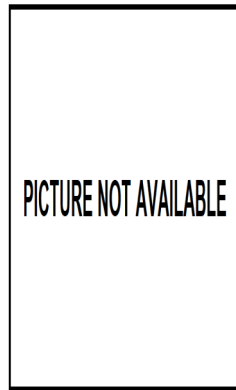
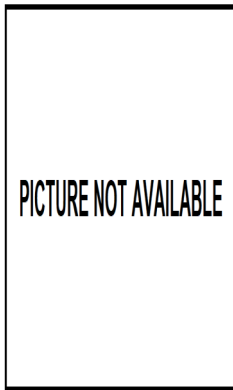
Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Colour inside of upper mandible: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Colour inside of upper mandible: left male (16-IV); right female (16-IV).



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Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Colour inside of upper mandible: left male (); right female ().



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing covers (16-IV).



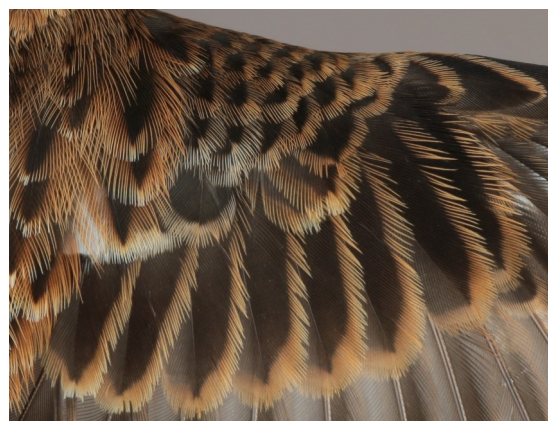
Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing covers (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing covers (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing covers (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing covers (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).





Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing coverts (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of primary coverts (16-IV).



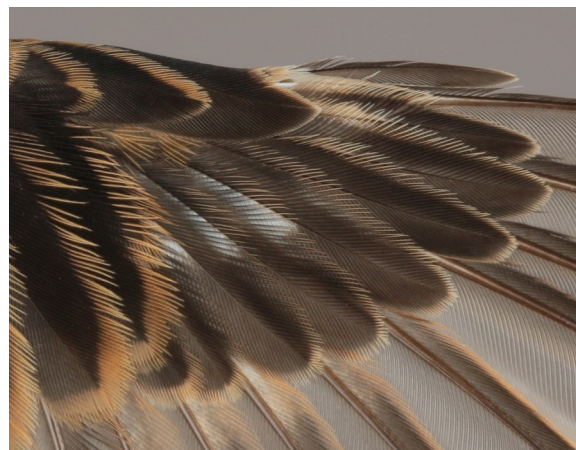
Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of primary coverts (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primary coverts (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primary coverts (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Male: pattern of primary coverts (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).





Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Female: pattern of primary coverts (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (16-IV).



Whinchat. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (16-IV).



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



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing (30-VII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Whinchat. Spring. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (04-VIII) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Male (10-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Female (24-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Male (12-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Female (09-IX).



Whinchat.  
Autumn.  
Adult. Head  
pattern: top  
male (10-IX);  
bottom female  
(24-IX).



Whinchat.  
Autumn. 1st  
year. Head  
pattern: top  
male (12-IX);  
bottom fe-  
male (09-IX).



**11370 Whinchat** (*Saxicola rubetra*)



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (24-IX).



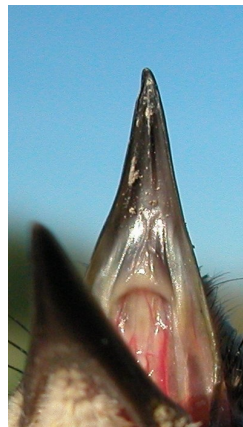
Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Breast pattern: left male (12-IX); right female (09-IX).



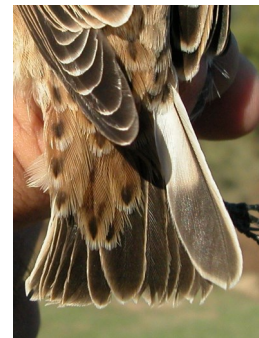
Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (24-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Upperparts pattern: left male (12-IX); right female (09-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. Colour inside of upper mandible: left adult (24-IX); right 1st year (09-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (24-IX).





