

00980 Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*)



Little Bittern. Male. Adult (30-VI).

LITTLE BITTERN (*Ixobrychus minutus*)

IDENTIFICATION

33-38 cm. **Adult male** with black upperparts, wing and tail; buff neck and underparts; wing with a white patch. **Adult female** similar to **male**, but no so dark. **Juveniles** chestnut and streaked.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable.

SEXING

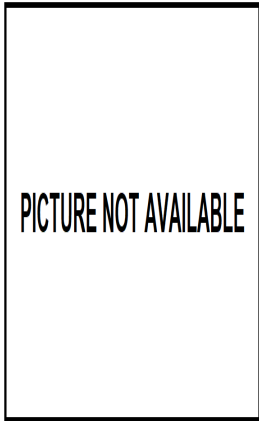
In **adults**, **male** with scapulars, upperparts and tail black with green gloss; greater coverts white or light grey buff; innermost greater covert with inner web bright black like inner secondary and scapulars. **Female** with scapulars, upperparts and tail brown, sometimes strongly tinged rufous, with narrow buff margins; greater coverts uniform buff, yellowish brown or light grey-brown; innermost greater covert with inner web brown like inner secondary and back.



Little Bittern. Sexing. Adult. Pattern of crown: left male; right female (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel).



Little Bittern. Sexing. Adult. Pattern of upperpart: left male; right female.



Little Bittern. Sexing. Adult. Pattern of greater coverts: left male; right female.

AGEING

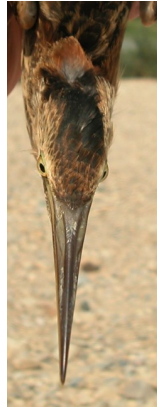
3 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile similar to **adult female**, but forehead and crown feathers with broad pale brown margins; dark striped neck; scapulars and upperparts dark brown with broad buff margins; lesser and median wing coverts dark brown with broad buff margins; primaries with pointed tips.

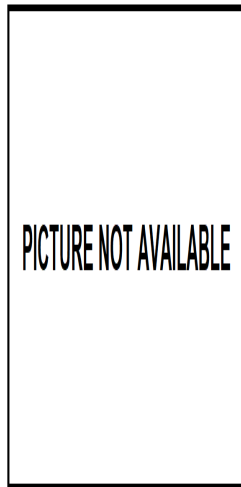
2nd year with retained **juvenile** wing coverts, especially outer greater coverts, darker than the moulted with **adult** pattern; sometimes some inner brownish **juvenile** secondary retained.

Adult with dark inner secondaries, all with similar pattern; median and greater coverts with **adult** pattern, white or grey-buff in **male**, uniform buff in **female**; primaries with rounded tips.

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Little Bittern. Ageing. Pattern of crown: left adult female (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); right juvenile.



Little Bittern. Ageing. Pattern of upperpart: left adult female; right juvenile.



Little Bittern. Ageing. Pattern of greater coverts: left adult female; right juvenile.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult starting in July, suspended before migration and finished in wintering sites. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers and some inner secondaries after arrival in wintering sites. Both age classes have a partial **prebreeding** moult involving a variable number of inner secondaries, mantle and scapulars.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Resident
- Wintering
- On passage



Little Bittern. Female. Adult ().



Little Bittern. 2nd year. Male ().



Little Bittern. 2nd year. Female ().

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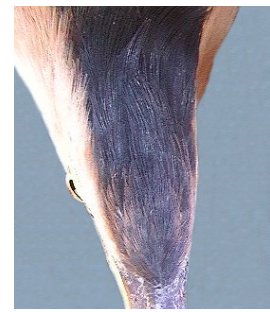
Little Bittern. Juvenile (08-IX).



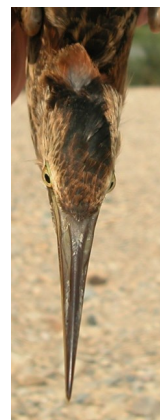
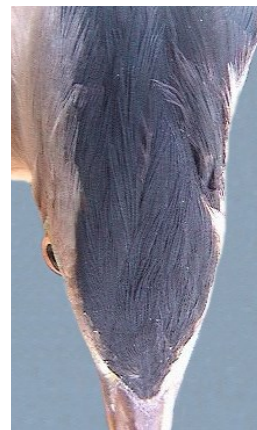
Little Bittern. Adult. Pattern of head and neck: top male (30-VI); bottom female (03-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel).



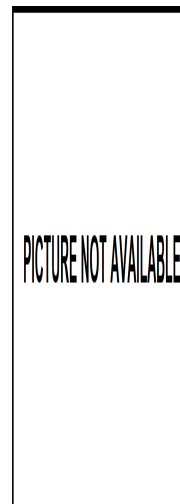
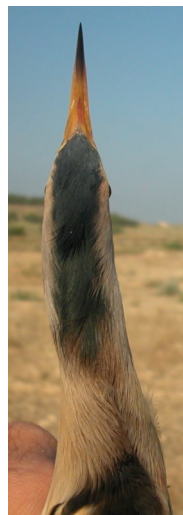
Little Bittern. Pattern of head and neck: top 2nd year male (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); middle 2nd year female (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); bottom juvenile (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (30-VI); right female (03-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel).

