

WESTERN GREAT EGRET

(*Ardea alba*)

IDENTIFICATION

85-102 cm. Wholly white plumage; dark bill in **breeding** birds and yellow in winter; legs and feet green blackish; in **breeding** plumage with long ornamental feathers on chest, mantle and scapulars.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Recalls a **Little Egret** which is a smaller heron (55-65 cm).



Little Egret.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile similar to **adult** but without ornamental feathers; yellow bill; fresh plumage.

2nd year spring with **juvenile** flight feathers and tail, all equally worn.

Adult with ornamental feathers well developed in **breeding** plumage; without the long ornamental feathers in winter; black bill in **breeding** period and yellow in winter.

SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult; usually finished in November. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers, usually finished in november. Both types of age have a **prebreeding** moult reduced to ornamental feathers.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Resident
- Wintering
- On passage