

BAILLON'S CRAKE (*Zapornia pusilla*)

IDENTIFICATION

16-19 cm. Reddish brown underparts, with black streaks and white spots; grey bluish forehead; dark brown wings, with white spots on coverts and scapulars; pale grey throat; slate grey underparts; flanks and tail undercoverts barred black and white; green bill.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Water Rail has a long and red bill. **Juvenile** and **adult Spotted Crake** have white speckling on head, breast and nape. **Adult Little Crake** with a red spot on base of bill, without a large barred area on flanks and thighs and without white marking on wing coverts; **juvenile** lacks black dots on crown and less barred chest.



Water Rail

SEXING

Very similar plumage in both sexes; many, but not all birds, can be sexed using colour of chin which is grey as the rest of underparts in **male** and paler than the rest of underparts in **female**. **Juveniles** cannot be sexed using plumage characters.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile with short and rounded streaked on upperparts; whitish-buff underparts with brown speckling; undertail coverts and flanks with dark brown and white barring; off-white throat; cheeks and side of neck off-white with brown mottled; olive-green iris; dark horn bill.

2nd year similar to **adults**, but with retained **juvenile** flight feathers, primary coverts and alula which will be more worn than in **adults**; some birds may still have a small amount of brown in the ear-coverts.

Adult with elongated streaks on upperparts; grey underparts without brown speckling; undertail coverts and flanks with black and white barring; grey throat; grey slate cheeks and side of neck; red-brown iris; deep green bill.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, with birds completing moult before migration and others starting moult in winter quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body and tail feathers; some birds start moult in breeding places and other wait till winter. Bad known **prebreeding** moult with probably some body feathers renewed.

PHENOLOGY

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

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 Summer visitor
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 Resident
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 Wintering
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 On passage