

# 133 Merlin



Merlin. Adult. Male (27-X).

## MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*)

### IDENTIFICATION

26-33 cm. **Adult male** with grey slate upperparts, reddish and streaked underparts; dark grey tail, with narrow bands. **Female** and **juvenile** with brown grey upperparts; head and upperparts streaked black; pale underparts, streaked brown.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

Grey upperparts recall a **Sparrowhawk**, with yellow or orange iris. **Kestrel**, has similar size but upperparts are buff and tail is longer.



Sparrowhawk



Kestrel

### SEXING

**Adults** and **juveniles** can be sexed by size; **male** with wing shorter than 206 mm; **female** with wing longer than 209 mm. Differences in plumage pattern are seen in **AGEING**.

### AGEING

2 types of age can be recognized:

**Juvenile** similar to **female**, but with upperparts strongly edged buff; median, greater coverts, primary coverts and tertials with buff barred; outermost tail feather with dark barred reaching the edge; central tail feathers with broad pale bands, subterminal interrupted by a dark patch near the centre of the feather in **males**.

**Adult male** with grey upperparts, with dark shaft streaks; buff underparts; grey upperwing coverts and tertials without buff spots; grey tail with a soft dark barred and dark subterminal band.

**Adult female** with brown grey upperparts (**CAUTION:** some **females** have a grey pattern similar to **males**); pale underparts; upperwing coverts and tertials grey brown, sometimes with buff spots; outermost tail feather with irregular dark barred which usually doesn't reach the edge; central tail feathers with broad pale bands.



Merlin. Ageing. Pattern of dark barred on the outermost tail feather: left adult female; right juvenile.

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Merlin. Sexing in juveniles. Pattern of subterminal band on central tail feather: left male: right female.



Merlin. Adult. Male-like female (15-XI)



Merlin. Male. Juvenile (22-IV)

## MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, finished in November. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to some body and tail feathers between February and May.

## PHENOLOGY

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

## STATUS IN ARAGON

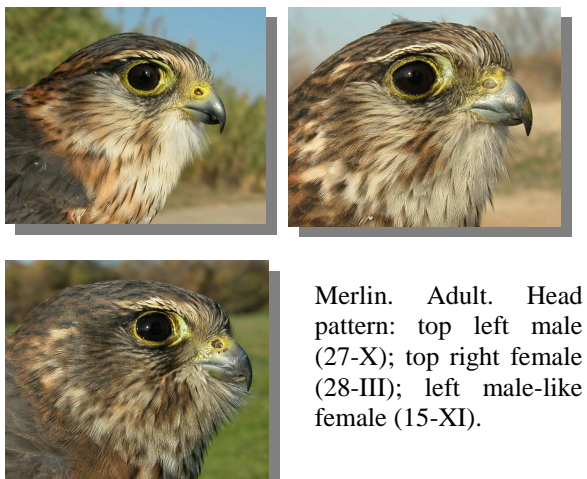
Winter visitor distributed through the plain and deforested areas in the Ebro Basin and Sistema Iberico.



Merlin. Female. Juvenile (31-X)

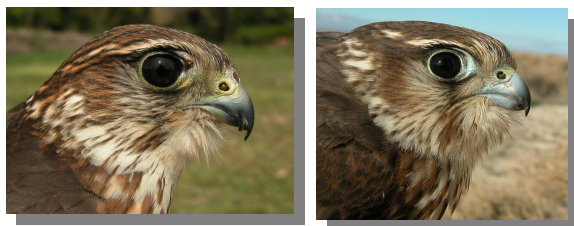


Merlin. Adult. Female (28-III)



Merlin. Adult. Head pattern: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).

