

Semipalmated Sandpiper – plumage scores







When on their Arctic breeding grounds Semi palmated Sandpipers have upperpart blackish-brown with very dull chestnut edging on ear-coverts and nape. Breast spotted and streaked brown. Coverts gray-brown; the outers paler at the tip the 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) Semipalmated Sandpipers have upperparts uniform gray-brown and underparts white with fine streaking on breast. 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 Semipalmated Sandpipers revert into the non-breeding plumage during a full post-nuptial molt (i.e. complete replacement of feathers) during October to February.

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

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