

44 Purple Heron

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Purple Heron. Adult. Male (10-IX).

PURPLE HERON (*Ardea purpurea*)

IDENTIFICATION

70-90 cm. Slate upperparts and wing coverts, with chestnut scapulars in **breeding** plumage; chesnut underparts; neck chestnut with two black lateral lines; yellowish legs and bill. **Juveniles** with buff upperparts.



Purple Heron. Pattern of upperparts and head.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Confusion only possible with **Grey Heron**, which has grey neck and wing coverts and pale underparts.

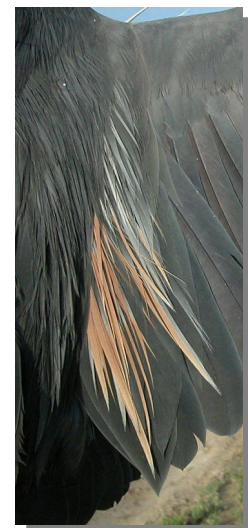
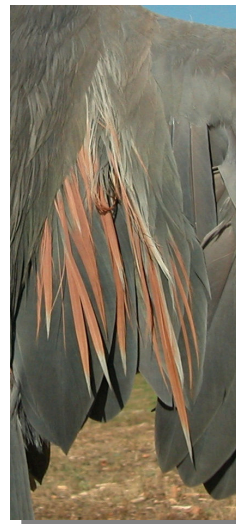


Grey Heron



SEXING

Plumage of both sexes quite alike although **male** with long slender scapulars broad and deep chesnut coloured. **Female** with long slender scapulars narrow and buff coloured. Size can be an useful characteristic in extreme birds (only **adults**): **male** with wing longer than 375 mm; bill longer than 125 mm; **female** with wing shorter than 355 mm; bill shorter than 120 mm.



Purple Heron. Sexing. Pattern of scapulars: left male; right female.

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AGEING

3 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile with chesnut crown; neck tawny-buff loosely mottled, without black lines; without a black line to base of bill to nape; without black lanceolate feathers on nape; without ornamental scapulars; upperparts feathers and wing coverts dark brown with broad buff edges.

2nd year with black crown mixed with brown feathers; upperparts and wing coverts brown with grey tinge; short ornamental scapulars and breast feathers; unmoulted **juvenile** flight feathers brown and worn contrasting with fresh moulted ones.

Adult with black crown; sides of neck rufous-brown with a long black line; black line to base of bill to nape; long ornamental scapulars and breast feathers; in **spring** with long black lanceolate feathers on nape; upperparts and wing coverts slate grey without pale margin; all flight feathers greyish.



Purple Heron. Ageing. Pattern of head and neck: left adult; right juvenile.



Purple Heron. Ageing. Pattern of wing coverts: top adult; bottom juvenile.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually starting in June and finished in wintering sites. Partial **postjuvenile** moult in wintering areas involving body feathers and some wing coverts. Both age classes have a partial **prebreeding** moult confined only to ornamental feathers on nape.

PHENOLOGY

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

STATUS IN ARAGON

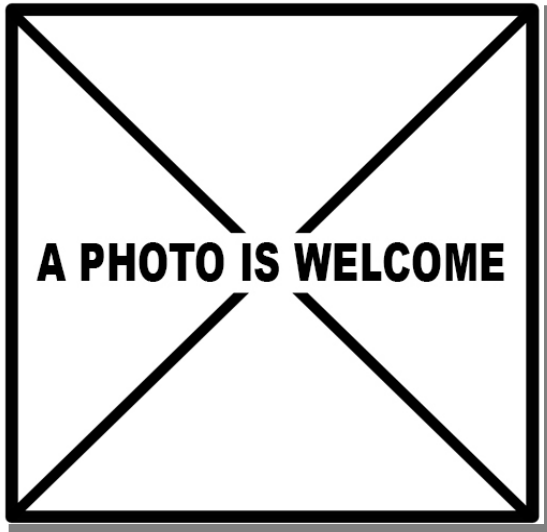
Summer visitor, very scarce breeder with records only in the Ebro Basin.



Purple Heron. Adult. Female (22-IV).

44 Purple Heron

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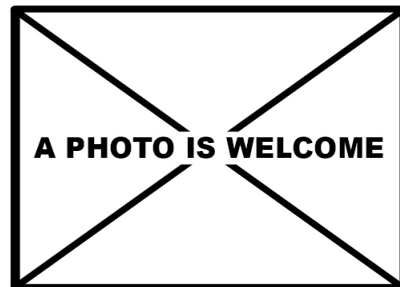
Purple Heron. 2nd year ().



Purple Heron. Adult. Pattern of head and ornamental feathers of neck: top male (10-IX); bottom female (22-IV).



Purple Heron. Juvenile (10-IX).

