



Grey Heron

Héron cendré



Ardea cinerea

This heron is the largest in Europe. It is grey above and white below, with a whitish head, neck and thighs. The neck has black flamingo markings. Bill and legs are yellowish. L. 84-102 cm; W. 155-175 cm.

Breeding adult: adults in breeding plumage have long, fine, black feathers on the back of the head.

Non breeding adult: like the breeding adult without the fine feathers on the head.

Juveniles: at birth, the chick is dark grey-brown on the upperparts, the flanks are pale grey, the underside is white. The bill is rather short and thick, brownish. Green legs. Young fledglings are more uniformly grey and darker than adults.

Voice given by the adults : short, low-pitched "khrèèik .

Eggs: Pale greenish-blue. Mostly between 3 and 6 eggs.

Nests: the nest is larger than that of other herons. In trees it is built with thicker branches. In reedbeds it is a large platform made of reeds.

Habitat: the Grey Heron is either tree-nesting and breeds with other heron species, such as the Little Egret in mixed colonies, or it nests on the ground in reeds with the Purple Heron.

Similar species: Purple Heron but the chick of this species is brown. In reedbeds the nests are larger than those of this species and widely spaced.

Breeding adult



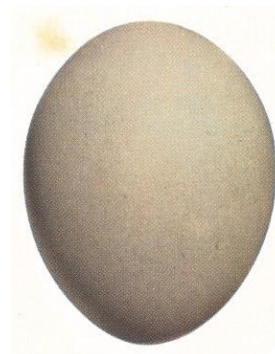
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Non breeding adult



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Egg



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Three weeks old chick



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Flying juvenile



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