

'Siberian' Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita tristis*)

Date: 30/11 – 9/12/19

Location: Auchenharvie Pond area, Stevenston, North Ayrshire

A rare visitor from Siberia, from Urals eastwards, with 100-145 per year in the UK (Hume *et al.* 2016). Treated as a subspecies of Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita collybita*) by BOURC, though is treated as a full monotypic species by Dutch CDNA.

Found by Jason McManus, initially identified by the higher pitched call than *collybita*. Song is very different from *collybita* though was not heard during its time at Auchenharvie.



Supercilium more pronounced than upper eye ring (van Duivendijk 2010; Garner 2014)

White underbelly (Garner 2014)



Grey-brown mantle (Svensson 2009)

Faint greenish tinge to secondary & primaries (van Duivendijk 2010)

Black legs (Jiguet & Audevard 2016)



Grey-brown crown (van Duivendijk 2010)

Very pale underbelly contrasting with grey brown upper body (Garner 2014)



Supercilium more pronounced than upper eye ring (van Duivendijk 2010; Garner 2014)

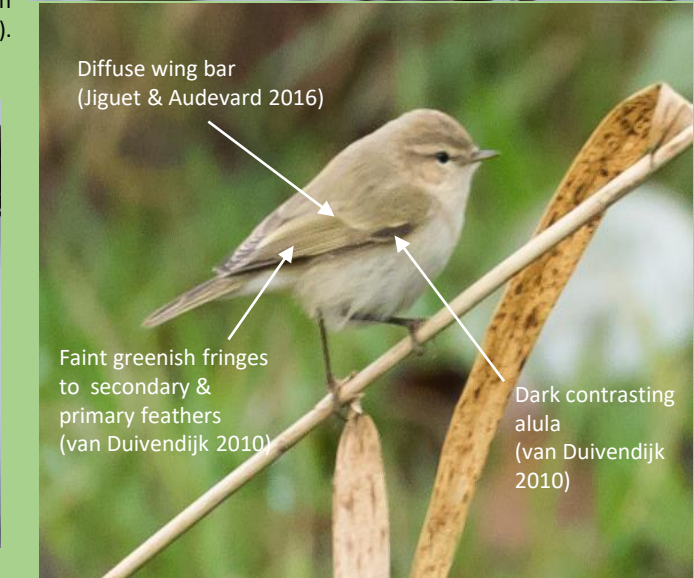
Very pale underbelly contrasting with grey brown upper body (Garner 2014)

Possible Confusion

There are morphological similarities with subspecies *abietinus* (clearly differentiated by call and song) and these two subspecies do overlap in range, so hybrids could not be ruled out (Shirihai & Svensson 2018). Ageing without seeing the bird in the hand is unreliable.



Tobacco-coloured (warm brownish) ear coverts (van Duivendijk 2010; Garner 2014)



Diffuse wing bar (Jiguet & Audevard 2016)

Faint greenish fringes to secondary & primary feathers (van Duivendijk 2010)

Dark contrasting alula (van Duivendijk 2010)



Dark beak with pale cutting edges (van Duivendijk 2010; Jiguet & Audevard 2016)

Summary

Whilst there are obvious morphological differences which clearly indicate this subspecies, there are some who may also require a recording of its call and song or DNA for safe identification. This subspecies is currently not reviewed by BBRC, SBRC or ABRC.

References

- Garner, M. (2014) *Birding Frontiers Challenge Series: Autumn*, Birding Frontiers
- Hume, R., Still, R., Swash, A., Harrop, H. & Tipling, D. (2016) *Britain's Birds*, Princetown University Press: Oxford
- Jiguet, F. & Audevard, A. (2016) *Tous Les Oiseaux Rares D'Europe*, Delachaux et Niestle: Paris
- Shirihai, H. & Svensson, L. (2018) *Handbook of Western Palearctic Birds Passerines: Larks to Warblers*, Helm: London
- Svensson, L. (2009) *Collins Bird Guide 2nd Edition*, HarperCollins: London
- Van Duivendijk, N. (2010) *Advanced Bid ID Guide: The Western Palearctic*, New Holland Publishers: London