



Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Male (27-V).

COMMON BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*)

IDENTIFICATION

24-26 cm. Dark plumage with long tail. **Male** black, with bill and eye-ring yellow. **Female** with bill and plumage brown; paler on underparts. **Juvenile** similar to **female**, but spotted and more reddish.



Blackbird. Female: pattern of breast, tail and wing.



Blackbird. Male: pattern of breast, tail and wing.



Blackbird. Juvenile: pattern of breast, tail and wing.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Male recalls a **Spotless Starling** with shorter tail and bill never all yellow. **Female** and **juvenile** different from **Thrushes** by lacking white underparts. **Female Blue Rock Thrush** has similar size, but different pattern on flanks and underparts. **Ring Ouzel** has a white patch on breast or, if missing, wing feathers with pale edges.



Spotless Starling



Song Thrush



Blue Rock Thrush.
Female



Ring Ouzel.
Female

SEXING

Male with black plumage; yellow bill (dark in **young males**). **Female** with dark brownish plumage, with olive tinge on upperparts; pale throat and breast with spots or streaks; dull yellowish-brown bill (dark in **young females**). Some **juveniles** can be sexed before their **postjuvenile** moult: **male** with deep black tail feathers; **female** with brown-olive tail feathers (**CAUTION**: much overlap and many cannot be sexed).



Blackbird. Adult. Sexing. Pattern of head and breast: left male; right female.

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Blackbird. Juvenile. Sexing. Pattern of tail: left male; right female.

AGEING

3 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile resembles a **female**, but more reddish; spotted upperparts; wing coverts streaked pale on tips; brown blackish bill; fresh plumage.

1st year autumn/2nd year spring with moult limit between darker moulted wing coverts and rest of **juvenile** retained wing feathers, browner and worn; dark bill usually till December.

Adult without moult limits on wing feathers; bill yellow (**males**) or brown-yellowish (**females**).



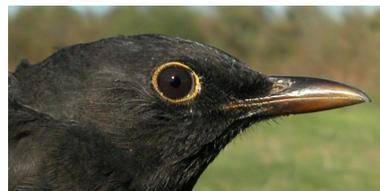
Blackbird. Ageing. Pattern of breast: left adult female; right juvenile.



Blackbird. Ageing. Pattern of wing coverts: top adult female; bottom juvenile.



Blackbird. Autumn. Male. Ageing. Colour of bill: top adult; bottom 1st year.



Blackbird. Autumn. Female. Ageing. Colour of bill: top adult; bottom 1st year.



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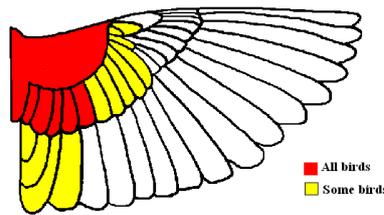
Blackbird. Male. Ageing. Moulting limit on wing covers: top adult; bottom 1st year.



Blackbird. Female. Ageing. Moulting limit on wing covers: top adult; bottom 1st year.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in October. Partial **postjuvenile** moult involving body feathers, lesser and median coverts and some inner greater coverts; some birds can extend their moult to all greater coverts, tertials, some secondaries and rarely some tail feathers; usually finished in October.



Blackbird. Extent of postjuvenile moult.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Wintering
- Resident
- On passage



Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Female (09-V).

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Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Male (27-V).



Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (27-V); bottom female (09-V).



Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (27-V); bottom female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Male (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (17-VI); bottom female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Female (17-VI).

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Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (27-V); right female (09-V).



Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Breast pattern: left male (27-V); right female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male (17-VI); right female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (27-V); right female (09-V).



Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Tail pattern: left male (27-V); right female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Tail pattern: left male (17-VI); right female (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (06-VI).

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Blackbird. Summer. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (09-V).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (27-V).



Blackbird. Summer. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (17-VI).



Blackbird. Summer. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (17-VI).



Blackbird. Winter. Adult. Male (13-X).

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Blackbird. Winter. Adult. Female (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. 1st year. Male (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. 1st year. Female (13-X).



Blackbird.
Winter. Adult.
Head pattern
and iris colour:
top male (13-
X); bottom
female (13-X).



Blackbird.
Winter. 1st
year. Head
pattern and iris
colour: top
male (06-XI);
bottom female
(30-XI).



Blackbird. Winter. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (13-X);
right female (13-X).

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Blackbird. Winter. 1st year. Breast pattern: left male (13-X); right female (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (13-X); right female (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. 1st year. Tail pattern: left male (13-X); right female (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. 1st year. Male: pattern of wing (13-X).



Blackbird. Winter. 1st year. Female: pattern of wing (13-X).