

148 Spotted Crake



SEXING

In **spring**, **male** with cheeks and sides of throat pure slate grey with only a small area of white speckling bordering ear coverts; spots of chest often small. **Female** with cheeks and sides of throat dull slate grey with heavy white speckling bordering ear coverts; spots of chest often large, tending to barring (**CAUTION:** the amount and pattern of spots on chest can be very variable in both sexes).

In **autumn**, **male** with cheeks and sides of throat heavily speckled with white; eye streak grey with some white speckling mainly to the rear of head. **Female** similar to **male**, but throat and cheeks more heavily speckled white with pure grey restricted to front part of eye streak and to central chin.

Juveniles cannot be sexed using plumage characters.

SPOTTED CRAKE (*Porzana porzana*)

IDENTIFICATION

21-23 cm. Head with black spotted brown crown and grey band on sides; feathers on upperparts and wing coverts dark brown, with olive edges and white streaks; breast white spotted; underparts grey with olive tinge; flanks barred with brown, black and white bars; green-yellowish bill with red base; green olive legs.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Water Rail has a long and red bill. **Little Crake** lacks white speckling on head, breast and nape. **Baillon's Crake** lacks white speckling on head and without red spot on base of bill.



Water Rail

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with brown supercilium speckled white; brown breast with white specks; without grey on head and breast; iris olive or deep green; dark bill with yellow base.

2nd year similar to **adults**, but can retain old pale **juvenile** feathers on chin and throat; in **spring** with **juvenile** flight feathers.

Adult with plumage described in **SEXING**; iris yellow brown to red brown; yellow bill shading to olive green at tip, with orange or red base.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in October. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined only to body feathers; often finished by October. Both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult confined to body.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Poorly known status. There are some records in breeding period, being a more common species on passage.