

# 38 Squacco Heron



Squacco Heron. Adult (26-VII).

## SQUACCO HERON (*Ardeola ralloides*)

### IDENTIFICATION

44-47 cm. In **breeding** plumage with long nape feathers; buffy-brown upperparts; wings, rump and tail white; head and neck faintly brown spotted. In **non breeding** plumage with duller colours and shorter nape feathers.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

### AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

**Juvenile** recalls an **adult**, but feathers of head and neck shorter and paler buff, streaked dark brown; mantle and scapulars dull brown; tail feathers vaguely mottled brown; inner secondaries brown; shafts of primaries brown; outer primaries tinged dusky on outer webs and rear tips; wing coverts mottled brown; orange-yellowish bill.

**2nd year** with most of the brown mottlings on wings and tail missing by wear but with **juvenile** primaries with brown shafts, mottled brown at tips.

**Adult** with long feathers (up to 140 mm) on head and neck, streaked brown-black; mantle and scapulars pink-buff, washed vinous; tail feathers white; inner secondaries and wing coverts washed golden-buff; white primaries; bluish bill.

### SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike. Size can be useful in extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 230 mm, bill longer than 66 mm; **female** with bill shorter than 66 mm. **CAUTION:** birds with wing shorter than 230 mm can belong to both sexes.

### MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in wintering quarters. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers; starts in breeding areas and finished in wintering quarters. Ornamental feathers obtained in **spring** in a **prebreeding** moult, changing also some wing coverts and inner secondaries.

### PHENOLOGY

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

### STATUS IN ARAGON

Summer visitor, with very scarce breeding pairs in Sariñena and some places of the Ebro river.



Squacco Heron. Adult: head pattern (26-VII).



Squacco Heron. Adult: crown pattern (26-VII).

# 38 Squacco Heron



Squacco Heron.  
Adult: nape  
pattern (26-  
VII).



Squacco Heron. Adult: pattern of wing (26-VII).



Squacco Heron.  
Adult: breast  
pattern (26-  
VII).



Squacco Heron.  
A d u l t :  
u p p e r p a r t s  
p a t t e r n (26-  
VII).



Squacco Heron.  
Adult: tail  
pattern (26-  
VII).