

# 129 Western Osprey

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## WESTERN OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

### IDENTIFICATION

60-71 cm. White head, with a dark band on sides; dark brown upperparts; white underparts, with a brown chest band; dark upperwing and white underwing, with a black patch; primaries with black tips.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls a **Short-toed Eagle**, which lacks a carpal dark patch on underwing and black eye lines.



Short-toed Eagle

### SEXING

**Male** usually with a faint breast band or without band; lesser and median underwing coverts uniformly white; blackish carpal patch often divided and restricted. **Female** with a broad, dark and well marked breast band; lesser and median underwing coverts with rows of dark spots; rather solid blackish carpal patch. (**CAUTION:** sexing is not always possible due to overlap and exceptions to the rule can be found). Size can be an useful character in extreme birds: **male** with wing shorter than 470 mm; **female** with wing longer than 500 mm.

### AGEING

Since most of the **2nd year** birds remain in their winter quarters and don't travel to Europe, usually only 2 types of age can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with regular buffish fringes on upperparts; streaked crown; greater coverts with pale tips; flight feathers with pale tips; secondaries barred from base to top without a dark subterminal band; barred greater underwing coverts forming a poorly distinct band; underparts tinged buffish; only one generation of wing feathers.

**Adult** with uniform dark brown upperparts; white crown with darker forecrown; greater coverts without pale tips; flight feathers without pale tips; secondaries with a dark subterminal band; greater underwing coverts forming a distinct dark band; white underparts; with several generations of wing feathers.

### MOULT

Moult starts in the **2nd year** and it is practically continuous, stopping only for migration periods.

### PHENOLOGY

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

### STATUS IN ARAGON

On passage, mainly in the Ebro river and large dams of the Region; some birds have been recorded in summer.