



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 upperparts.

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** (manily **2nd year**) without grey on head; off-white throat; breast without pink tinge; iris gresyish; 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.



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.

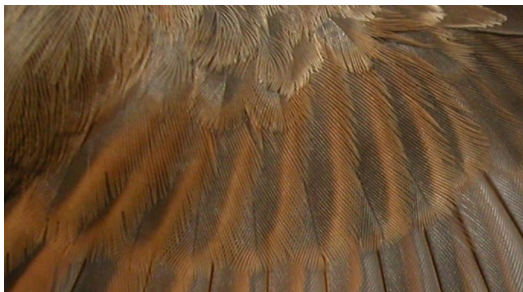


Whitethroat. Autumn. Ageing. Colour of iris: top adult; middle 1st year; bottom juvenile.

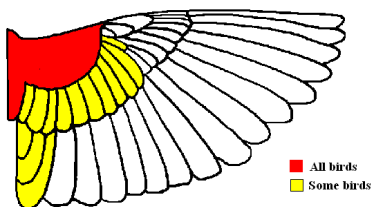
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Whitethroat. Autumn. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult female; right 1st year.



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



Whitethroat. Extent of postjuvenile moult.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Wintering
- Resident
- On passage

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.



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



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).

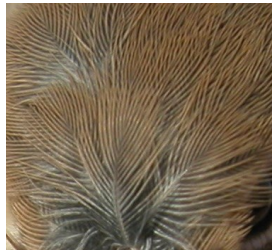


Whitethroat. Spring. Crown pattern: top left 2nd year male (04-IV); top right 2nd year female (28-IV); left juvenile (15-VI).

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



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



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



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





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



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



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



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



Whitethroat. Spring. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (26-IV).



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



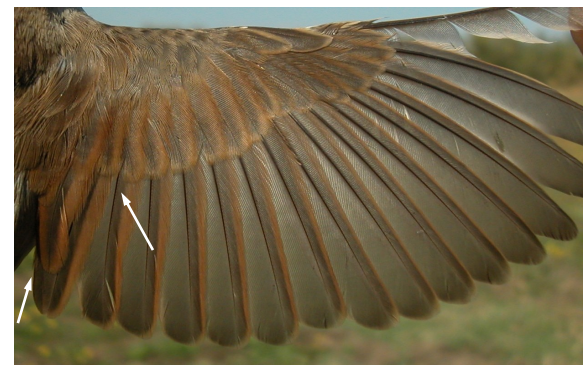
Whitethroat. Autumn. Adult with completed moult. Male: pattern of wing (31-VIII).



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



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



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