LITTLE CRAKE (Porzana 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 flancks 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.

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 finised 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

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STATUS IN ARAGON
Poorly known status. There is a breeding record in Cinco Villas, being a more common species on passage.