

## POCHARD (*Aythya ferina*)

### IDENTIFICATION

42-49 cm. **Male** with red-chestnut head and neck; black breast and tail coverts; grey wings and body. **Female** pale brown, darker on upperparts and paler on head; grey wings.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

**Male** with unmistakable plumage. The pattern of the body greyer than head; dark bill with a central pale band and a pale stripe behind the eye differ the **female** from other *Aythya* females.

### SEXING

**Male** in **breeding** plumage unmistakable with head red-chestnut, breast and upper and undertail coverts black; body vermiculated grey; wing coverts grey; iris reddish; in **non breeding** plumage similar to **breeding male** but with duller colours. **Female** with brown body, paler on head and breast; wing coverts grey-brown; iris brown or yellow-brown. In **juvenile** birds, **male** with wing coverts, mantle and scapulars vermiculated or speckled white at tips; secondaries with pale tips on both webs. **Female** with wing coverts, mantle and scapulars without vermiculated or speckled white at tips; secondaries with pale tips only on the inner web.

### AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with narrow tail feathers; lesser and median coverts even grey-brown, narrow and with rounded tips; greater coverts grey-brown, narrow and with rounded tips, with a little or without white whitish pipping; without pale stripe behind the eye.

**1st year autumn/2nd year spring** with juvenile feathers retained. **CAUTION:** this species has much variation in moult timing, with birds changing only body feathers till others with moulted tertials and flight feathers.

**Adult** with grey wing coverts vermiculated with white, broad and with rounded tips; **female** with pale stripe behind the eye.

### MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, acquiring eclipse plumage, usually finished in October. Partial **postjuvenile** moult changing body feathers; this species moults during all the winter and some birds can change tertials and some flight feather. Both types of age have a partial **prebreeding** moult acquiring breeding plumage.

### PHENOLOGY

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

### STATUS IN ARAGON

Mainly a winter visitor, with scarce breeding pairs on wetlands in Cinco Villas; sometimes recorded breeding in other places of the Region.