369 Western Orphean Warbler

WESTERN ORPHEAN WARBLER
(Sylvia hortensis)

IDENTIFICATION
14-15 cm. Male with black cap going under the eye; pale grey upperparts, unspotted; white underparts, with pinkish tinge; dark wings; tail with white edges; dark legs. Female similar to male with grey cap and breast with brownish tinge.

SIMILAR SPECIES
Male Blackcap has black over the eye. Male Sardinian Warbler is smaller, with red eyering and pale legs.

SEX
In spring, male with uniformly black-grey head without distinct (or just a little) earcoverts; black eyering. Female with grey head with distinct darker ear-coverts; white eyering with some grey feathers. (CAUTION: 2nd year males are very similar to adult females). Juveniles cannot be sexed using plumage characteristics.

In autumn, adult male with head uniformly blackish-grey, without distinct ear-coverts or just slightly darker; eye-ring mostly black; underparts white tinged pinkish grey. Adult female with head greyer than male, with distinct darker ear-coverts; eye-ring white o with grey feathers; underparts like male but less extensively tinged pinkish. After postjuvenile moult, only some extreme 1st year birds can be sexed: male tends to have darker head than female and distinct darker ear-coverts; eye-ring usually pure grey. Female with pale grey head and ear-coverts slightly marked; eye-ring grey tinged brownish.
AGEING

4 age groups can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with fresh plumage, without moult limits; iris dark brown-olive; dark brown crown little contrasted with sides of head; outermost tail feathers with creamy-brown edges.

**1st year autumn** similar to *juveniles*, but with moult limit on wing between darker lesser and median coverts and unmoulted greater coverts; if some greater coverts moulted then with limit within the grey inner and outer brown *juvenile* retained; grey crown.

**2nd year spring** easy to see in some birds that do not yet have the pale yellow iris of **adults**; very worn primary coverts; some birds retain *juvenile* tail feathers, which will be very worn (CAUTION: there are 2nd year birds with iris and tail similar to **adults**).

**Adult** in autumn without moult limits on wing (CAUTION: birds with suspended moult have very worn secondaries); iris whitish; outermost tail feathers with white edges.

**CAUTION:** in spring, after prebreeding moult, both 2nd year and **adult** birds have moult limits.
MOULT
Complete postbreeding moult, usually finished early September (CAUTION: some birds suspend moulting (usually secondaries) to finish it in their wintering quarters). Partial postjuvenile moult, involving body feathers, lesser and median coverts and some inner greater coverts; some birds can moult all the greater coverts and some tertials; usually finished in August. Both age classes have a prebreeding moult including part of body feathers, a variable number of greater coverts, some tertials and secondaries and some tail feathers (2nd year birds usually change all tail feathers).

PHENOLOGY

STATUS IN ARAGON
Summer visitor. Distributed throughout the Mediterranean open woodlands from the Region.

Orphean Warbler. Spring. 2nd year. Male (16-V).

Orphean Warbler. Spring. 2nd year. Female (16-V).

Orphean Warbler. Spring. Juvenile (21-VI)

Orphean Warbler. Spring. Head pattern: top left 2nd year male (16-V); top right 2nd year female (16-V); left juvenile (21-VI).

Orphean Warbler. Spring. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (16-V); bottom female (16-V).

Orphean Warbler. Spring. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (16-V); bottom female (16-V).

Orphean Warbler. Spring. Breast pattern: top left 2nd year male (16-V); top right 2nd year female (16-V); left juvenile (21-VI).
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Orphean Warbler. Spring. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (16-V); bottom female (16-V).


Orphean Warbler. Spring. Tail pattern: top left 2nd year male with unmoulted tail (16-V); top right 2nd year female with moulted tail (16-V); left juvenile (21-VI).

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Orphean Warbler. Spring. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing (16-V).


Orphean Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Female (23-VII).
Orphean Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (17-VIII); bottom female (17-VIII).

Orphean Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (23-VII); bottom female (23-VII).


Orphean Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Breast pattern: left male (23-VII); right female (23-VII).
Orphean Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (17-VIII); right female (17-VIII).

Orphean Warbler. Autumn. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (17-VIII); right female (17-VIII).

Orphean Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Upperpart pattern: left male (23-VII); derecha hembra (23-VII).

Orphean Warbler. Autumn. 1st year. Tail pattern: left male (23-VII); derecha hembra (23-VII).

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