GREY HERON (Ardea cinerea)

IDENTIFICATION
90-98 cm. Grey upperparts and wing coverts; white head, with black supercilium; white neck with two black lines; pale underparts; yellow bill; green or reddish legs.

SEXING
Plumage of both sexes alike; size can be an useful character in extreme birds (only adults): male with wing longer than 475 mm; bill longer than 125 mm; female with wing shorter than 430 mm; bill shorter than 109 mm.

AGEING
4 age groups can be recognized:
Juvenile with grey forehead, crown and neck; upperparts without ornamental feathers; upper mandible dark; with one age of very fresh flight feathers.
1st year winter/2nd year spring with grey crown, striped dull black; dull black nape with ornamental feathers shorter and less glossy than adults; upper mandible dark; with one age of juvenile flight feathers.
2nd year autumn/3rd year spring similar to adults, but with grey forehead and only some white feathers on crown; ornamental feathers shorter than in adults.
Adult with uniform grey upperparts with pale grey ornamental feathers on mantle and scapulars; pure white forehead and crown with black borders; long and glossy ornamental feathers on nape; upper mandible yellow-orange (mainly in spring).
CAUTION: some adults may have grey crown, but always have white nape.

SIMILAR SPECIES
Confusion only possible with Purple Heron, which has chestnut head, neck and underparts.
MOULT

Complete postbreeding moult, usually finished in November. Partial postjuvenile moult confined to most of the body feathers and rarely some wing coverts; flight feathers remain unmoulted till their 2nd year; some birds still moulting in February.

PHENOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>XII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident, very scarce breeder with records in the Ebro river and Sariñena; more common wintering in the Ebro and tributaries.
Grey Heron. Juvenile (27-VII).

Grey Heron. Crown pattern: left adult (12-III); right 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Pattern of head and ornamental feathers on crown: top adult (12-III); bottom 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Pattern of head and ornamental feathers on crown: top 2nd year spring (24-III); bottom juvenile (27-VII).

Grey Heron. Crown pattern: left 2nd year spring (24-III); right juvenile (27-VII).
Grey Heron. Nape pattern: left adult (12-III); right 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Nape pattern: left 2nd year spring (24-III); right juvenile (27-VII).

Grey Heron. Pattern of neck and ornamental feathers on breast: left adult (12-III); right 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Pattern of neck and ornamental feathers on breast: left 2nd year spring (24-III); right juvenile (27-VII).

Grey Heron. Breast pattern: left adult (12-III); right 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Breast pattern: left 2nd year spring (24-III); right juvenile (27-VII).

Grey Heron. Pattern of flank: top adult (12-III); bottom 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Pattern of flank: top 2nd year spring (24-III); bottom juvenile (27-VII).
Grey Heron. Upperpart pattern: left adult (12-III); right 2nd year autumn (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Adult: pattern of primaries (12-III).

Grey Heron. Upperpart pattern: left 2nd year spring (24-III); right juvenile (27-VII).

Grey Heron. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primaries (09-IX).
Grey Heron. 2nd year spring: pattern of primaries (24-III).

Grey Heron. Adult: pattern of secondaries (12-III).


Grey Heron. 2nd year autumn: pattern of secondaries (09-IX).
Grey Heron. 2nd year spring: pattern of secondaries (24-III).


Grey Heron. 2nd year autumn: pattern of wing (09-IX).

Grey Heron. Adult: pattern of wing (12-III).

Grey Heron. 2nd year spring: pattern of wing (24-III).