

## THE SMALL GREBES



• *Little Grebe on nest.*

Photo: A. J. Elliott



• *Hoary-headed Grebe at nest.*

Photo: C. E. Bryant

## The Small Grebes *Podiceps* spp.

The Little Grebe *Podiceps ruficollis* and the Hoary-headed Grebe *P. poliocephalus* are readily distinguished in breeding plumage. However, separation is more difficult during the winter

when the birds are in non-breeding plumage. The following characters help distinguish these birds in the hand.

### LITTLE GREBE

*Podiceps ruficollis*

*Neck:* Some rufous or buff from behind eye and down the side of the neck.

*Sides of face:* Line of dark crown feathers passes through centre of the eye.

*Crown:* Uniformly dark brown; no white streaks.

*Bill:* Nostrils with rounded ends.

*Feathered borderline between forehead and culmen:* Convex.

### HOARY-HEADED GREBE

*Podiceps poliocephalus*

*Neck:* Sides white; no rufous or buff.

*Sides of face:* Line of dark crown feathers passes just below eye.

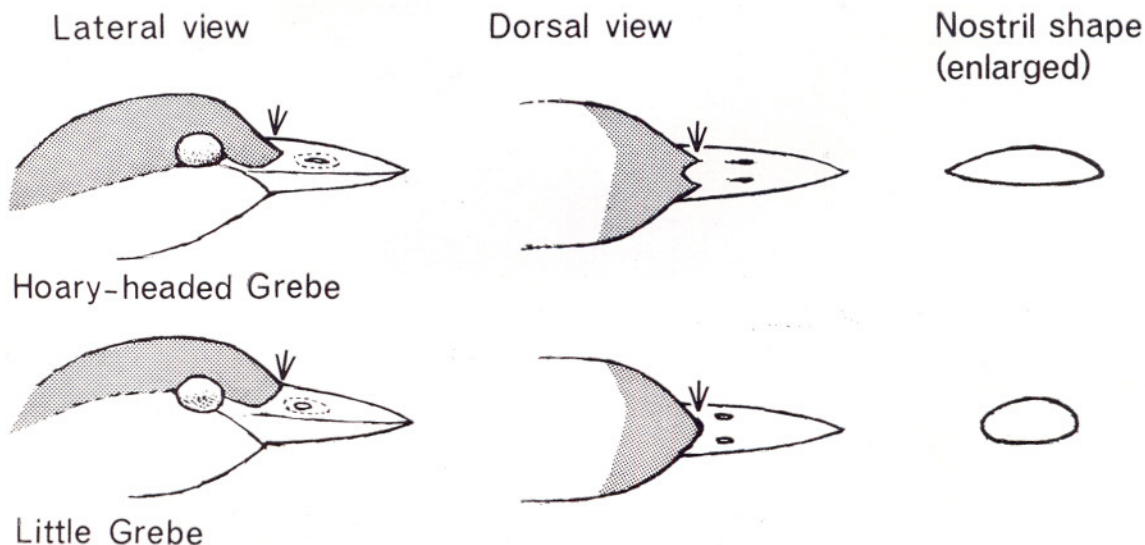
*Crown:* Dark brown, often with some white streaks on forehead and sides due to developing breeding plumes.

*Bill:* Nostrils with pointed ends.

*Feathered borderline between forehead and culmen:* Concave, with ends pointing towards nasal groove.

#### DIAGNOSTIC CHARACTERS

Shape of the nostrils and the feathered borderline between forehead and culmen appear to be diagnostic at all ages.



• Figure 1. The main diagnostic characters are illustrated. The feathered borderline between forehead and culmen is indicated by arrows.

Drawings by F. Knight