



Cattle Egret

Héron gardeboeuf



Bubulcus ibis

This heron has a stocky appearance. It is fairly short-legged with a broad, short neck. L. 45-52 cm; W. 82-95 cm.

Breeding adult: white except for an erectile crest covering the head and nape of the neck which is orange-red and feathers of the same colour on the back and breast. The usually yellow bill and legs turn bright red at the time of egg laying.

Non breeding adult: its plumage is entirely white. The bill is yellow and the legs are grey.

Adult voice « ark » ou « ag ag ag ».

Juveniles: at birth the chick is white, with a prominent crest on top of the head, white sweetbread and a short, thick, yellow/green bill. As it grows, the bill becomes dark grey with a small light tip.

Eggs: blue-white slightly larger than those of the little egret. Lower clutch (rather 3-4).

Nests: like that of Little Egret.

Habitat: The Cattle Egret is arboreal and breeds mostly with other heron species, like the Little Egret in mixed colonies.

Similar species: The closely related Little Egret has a two-coloured bill (pink with black tip that became colour flesh and black).

Breeding adult



© I. Badone / Tour du Valat

Non-breeding adult



© J.E. Roche

Nest with eggs



©T. Fuentes

Egg and one-week chicks



©T. Fuentes

Two weeks chick



©T. Fuentes