01080 Squacco Heron (Ardeola ralloides)





Squacco Heron. Adult (26-VII).

SQUACCO HERON (Ardeola ralloides)

IDENTIFICATION

44-47 cm. In **breeding** plumage with long nape feathers; buffy-brown upperparts; wings, rump and tail white; head and neck fainthly brown spotted. In **non breeding** plumage with duller colours and shorter nape feathers.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile recalls an adult, but feathers of head and neck shorter and paler buff, streaked dark brown; mantle and scapulars dull brown; tail feathers vaguely mottled brown; inner secondaries brown; shafts of primaries brown; outer primaries tinged dusky on outer webs and rear tips; wing coverts mottled brown; orange-yellowish bill.

2nd year with most of the brown mottlings on wings and tail missing by wear but with **juvenile** primaries with brown shafts, mottled brown at tips.

Adult with long feathers (up to 140 mm) on head and neck, streaked brown-black; mantle and scapulars pink-buff, washed vinous; tail feathers white; inner secondaries and wing coverts washed golden-buff; white primaries; bluish bill.

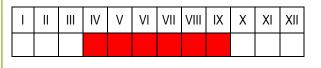
SEXING

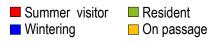
Plumage of both sexes alike. Size can be useful in extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 230 mm, bill longer than 66 mm; **female** with bill shorter than 66 mm. **CAUTION:** birds with wing shorter than 230 mm can belong to both sexes.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in wintering quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers; starts in breeding areas and finished in wintering quarters. Ornamental feathers obtained in **spring** in a **prebreeding** moult, changing also some wing coverts and inner secondaries.

PHENOLOGY







Squacco Heron. Adult: head pattern (26-VII).



Squacco Heron. Adult: crown pattern (26-VII).

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01080 Squacco Heron (Ardeola ralloides)





Squacco Heron. Adult: nape pattern (26-VII).





Squacco Heron. Adult: pattern of wing (26-VII).



Squacco Heron. Adult: breast pattern (26-VII).



Squacco Heron. A d u l t : u p p e r p a r t s pattern (26-VII).



Squacco Heron. Adult: tail pattern (26-VII).

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