

256 Black-bellied Sandgrouse

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BLACK-BELLIED SANDGROUSE (*Pterocles orientalis*)

IDENTIFICATION

33-35 cm. **Male** with upperparts grey and yellow mottled; grey head and neck; chestnut throat; buff wing coverts with yellow edges. **Female** with upperparts buff and dark barred; yellowish head and neck with dark bars; buff wing coverts with dark streaked. Both sexes have black underparts.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls a **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse**, with white belly.

SEXING

In **adult** birds, **male** grey head and breast; chestnut throat with a triangular black patch; upperparts with golden mottled; grey bluish primaries; primary coverts grey; some grey mottled; golden wing coverts with grey spots. **Female** with head, breast and upperparts buff, dark streaked; buff throat with a dark line; brown-grey primaries with white edges end tips; grey primary coverts with narrow white edge; buff wing coverts, barred or mottled dark. **Juveniles** cannot be sexed till autumn, when the first wing coverts are growing.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile similar to **female**, but with fresh plumage; grey primaries with buff edges and vermiculated dark.

1st year autumn/2nd year spring similar to **adult**, but with the **juvenile** three outermost primaries retained, which will be worn.

Adults with pattern described in **SEXING**; **male** with primaries edged buff vermiculated dark; **female** with primaries without buff edges vermiculated dark.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in October. Quite complete **postjuvenile** moult, changing all feathers except the outermost three primaries; usually finished late September.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident. Breeds scarcely in the Ebro Basin and Sistema Iberico.