

Ruddy Turnstone – plumage scores

When on their Arctic breeding grounds Ruddy Turnstone have head and neck extensively white with blackish-brown streaking. Mantle, scapulars, tertials and some coverts blackish-brown with extensive rufous-chestnut edges. This is variously referred to as breeding, nuptial, alternate (US) or summer (Europe) plumage. The term Breeding Plumage is used here.



When on the non-breeding grounds (South and Central America) Ruddy Turnstone have upperparts dark grayish-black / pale gray. The coverts are dark gray with pale edges. This is variously referred to as non-breeding, basic (US) or winter (Europe) plumage. The term Non-Breeding plumage is used below.

The terms basic and alternate plumage are unfamiliar outside of North America, and the terms summer and winter plumage are unfamiliar outside of Europe. The latter are also technically incorrect for birds spending the non-breeding season in the Southern Hemisphere. However, given the international involvement in the project you may hear any of these terms being used.

The breeding plumage is acquired during a partial pre-nuptial molt (i.e. one not involving flight and tail feathers) starting in late April / early May and completed by the time they arrive on their Arctic breeding grounds in early June. Adult Ruddy Turnstone revert into the non-breeding plumage during a full post-nuptial molt (i.e. complete replacement of feathers) the timing and pattern of feather replacement differing between races and populations (probably July – October for birds using Delaware Bay).

Plumage is scored on a scale of 1 thru 7. The score codes the proportion of breeding plumage averaged over the entire bird

NOTE: This species exhibits considerable individual variation in the extent of color displayed when in full breeding plumage making scoring difficult.

F E M A L E	<i>No Picture Available</i>	<i>No Picture Available</i>			<i>No Picture Available</i>	<i>No Picture Available</i>	<i>No Picture Available</i>
	1: Whole plumage non-breeding	2: Trace of breeding plumage	3: ca 25% breeding plumage	4: ca 50% breeding plumage	5: ca 75% breeding plumage	6: Trace of non-breeding plumage	7: Whole plumage breeding
M A L E	<i>No Picture Available</i>	<i>No Picture Available</i>	<i>No Picture Available</i>	<i>No Picture Available</i>	