

187 Curlew Sandpiper



CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*)

IDENTIFICATION

18-19 cm. In **breeding** plumage with dark brown upperparts and reddish underparts; in **non-breeding** plumage with grey upperparts and white underparts; head with pale supercilium; wing with a white band; bill long and curved; dark legs.

SIMILAR SPECIES

In **breeding** plumage unmistakable due to chestnut pattern on head and underparts. In **non breeding** plumage recalls a **Dunlin**, which has shorter bill and a dark line on rump.



Dunlin

AGEING

Usually **2nd year** birds remain in their wintering quarters, so in Aragon only 2 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with dark brown upperparts with whitish-buff and chestnut fringes; brown wing coverts with broad buff fringes; white underparts suffused buff; breast faintly streaked brownish.

Adult in **breeding** plumage (**spring**) with dark brown upperparts with whitish or pale grey fringes; brown-grey wing coverts, outers with grey tip and inners fringed whitish; chestnut underparts, with dark bars and whitish tips. In **autumn**, after **postbreeding** moult, with grey upperparts; grey wing coverts with whitish fringes; white underparts; pale breast streaked grey brown.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, starting with body feathers in breeding places, then suspended for migration and finished in wintering quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult similar to **adult** but usually not started, or it is very little, till arriving to wintering areas; some juvenile flight feathers can be retained. Both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult, between February and April, including body feathers, central tail feathers, some tertial and sometimes median wing coverts.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Recorded on passage in any wetland of the region

SEXING

In **breeding** plumage, **female** with paler chestnut pattern, more white feathers and distinct brown bars on underparts pale than **male**. In **non breeding** plumage pattern of both sexes alike. Length of bill can be useful in extreme birds: **female** with bill longer than 40 mm; **male** with bill shorter than 36 mm.