

372 Common Whitethroat

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Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Male (26-IV)

COMMON WHITETHROAT (*Curruca communis*)

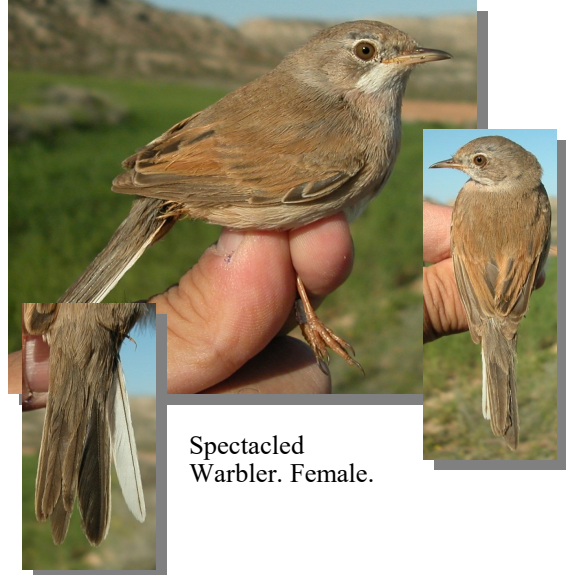
IDENTIFICATION

13-15 cm. Brownish upperparts; pale underparts, whiter on throat; wing coverts, tertials and secondaries with buff edges; legs and bill pale grey. **Breeding male** with grey head; **non breeding male, female** and **juvenile** with brownish head. Wing 66-77 mm.

Whitethroat.
Pattern of head,
tail and upper-
parts.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls a **Spectacled Warbler** with similar wing pattern but smaller (12-13 cm; wing 53-57 mm).

Spectacled
Warbler. Female.

SEXING

In **spring**, **adult male** with grey head; white throat; breast with pinkish tinge; iris yellowish-brown; lesser wing coverts with grey centres. **Female** (mainly **2nd year**) without grey on head; off-white throat; breast without pink tinge; iris greyish; lesser coverts with brown centres. **Adult females** are similar to **2nd year males** with brown head tinged grey; off-white throat; iris brownish; breast creamy-buff or with faint pinkish tinge; lesser wing coverts with grey-brown centres. (**CAUTION:** with many intermediate specimens this species can be confidently sexed only in extreme birds).

In **autumn** sexes very similar, so sexing is very difficult and possible only for some extreme **males** with grey on base of crown feathers; breast with pinkish tinge; iris brown-orange; lesser coverts with grey centre. Birds with other appearance may be indistinctly **male** or **female**. **Juveniles** and **1st year** birds cannot be sexed using plumage pattern.

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Whitethroat.
Sexing. Pattern of head and iris colour: top male; bottom female



Whitethroat. Sexing. Pattern of breast: left male; right female.



Whitethroat.
Sexing. Pattern of lesser coverts: top male; bottom female.



AGEING

4 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile with fresh plumage; iris greyish (an useful characteristic to ageing during all the autumn).

1st year autumn with moult limit on wing within moulted greater coverts, with dark buff edges, and **juvenile** retained with paler buff edges (**CAUTION:** without moult limit if all greater coverts have been moulted or all are unmoulted); if outer tail feathers remain unmoulted, then with pointed tips and the outermost with brownish tinge and bad defined white edge; dark grey-brown iris.

2nd year spring with unmoulted primary coverts, which are very worn and bleached; sometimes with **juvenile** retained greater coverts, very worn and bleached (**CAUTION:** moult limit within greater coverts also possible in **adults**); unmoulted flight feathers worn and bleached, without bright; if there are retained tail feathers, then very worn (**CAUTION:** these characteristics are not always easy to see. Some birds have a complete prebreeding moult being indistinguishable from **adults**).

Adult in autumn with complete **postbreeding** moult without moult limits or, if suspended, with contrast in flight feathers (mainly in secondaries) between fresh moulted and worn and brown retained; iris reddish orange; outermost tail feather rounded and usually pure white or with paler tip. In **spring** with wing feathers moderately fresh.



