

38 Squacco Heron



SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike. Size can be useful in extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 230 mm, bill longer than 66 mm; **female** with bill shorter than 66 mm. **CAUTION:** birds with wing shorter than 230 mm can belong to both sexes.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in wintering quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers; starts in breeding areas and finished in wintering quarters. Ornamental feathers obtained in **spring** in a **prebreeding** moult, changing also some wing coverts and inner secondaries.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Summer visitor, with very scarce breeding pairs in Sariñena and some places of the Ebro river.

SQUACCO HERON (*Ardeola ralloides*)

IDENTIFICATION

44-47 cm. In **breeding** plumage with long nape feathers; buffy-brown upperparts; wings, rump and tail white; head and neck faintly brown spotted. In **non breeding** plumage with duller colours and shorter nape feathers.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile recalls an **adult**, but feathers of head and neck shorter and paler buff, streaked dark brown; mantle and scapulars dull brown; tail feathers vaguely mottled brown; inner secondaries brown; shafts of primaries brown; outer primaries tinged dusky on outer webs and rear tips; wing coverts mottled brown.

2nd year with most of the brown mottlings on wings and tail missing by wear but with **juvenile** primaries with brown shafts, mottled brown at tips.

Adult with long feathers (up to 140 mm) on head and neck, streaked brown-black; mantle and scapulars pink-buff, washed vinous; tail feathers white; inner secondaries and wing coverts washed golden-buff; white primaries.