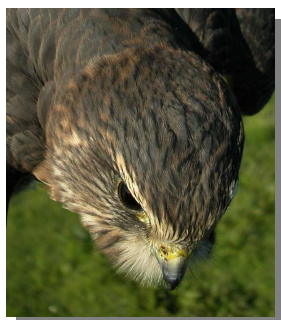
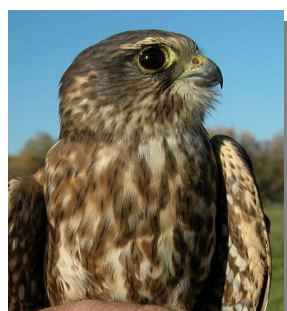
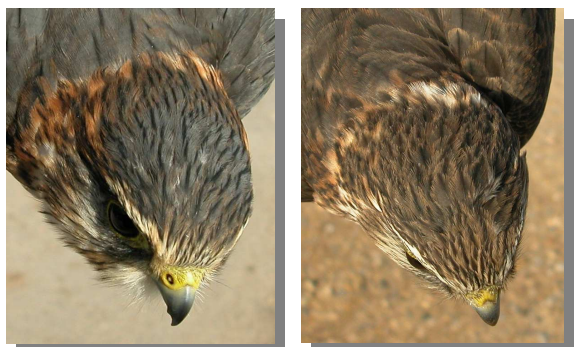
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Merlin. Juvenile. Head pattern: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).



Merlin. Adult. Breast pattern: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).



Merlin. Adult. Crown pattern: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).



Merlin. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).



Merlin. Juvenile. Crown pattern: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).

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Merlin. Adult. Upperpart pattern: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).



Merlin. Adult. Pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).



Merlin. Juvenile. Pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).

Merlin. Juvenile. Upperpart pattern: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).

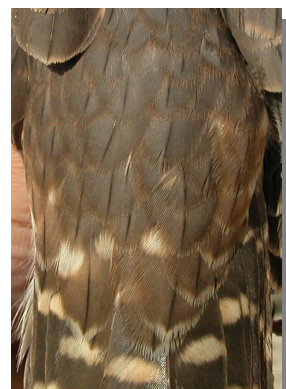
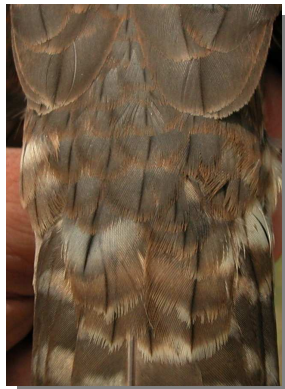
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Merlin. Adult. Pattern of the longest alula feather: top male (27-X); bottom female (28-III).



Merlin. Juvenile. Pattern of the longest alula feather: top male (22-IV); bottom female (31-X).



Merlin. Juvenile. Pattern of rump and uppertail coverts: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).

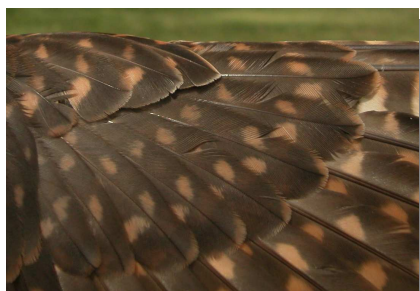


Merlin. Adult. Pattern of rump and uppertail coverts: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).

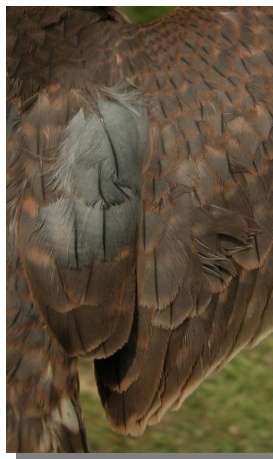
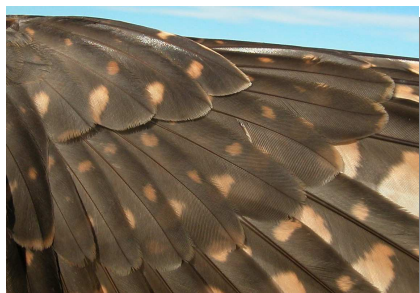


Merlin. Adult. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (27-X); middle female (28-III); bottom male-like female (15-XI).

