

09 Black-necked Grebe

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BLACK-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

IDENTIFICATION

28-34 cm. In **breeding** plumage with black upperparts, head and neck; with golden feather tufts on sides of head; chestnut flanks; white vent. In **non breeding** plumage with dark upperparts; pale underparts; black on head only till the eyes.

SIMILAR SPECIES

In Aragon, this species is unmistakable.

SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike, but in **breeding** plumage **male** usually with more rufous flanks and yellow crest than **female**. Size can be useful in extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 136 mm, bill longer than 27 mm. **Female** with wing shorter than 127 mm, bill shorter than 21 mm.

AGEING

4 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with pale brown upperparts, often with olive hue; crown and hindneck with olive hue; sides of neck buff; scapulars usually with remains of down on tips, iris brown with orange tinge.

1st year winter similar to **adults**, but with **juvenile** brown feathers on upperparts mixed with black **adult-type** feathers. Late winter all **juvenile** body feathers are lost but scapulars and wing coverts retained.

2nd year spring similar to **adults**, but with feathers on crown not so glossy black and with some brown feathers; wing coverts and primaries eroded and fading brown; some birds with iris orange or orange red.

Adult in winter with uniform black upperparts; scapulars with rounded and well formed tips; iris bright red. In **spring** with glossy black feathers on crown, without brown feathers; wing coverts and primaries with fresh tips.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished by October. Partial **postjuvenile** moult, confined to body and tail feathers; finished in some birds by december. Both types of age have a partial **prebreeding** moult changing tail and body feathers to acquire the breeding plumage.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Residen but always an uncommon species. A very scarce breeder with some wintering birds.