

## Sanderling – plumage scores

When on their Arctic breeding grounds Sanderling have head and breast extensively spotted rufous and blackish with a distinct division against the underparts. Back blackish with rufous and gray edges. Coverts gray, outers edged paler and inners fringed white. 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) Sanderling have back and crown gray. Coverts are gray with white fringes, underparts are white. 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 Sanderling 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 populations.

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

*Note: In breeding plumage back of male black/red-brown and back of female black/grayish – do not confuse this difference with extent of breeding plumage*

						
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
						No Picture Available