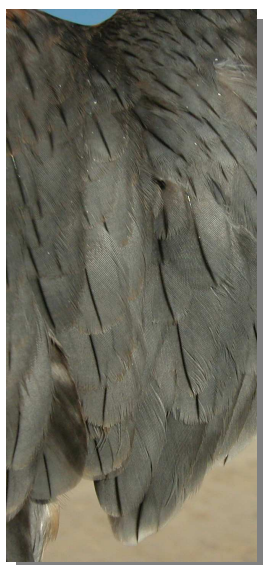
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Merlin. Juvenile. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (22-IV); bottom female (31-X).



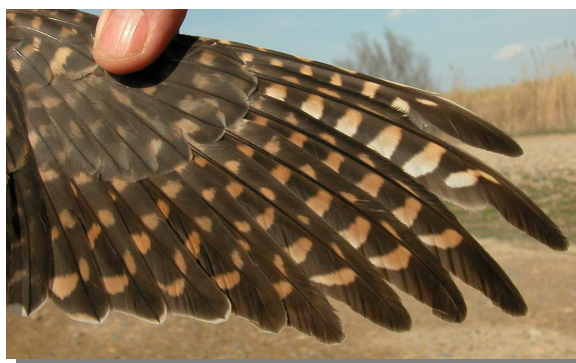
Merlin. Juvenile. Pattern of scapulars and tertials: left male (22-IV); right female (31-X).



Merlin. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (27-X).



Merlin. Adult. Pattern of scapulars and tertials: top left male (27-X); top right female (28-III); left male-like female (15-XI).



Merlin. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (28-III).

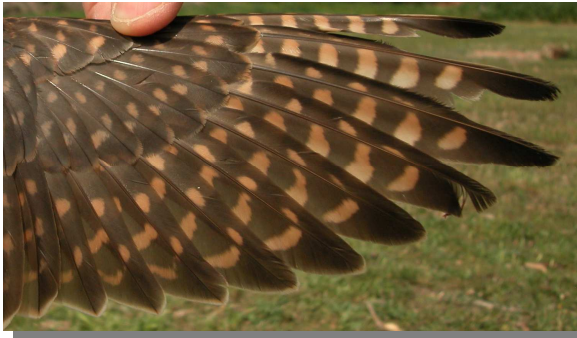
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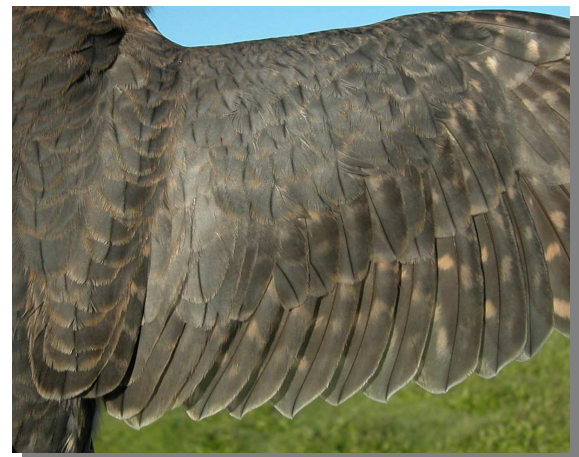
Merlin. Adult. Male-like female: pattern of primaries (15-XI).



Merlin. Adult. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (28-III).



Merlin. Juvenile. Male: pattern of primaries (22-IV).



Merlin. Adult. Male-like female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (15-XI).



Merlin. Juvenile. Female: pattern of primaries (31-X).



Merlin. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (22-IV).



Merlin. Adult. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (27-X).

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Merlin. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (31-X).



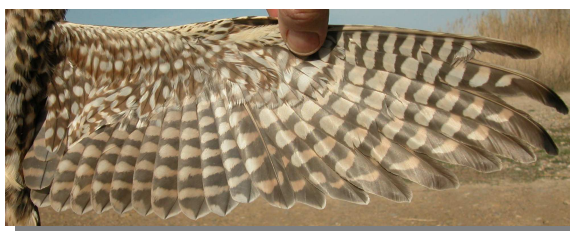
Merlin. Adult. Male-like female: pattern of wing (15-XI).



Merlin. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (27-X).



Merlin. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing (22-IV).



Merlin. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (28-III).



Merlin. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (31-X).