

05 Little Grebe

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Little Grebe. Summer. Male (08-VIII).

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

IDENTIFICATION

25-29 cm. In **summer** with dark grey plumage, with chestnut cheeks and foreneck; bill with pale yellow gape. In **winter** and **juveniles** paler, with brown upperparts and pale grey underparts, without yellow gape on bill.



Little Grebe. Pattern of head: top summer; bottom winter (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).

SEXING

Both sexes with similar plumage although, in **breeding** plumage, **females** are usually duller than **males**. (**CAUTION:** plumage pattern is not always an useful characteristic). In **adults**, size can be useful for extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 102 mm; **female** with wing shorter than 95 mm.

AGEING

4 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile with remnants of nestling pattern (dark brown or white striping) on sides of head and neck; buff cheeks; iris dark; orange bill.

1st year winter similar to **adult** in **winter**, but easily recognizable if keeps **juvenile** downy feathers on back or remnants of pale striping on face and neck sides; iris dull reddish; tips of the outermost primaries narrow.

2nd year spring similar to **adult**, but with tips of the outermost **juvenile** primaries narrow.

Adult with reddish iris; tips of the outermost primaries wide and rounded; in **summer** with black bill.



Little Grebe. Summer. Ageing. Pattern of head and iris colour: top adult; bottom juvenile.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in November. Partial **postjuvenile** moult, confined to head and body feathers, finished between August and November. Both age groups have a partial **prebreeding** moult changing body feathers to acquire the breeding plumage.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable by its little size and neck pattern.

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PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident, with contribution of wintering European birds. Breeds in ponds with good vegetated margins in the Ebro Valley and Gallocanta.



Little Grebe. Summer. Head pattern: top male (08-VIII); middle female (08-VIII); bottom juvenile (18-VII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Female (08-VIII).



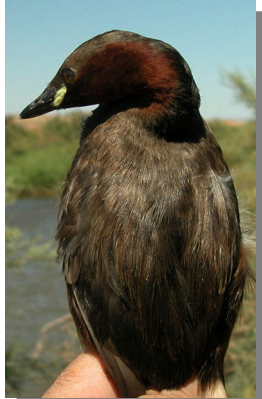
Little Grebe. Summer. Juvenile (18-VII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Breast pattern: top left male (08-VIII); top right female (08-VIII); left juvenile (18-VII).

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Little Grebe. Summer. Upperpart pattern: top left male (08-VIII); top right female (08-VIII); left juvenile (18-VII).



Little Grebe. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of secondaries (08-VIII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (18-VII).



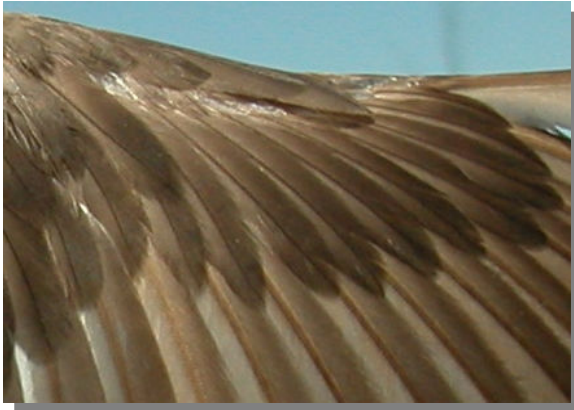
Little Grebe. Summer. Adult: pattern of secondaries (08-VIII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (08-VIII).

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Little Grebe. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of primary coverts (08-VIII).



Little Grebe. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of primaries (08-VIII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of primary coverts (18-VII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (18-VII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Adult: pattern of primaries (08-VIII).



Little Grebe. Summer. Adult: pattern of wing (08-VIII).



Little Grebe. Summer. 2nd year: pattern of wing (08-VIII).

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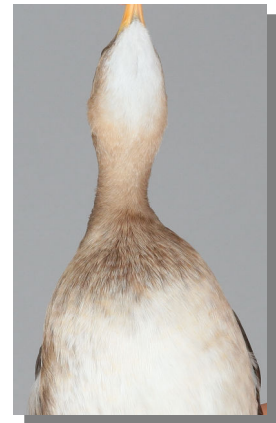
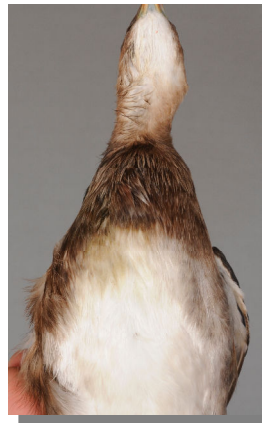
Little Grebe. Summer. Juvenile: pattern of wing (18-VII).



Little Grebe. Winter. Head pattern: top adult (26-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory); bottom 1st year (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



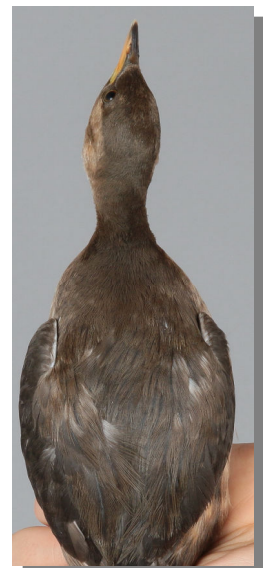
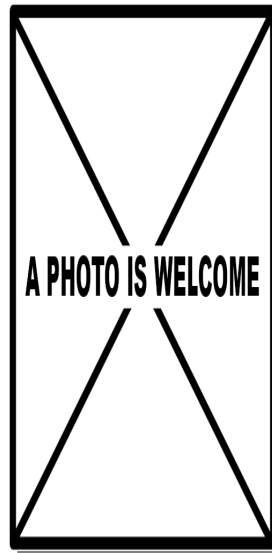
Little Grebe. Winter. Adult (26-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. Breast pattern: left adult (26-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory); right 1st year (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. 1st year (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. Upperpart pattern: left adult (); right 1st year (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).

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Little Grebe. Winter. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (08-I).



Little Grebe. Winter. 1st year: pattern of secondaries (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. 1st year: pattern of primary coverts (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. Adult: pattern of primaries (26-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. Adult: pattern of secondaries (26-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. 1st year: pattern of primaries (30-X) (Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).

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Little Grebe. Winter. Adult: pattern of wing (26-X)
(Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).



Little Grebe. Winter. 1st year: pattern of wing (30-X)
(Photo: Ottenby Bird Observatory).