

34 Bittern**MOULT**

Complete **postbreeding** moult; usually finished in January. Partial **postjuvenile** moult confined to body feathers; some birds have a more extensive moult changing wing coverts, tail, scapulars and flight feathers; usually finished in November.

PHENOLOGY

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

BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*)**IDENTIFICATION**

70-80 cm. Brown upperparts with golden tinge and strongly streaked; underparts brown-yellowish; black crown and moustachial stripe; yellow greenish bill.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike. Size can be an useful character: **male** with wing longer than 335 mm; **female** with wing shorter than 327 mm.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile recalls an **adult** but black of crown tinged brown and smaller, usually not extending to nape; moustachial streak brown; mantle and scapulars strongly mottled and vermiculated; outer primaries narrow and pointed.

1st year autumn/2nd year spring similar to **adult**; if feathers on wing coverts, flight feathers, tail or scapulars have been moulted, then with two generations of feathers; if feathers on wing and tail have only one generation, then with **juvenile** pattern.

Adult with black crown extending to nape; moustachial streak black; mantle and scapulars softly mottled and vermiculated; outer primaries broad and with rounded tips; with only one generation of feathers

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident, with located breeding pairs in reed fields of Gallocanta, Cinco Villas, Sarrriena and Bajo Cinca.