

178 Grey Plover



GREY PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

IDENTIFICATION

27-28 cm. In spring with black underparts; dark brown mantle, with white barred. In autumn with pale underparts, with brown spots on breast and flanks; in both plumages with pale band on upper wing and dark axillaries; with a small fourth toe.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls a **Golden Plover**, which lacks black axillaries, wide wingbar and white rump.



Golden Plover

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with upperparts and wing coverts with greyish brown feathers edged pale gold or yellowish white; white underparts; breast and flanks with extensive buff brown barred.

2nd year usually remaining in **winter** plumage; with juvenile flight feathers which will be worn and always with only one age; often with **juvenile** median coverts retained which have very pale cream spots.

Adult unmistakable in **breeding** plumage with silver and dark grey upperparts and black underparts; sometimes with two ages of primaries.

MOULT

Usually complete **postbreeding** moult starting in breeding places with only some few feathers on lower mantle, scapulares, underparts, median wing coverts and inner primaries; then suspended for migration and finished in wintering quarters (**CAUTION:** some birds, more **males** than **females**, can retain unmoulted outer primaries). Partial **postjuvenile** moult including only body feathers and some wing coverts; usually starting in wintering areas. Only **adults** have a **prebreeding** moult including body feathers and wing coverts, since **2nd year** birds remain in **winter** plumage.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

On passage, being a very scarce species in wetlands and rice fields.

SEXING

In **breeding** plumage, **male** with black underparts with few white fringes; undertail coverts with small bars. **Female** with brownish black underparts with many white fringes; undertail coverts with large bars (**CAUTION:** occasionally both sexes are rather similar). Pattern of both sexes alike in **non breeding** plumage.