

COMMON Pochard
(*Aythya ferina*)

IDENTIFICATION

42-49 cm. **Male** with red-chestnut head and neck; black breast and tail coverts; grey wings and body. **Female** pale brown, darker on upperparts and paler on head; grey wings.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Male with unmistakable plumage. The pattern of the body greyer than head; dark bill with a central pale band and a pale strike behind the eye differ the **female** from other **Aythya females**.

SEXING

Male in **breeding** plumage unmistakable with head red-chestnut, breast and upper and undertail coverts black; body vermiculated grey; wing coverts vermiculated grey; iris reddish; in **non breeding** plumage similar to **breeding male** but with duller colours. **Female** with brown body, paler on head and breast; wing coverts grey-brown; iris brown or yellow-brown. In **juvenile** birds, **male** with wing coverts, mantle and scapulars vermiculated or speckled white at tips; central secondaries with pale speckling on the outer web. **Female** with wing coverts, mantle and scapulars usually plain grey-brown, slightly speckled near the tip; secondaries without speckling.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with narrow tail feathers; lesser and median coverts plain grey-brown, narrow and with rounded tips; greater coverts grey-brown, narrow and with rounded tips, with a little or without whitish pipping; outer primary narrow, without gloss; without pale stripe behind the eye.

1st year autumn/2nd year spring with juvenile feathers retained. **CAUTION:** this species has much variation in moult timing, with birds changing only body feathers till others with moulted tertials and flight feathers.

Adult with grey wing coverts vermiculated with white, broad and with rounded tips; **female** with pale stripe behind the eye.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, acquiring eclipse plumage, usually finished in October. Partial **postjuvenile** moult changing body feathers; this species moults during all the winter and some birds can change tertials, all or some tail feathers and some flight feathers. Both types of age have a partial **prebreeding** moult acquiring breeding plumage.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Wintering
- Resident
- On passage