Whitethroat.
Autumn.
Ageing. Colour of iris: top adult; middle 1st year; bottom juvenile.

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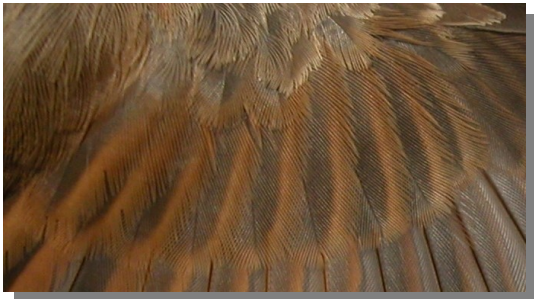
Whitethroat. Autumn. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult female; right 1st year.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in September. **CAUTION:** some birds suspend their moult before migration to be finished in wintering sites, so they have old and fresh flight feathers on passage. Partial **postjuvenile** moult, involving body feathers, lesser and median coverts, some inner or all greater coverts and sometimes tertials and some tail feathers; usually finished in September. Both age classes have a **prebreeding** moult very variable in extension including no, some or all wing coverts and no, some or most of the flight and tail feathers.

STATUS IN ARAGON

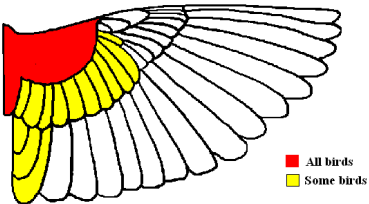
Summer visitor, widely distributed throughout the mountainous areas of the Region. Widespread on passage.



Whitethroat. Autumn. Ageing. Moult limit on greater coverts: top adult; bottom 1st year.



Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Female (23-IV).



Whitethroat. Extent of postjuvenile moult.

PHENOLOGY

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



Whitethroat. Spring. 2nd year. Male (04-IV).

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Whitethroat. Spring. 2nd year. Female (28-IV).



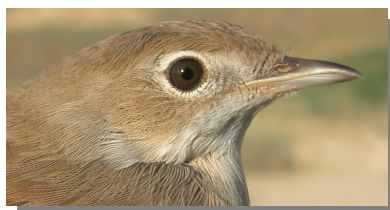
Whitethroat. Spring. Juvenile (15-VI).



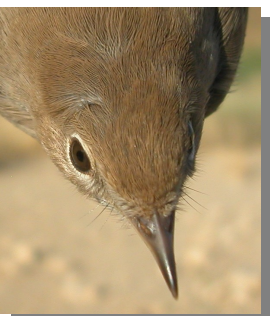
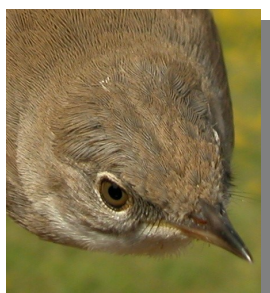
Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (26-IV); bottom female (23-IV).



Whitethroat. Spring. Head pattern and iris colour: top 2nd year male (04-IV); middle 2nd year female (28-IV); bottom juvenile (15-VI).



Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (23-IV).



Whitethroat. Spring. Crown pattern: top left 2nd year male (04-IV); top right 2nd year female (28-IV); left juvenile (15-VI).

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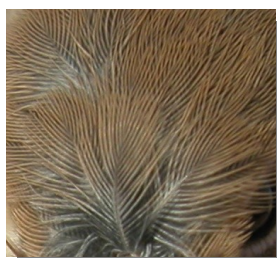
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Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Colour of base of crown feathers: left male (26-IV); right female (23-IV).



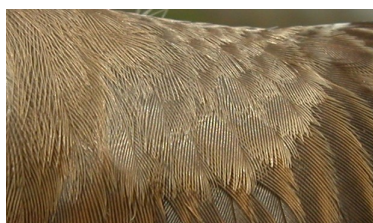
Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (23-IV).