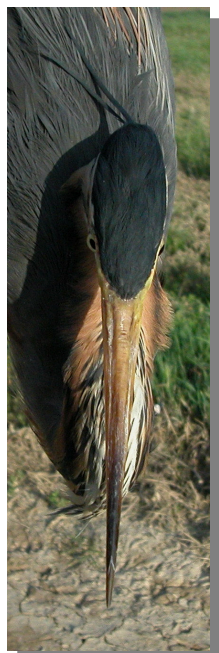
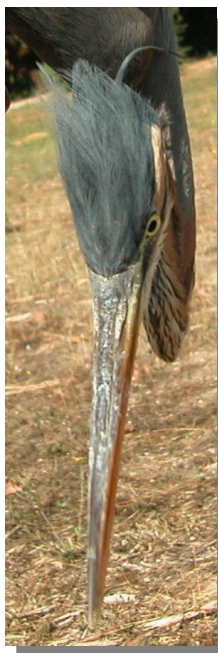


Purple Heron. Pattern of head and ornamental feathers of neck: top 2nd year (); bottom juvenile (10-IX).

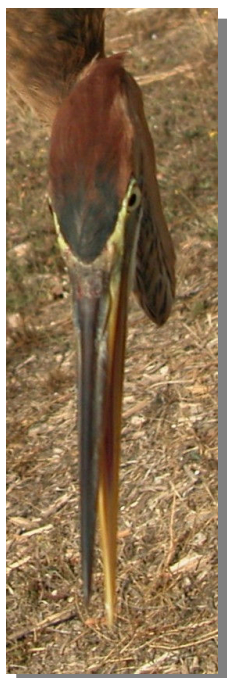
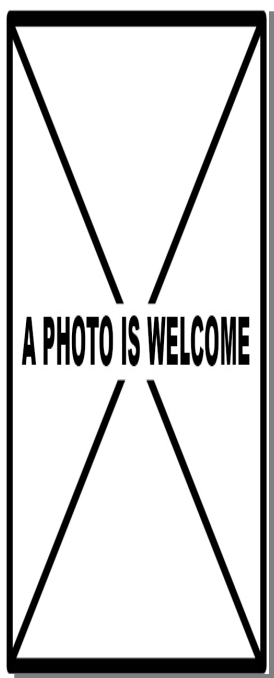


44 Purple Heron

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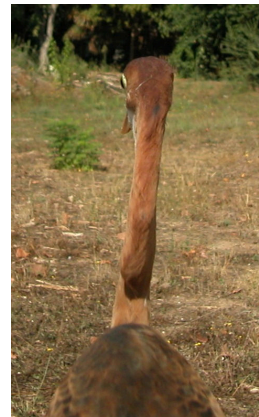
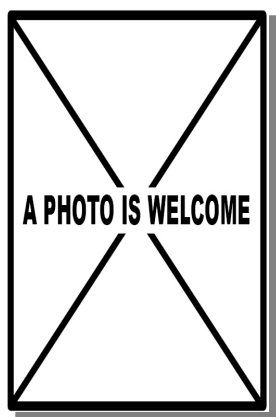
Purple Heron. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (22-IV).



Purple Heron. Crown pattern: left 2nd year (0); right juvenile (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (22-IV).



Purple Heron. Nape pattern: left 2nd year (0); right juvenile (10-IX).

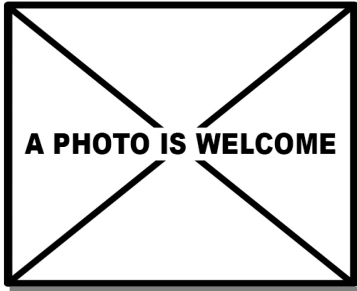


Purple Heron. Adult. Breast pattern: top male (10-IX); bottom female (22-IV).



44 Purple Heron

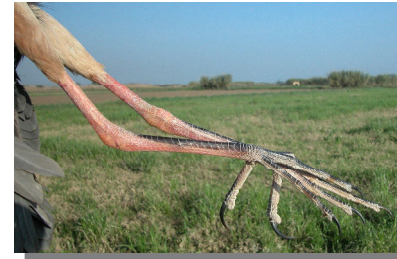
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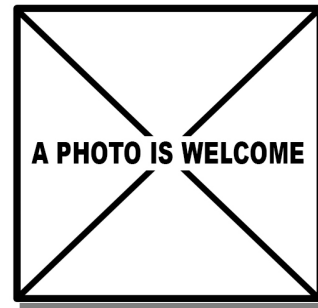
Purple Heron. Breast pattern: top 2nd year (); bottom juvenile (10-IX).



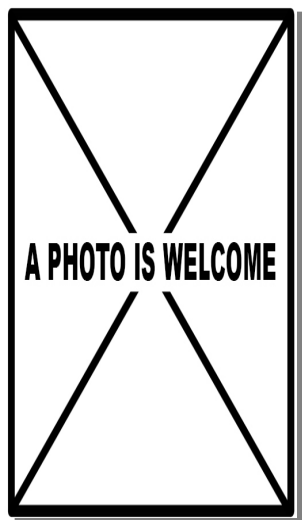
Purple Heron. Adult. Legs pattern: top male (10-IX); bottom female (22-IV).



Purple Heron. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (22-IV).



