

06 Great Crested Grebe

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GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*)

IDENTIFICATION

46-51 cm. In **breeding** plumage with dark upperparts; white underparts; head with dark and reddish ornaments. In **non breeding** plumage with duller colours; without ornaments on head.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable.

SEXING

Both sexes with similar plumage. Size can be useful for sexing in extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 205 mm; bill longer than 60 mm. **Female** with wing shorter than 175 mm; bill shorter than 60 mm.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in November. Partial **postjuvenile** moult, confined to upperparts and some wing coverts; finished between August and November. Both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult to acquire the breeding plumage.

AGEING

4 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with remnants of nestling pattern (brown streaked and down) on sides of head and neck; grey secondaries; greater coverts with dark grey inner web; iris orange with narrow yellow ring.

1st year winter similar to **adults in winter**, but scapulars with remnants of down on tips; grey secondaries and inner webs of outer greater coverts grey-brown, sometimes with a white edge; hind rim of tarsus only slightly serrated.

2nd year spring with flight feathers and outer greater coverts with **juvenile** pattern; ornaments on head poorly developed; hind rim of tarsus slightly serrated.

Adult in any season with white secondaries; outermost greater coverts with pure white inner web; scapulars without remnants of down on tips; red iris with narrow orange ring; hind rim of tarsus strongly serrated. In **breeding** plumage with well developed ornaments on head.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident, with contribution of wintering European birds. Breeds widely distributed throughout the Region being more abundant in ponds in north of the Ebro river.