**Subalpine Warbler**

**SUBALPINE WARBLER** (*Sylvia cantillans*)

**IDENTIFICATION**
12-13 cm; wing between 57-64 mm. Male with grey head and upperparts; orange throat and breast; iris and eye-ring reddish. Female duller than male, with brownish upperparts; whitish underparts; white eye-ring and grey-brown iris; 10th primary with the same length than primary coverts; both sexes with a white moustache (better defined in male) and pale legs. Juveniles are similar to female, without grey and with buff flanks.

**SIMILAR SPECIES**
Male recalls a Dartford Warbler which lacks white moustache and has breast with white spots. Female recalls a Spectacled Warbler which has buff wings, lacks pale moustache and grey on head. Juveniles can be more difficult to determine: Spectacled Warbler has greater coverts, tertials and secondaries with broad buff edges; some with wing shorter than 55 mm. Sardinian Warbler has darker upperparts; flanks grey and no buff; fluffy plumage; 10th primary usually longer than primary coverts.
SEXING

In spring, male with grey upperparts; red eye-ring; white moustache; reddish throat and breast. Female with duller colours; white eye-ring; pale throat and breast. (CAUTION: some 2nd year males are very similar to adult females). Juveniles cannot be sexed using plumage pattern. In autumn, after postjuvenile moult, a limited sexual dimorphism in 1st year birds can be found: male usually grey with orange-brown tinge on underparts; female brown and without orange tinge on underparts. (CAUTION: most of the birds are intermediate and sexing only male-like birds are recommended); adults as in spring.
AGEING

4 age groups can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with fresh plumage; without moult limits; outer tail feathers with brownish edge; iris grey-olive.

**1st year autumn** with moult limits on wing between moulted dark grey wing coverts and tertials contrasting with retained more worn and pale brown **juvenile** flight feathers, primary coverts and sometimes outer greater coverts; in unmoulted then with outer tail feathers with brownish edge; dark iris.

**2nd year spring** with moult limit on wing between moulted feathers and **juvenile** retained, usually flight feathers, primary coverts and sometimes outer greater coverts, very worn and brown; if unmoulted then the outermost tail feathers with brownish tinged edges.

**Adult in autumn** without moult limits on wing; all greater coverts with greyish edges; the outermost tail feathers with white edges (CAUTION: some specimens have it grey); iris reddish.

CAUTION: in spring, after prebreeding moult, both age classes have moult limits on wings; some **2nd year** birds have a complete moult being indistinguishable from **adults**.

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**Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Sexing. Pattern of head:** top male; bottom female.

**Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Sexing. Pattern of breast:** left male; right female.

**Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Sexing. Pattern of breast:** left male; right female.

**Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Sexing. Pattern of breast:** left male; right female.

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**Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Ageing. Pattern of head and iris colour:** top adult female; bottom juvenile.

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

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http://blascozumeta.com
Subalpine Warbler. Spring. 2nd year. Female (05-VII).


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

MOULT
Complete postbreeding moult, usually finished in September. Partial postjuvenile moult involving body feathers, lesser and median coverts and all or most greater coverts; some birds can moult tertials and some tail feather; usually finished in September. Both age classes have a partial prebreeding moult (more extensive in 2nd year birds) including all or part of tertials and tail feathers, none to all greater coverts and some inner secondaries.

PHENOLOGY

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STATUS IN ARAGON
Summer visitor. Widely distributed throughout the Region, absent from the highest mountains and deforested areas.

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. 2nd year. Male (05-VII).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. 2nd year. Female (21-V).

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

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Adult. Pattern of head, colour of eye-ring and iris: top male (01-VI); bottom female (11-VI).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Pattern of head, colour of eye-ring and iris: top 2nd year male (05-VII); middle 2nd year female (21-V); bottom juvenile (13-VII).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (01-VI); right female (11-VI).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-VII); top right 2nd year female (21-V); left juvenile (13-VII).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (01-VI); right female (11-VI).
Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (01-VI); right female (11-VI).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Upperpart pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-VII); top right 2nd year female (21-V); left juvenile (13-VII).

Subalpine Warbler. Spring. Tail pattern: top left 2nd year male (05-VII); top right 2nd year female (21-V); left juvenile (13-VII).

Subalpine Warbler. Colour of legs: top left adult (25-V); top right 1st year (06-VIII); left juvenile (07-VII).


Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Female (15-VIII).

Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Breast pattern: left male (15-VIII); right female (15-VIII).
Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (12-VIII); right female (09-VIII).

Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Tail pattern: left male (15-VIII); right female (15-VIII).

Subalpine Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Upperpart pattern: left male (15-VIII); right female (15-VIII).