Purple Heron. Legs pattern: top 2nd year (); bottom juvenile (10-IX).



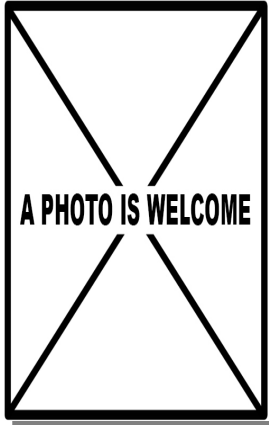
Purple Heron. Upperpart pattern: left 2nd year (); right juvenile (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Adult. Tail pattern: left male (10-IX); right female (22-IV).

44 Purple Heron

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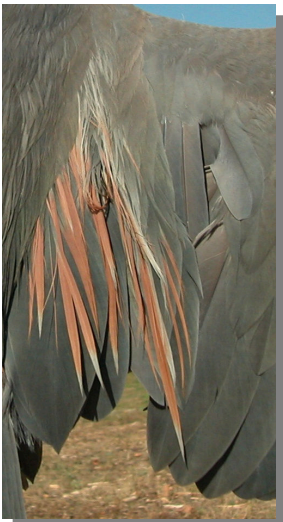
Purple Heron. Tail pattern: left 2nd year (); right juvenile (10-IX).



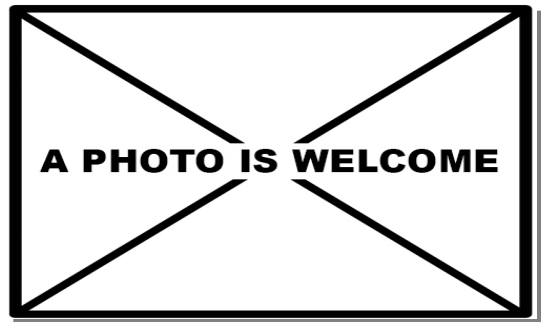
Purple Heron. Adult. Male: pattern of wing covers (10-IX).



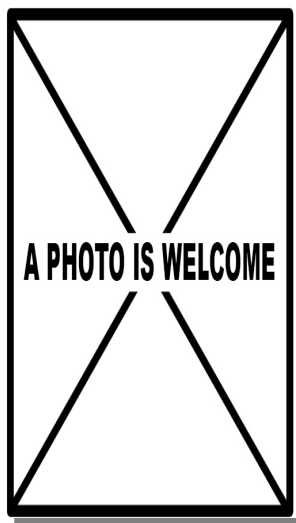
Purple Heron. Adult. Female: pattern of wing covers (22-IV).



Purple Heron. Adult. Pattern of tertials: left male (10-IX); right female (22-IV).



Purple Heron. 2nd year: pattern of wing covers ().



Purple Heron. Pattern of tertials: left 2nd year (); right juvenile (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Juvenile: pattern of wing covers (10-IX).

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Purple Heron. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (10-IX).



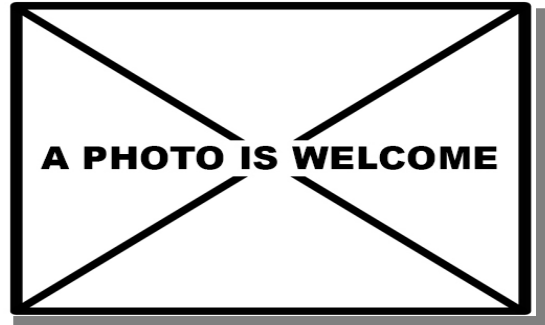
Purple Heron. 2nd year: pattern of primaries (0).



Purple Heron. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (10-IX).

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Purple Heron. 2nd year: pattern of secondaries ().

Purple Heron. Adult. Male: pattern of secondaries (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (10-IX).

Purple Heron. Adult. Female: pattern of secondaries (22-IV).

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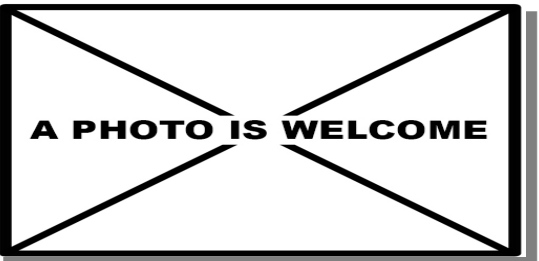
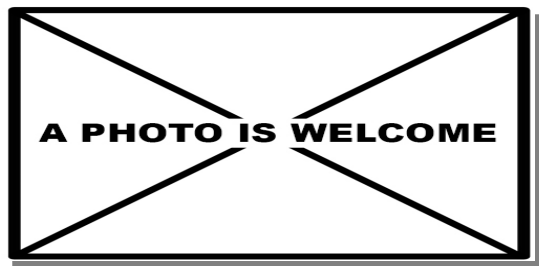
Purple Heron. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Juvenile: pattern of wing (10-IX).



Purple Heron. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (22-IV).



Purple Heron. 2nd year: pattern of wing ().