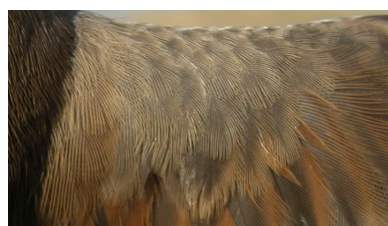
Whitethroat. Spring. Colour of base of crown feathers: top left 2nd year male (04-IV); top right 2nd year female (28-IV); left juvenile (15-VI).



Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Pattern of lesser coverts: top male (26-IV); bottom female (23-IV).



Whitethroat. Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (04-IV); top right 2nd year female (28-IV); left juvenile (15-VI).



Whitethroat. Spring. Pattern of lesser coverts: top 2nd year male (04-IV); middle 2nd year female (28-IV); bottom juvenile (15-VI).

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Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (23-IV).



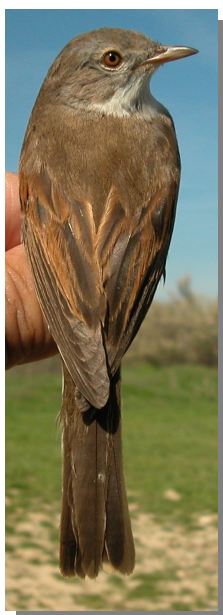
Whitethroat. Spring. Upperpart pattern: top left 2nd year male (04-IV); top right 2nd year female (28-IV); left juvenile (15-VI).



Whitethroat. Spring. Tail pattern: top left 2nd year male (04-IV); top right 2nd year female (28-IV); left juvenile (15-VI).

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Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (26-IV); right female (23-IV).



Whitethroat. Spring. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (04-IV).



Whitethroat. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (28-IV).



Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing



Whitethroat. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing (15-VI).



Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (23-IV).

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Whitethroat. Autumn. Adult. Male (31-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Head pattern and iris colour: top adult male (16-IX); middle adult female (31-VIII); bottom 1st year (05-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Adult. Female (31-VIII).



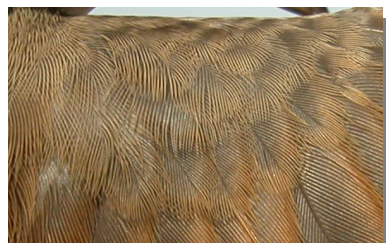
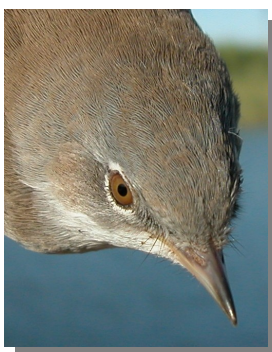
Whitethroat. Autumn. 1st year (05-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Breast pattern: top left adult male (16-IX); top right adult female (31-VIII); left 1st year (05-VIII).

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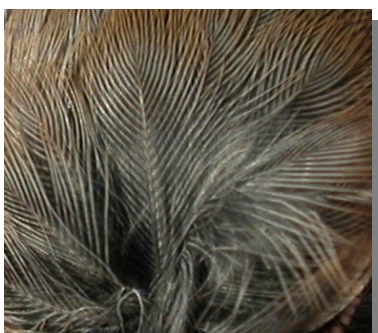
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Whitethroat. Autumn. Pattern of lesser coverts: top adult male (16-IX); middle adult female (31-VIII); bottom 1st year (05-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Crown pattern: top left adult male (16-IX); top right adult female (31-VIII); left 1st year (05-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Colour of base of crown feathers: top adult male (16-IX); middle adult female (31-VIII); bottom 1st year (05-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Tail pattern: top left adult male (16-IX); top right adult female (31-VIII); left 1st year (05-VIII).

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Whitethroat. Autumn. Adult with suspended moult. Male: pattern of wing (31-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Upperparts pattern: top left adult male (16-IX); top right adult female (31-VIII); left 1st year (05-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Adult with suspended moult. Female: pattern of wing (31-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. Adult with completed moult. Male: pattern of wing (31-VIII).



Whitethroat. Autumn. 1st year: pattern of wing (05-VIII).