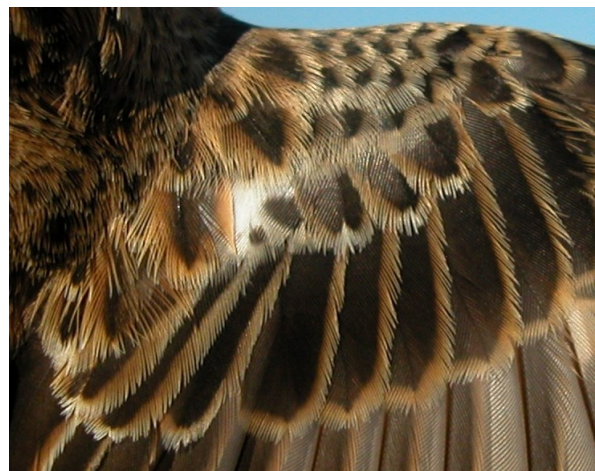
Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Tail pattern: left male (12-IX); right female (09-IX).



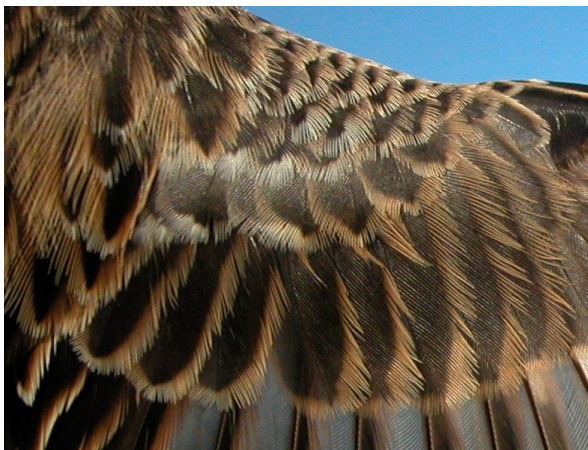
Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Male: pattern of wing covers (12-IX).



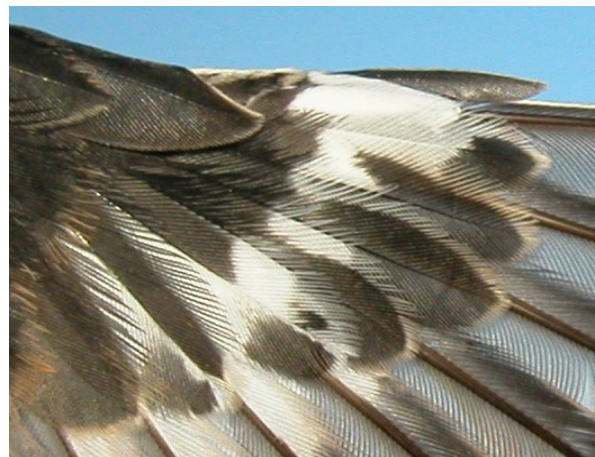
Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Male: pattern of wing covers (10-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Female: pattern of wing covers (09-IX).

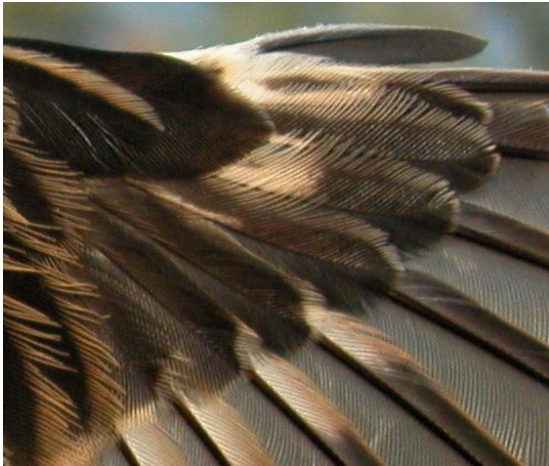


Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Female: pattern of wing covers (24-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Male: pattern of primary covers (10-IX).





Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Female: pattern of primary coverts (24-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Male: pattern of primary coverts (12-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Female: pattern of primary coverts (09-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (10-IX)



Whinchat. Autumn. Adult. Female: pattern of wing(24-IX)



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Male: pattern of wing(12-IX).



Whinchat. Autumn. 1st year. Female: pattern of wing(09-IX).