

LITTLE CRAKE (*Zapornia parva*)

IDENTIFICATION

18-20 cm. **Male** with olive brown upperparts, streaked brown and black and with lateral white spots; face and underparts grey bluish; grey undertail feathers with black barred; green bill with a red spot on base. **Female** with upperparts similar to **male**; white throat; buff yellowish underparts; brown flanks with grey and white barred; green bill with a red spot on base.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Water Rail has a long and red bill. **Juvenile** and **adult Spotted Crake** have white speckling on head, breast and nape. **Adult Baillon's Crake** lacks a red spot on base of bill, has a large barred area on flanks and thighs and distinctive white marking on wing coverts; **juvenile** has black dots on crown and more barred chest.



Water Rail

SEXING

Male with slate grey underparts; grey throat and neck. **Female** with buff-brown to salmon-pink underparts; off-white throat and neck.

Juveniles cannot be sexed using plumage characters.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with off-white underparts mottled brown; brown supercilium with brown flecking; tertials and wing coverts with white dotting; grey brown iris: pale green bill.

2nd year similar to **adults**, but **female** with belly paler buff and less salmon; **male** with grey belly washed olive brown; both sexes with retained **juvenile** flight feathers, primary coverts and alula which will be more worn than in **adults**; white **juvenile** spotting reduced through wear and only some, if any, white edges remain.

Adult with plumage described in **SEXING**; without off-white underparts mottled brown; tertials and wing coverts near-uniform without white dotting; scarlet iris: bright green bill.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, with birds completing moult before migration and others with suspended moult which is finished in winter quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers, wing coverts and tertials; some birds start moult in breeding places and other wait till winter areas **CAUTION:** have been described **juvenile** birds with a complete moult. Bad known **prebreeding** moult with probably some body feathers renewed.

PHENOLOGY

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

■ Summer visitor

■ Resident

■ Wintering

■ On passage