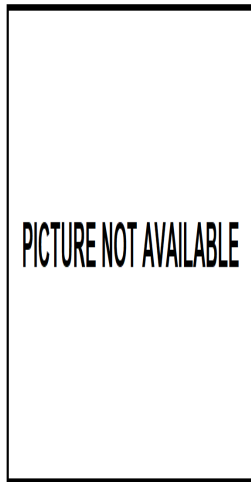
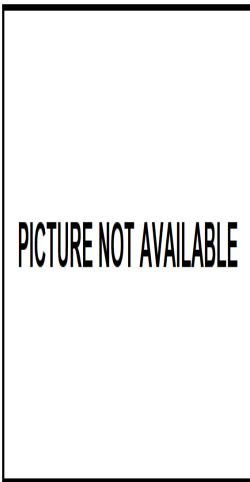


Little Bittern. Crown pattern: top left 2nd year male (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); top right 2nd year female (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); left juvenile (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (30-VI); right female (03-V).

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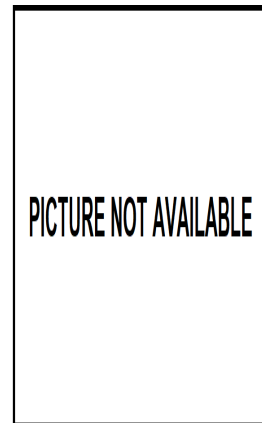
Little Bittern. Breast pattern: top 2nd year male (); middle 2nd year female (); bottom juvenile (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Nape pattern: top left 2nd year male (); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (08-IX).



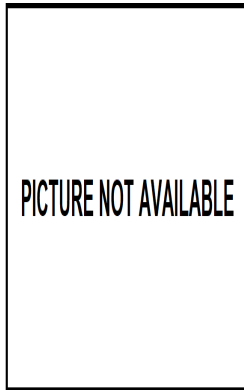
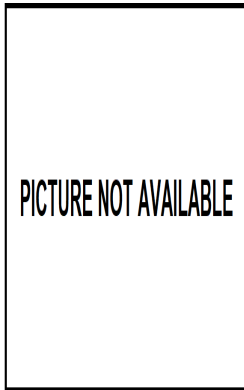
Little Bittern. Adult. Breast pattern: top male (30-VI); bottom female ().



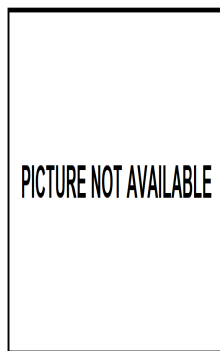
Little Bittern. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (30-VI); right female ().



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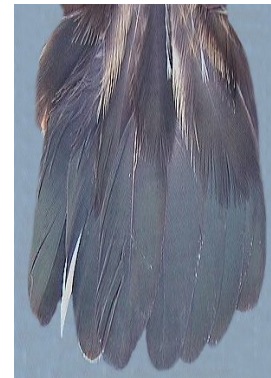
Little Bittern. Upper-part pattern: top left 2nd year male (); top right 2nd year female (); left juvenile (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Legs pattern: top left male (30-VI); middle female (); bottom juvenile (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (30-VI); right female (15-X).



Little Bittern. Tail pattern: top left 2nd year male (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); top right 2nd year female (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); left juvenile (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Adult. Male: pattern of wing covers (30-VI).



Little Bittern. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing covers (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel).



Little Bittern. Adult. Female: pattern of wing covers (15-X).



Little Bittern. Juvenile: pattern of wing covers (08-IX).

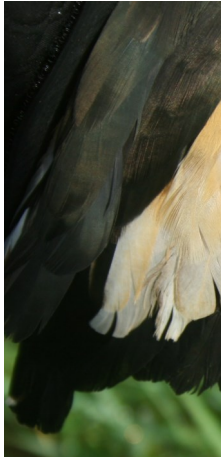


Little Bittern. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing covers (22-IV) (Foto: Marc Illa).



Little Bittern. Adult. Pattern of tertials and scapulars: left male (30-VI); right female ().

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Little Bittern. Pattern of tertials and scapulars: top left 2nd year male (22-IV) (Photo: Marc Illa); top right 2nd year female (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel); left juvenile (08-IX).

Little Bittern. 2nd year. Male: pattern of secondaries (22-IV) (Photo: Marc Illa).



Little Bittern. 2nd year. Female: pattern of secondaries (06-V) (Photo: Reinhard Vohwinkel).



Little Bittern. Adult. Male: pattern of secondaries (30-VI).



Little Bittern. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Adult. Female: pattern of secondaries (15-X).



Little Bittern. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (30-VI).



Little Bittern. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (15-X).

PICTURE NOT AVAILABLE

Little Bittern. 2nd year. Male: pattern of primaries (22-IV) (Photo: Marc Illa).



Little Bittern. 2nd year. Female: pattern of primaries ().



Little Bittern. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (08-IX).



Little Bittern. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (30-VI).

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Little Bittern. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (15-X).



PICTURE NOT AVAILABLE

Little Bittern. 2nd year. Male: pattern of wing (22-IV)
(Photo: Marc Illa).

PICTURE NOT AVAILABLE

PICTURE NOT AVAILABLE

Little Bittern. 2nd year. Female: pattern of wing ().



Little Bittern. Juvenile: pattern of wing (08-IX).