Nominate Hume's Whitethroats in the Netherlands in September 2014 and Finland in November-December 2020

van der Vliet, Rinse; de Knijff, Peter; Kvist, Laura; Lehikoinen, Petteri; Lehikoinen, Aleksi ...

2023
Dutch Birding Association
http://hdl.handle.net/10138/356713
van der Vliet, R, de Knijff, P, Kvist, L, Lehikoinen, P, Lehikoinen, A, van der Spek, V & Velmala, W 2023, 'Nominate Hume's Whitethroats in the Netherlands in September 2014 and Finland in November-December 2020', Dutch Birding, Vuosikerta. 45, Nro 1, Sivut 17-25. < https://www.dutchbirding.nl/journal/ref/DB_45:17-25 >

Nominate Hume's Whitethroats in the Netherlands in September 2014 and Finland in November-December 2020

Rinse van der Vliet, Peter de Knijff, Laura Kvist, Petteri Lehikoinen, Aleksi Lehikoinen, Vincent van der Spek & William Velmala

In 2014 and 2020, nominate Hume's Whitethroats *Sylvia althaea althaea* (hereafter nominate *althaea*) were recorded in the Netherlands and Finland, respectively. Both records are documented in this paper.

The Netherlands, 16 September 2014

In 2013-20, five ringing stations in the Netherlands, ie, Vrs Castricum, Castricum, Noord-Holland; Vrg De Grauwe Gans, Almere, Flevoland; Vrs Meijendel, Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland; Vrs Schiermonnikoog, Schiermonnikoog, Friesland; and Vrs Van Lennep, Bloemendaal, Noord-Holland, cooperated in sampling body feathers of 'lesser whitethroats' sensu lato (ie, *S curruca* and *S althaea*) for DNA analysis. A random selection method was used, with the exception of 'suspicious' birds (presumed rare taxa) always being sampled. In addition, both feather and faeces samples of 'suspicious' (for instance wintering) birds from other sites in the country were collected since 2006. By analysing the sequence variation in the mitochondrial cytochrome b gene (mtDNA cytb) in DNA that was extracted from these samples, it was aimed to develop a better understanding of the occurrence and identification of (local) nominate Western Lesser Whitethroat *S curruca* (hereafter nominate *curruca*), two vagrant Asian taxa recorded by DNA analysis in previous years, ie, Siberian Lesser Whitethroat *S a blythi* (hereafter *blythi*) and Desert Lesser Whitethroat *S a halimodendri* (hereafter *halimodendri*) and possibly even new taxa for the Netherlands. For information on current taxonomy of lesser whitethroats, see, eg, Redactie Dutch Birding (2014).

On 16 September 2014, Rinse van der Vliet ringed (Arnhem BC49171), photographed and collected a body-feather of a lesser whitethroat at Vrs Meijendel. Since this bird did not look like a typical nominate *curruca*, RvdV took more photographs than usual. When the DNA results became available, it was a surprise that the cytb sequence of this bird matched that of nominate *althaea*. The Dutch rarities committee (CDNA) accepted it in July 2021. This represented a new taxon for the Netherlands and, as far as we are aware of, also for Europe.

Description

The description is based on photographs and measurements taken by RvdV.

GENERAL IMPRESSION Clearly lesser whitethroat but with strikingly long and strong bill.
HEAD Like lesser whitethroat, although little darker than in typical nominate *curruca*. No pale supercilium. Pale eye-ring broken at sides. Lore and ear-coverts darkest parts of head, creating dark-grey mask, though contrast not very prominent. Neck greyish.
UPPERPARTS Rather dark greyish-brown, just slightly contrasting with greyish neck. Rump grey.
UNDERPARTS Hard to judge from photographs. Upper chest and front side of flank greyish brown, contrasting with whiter lower breast and belly.
TAIL Mostly dark grey to blackish, sharply contrasting with pure white parts. Outer tail feather (t6) with completely white outer web; inner web largely white, contrasting with sharply demarcated blackish wedge at basal half. T5 with strikingly deep, pure white wedge on inner web, sharply contrasting with otherwise very dark feather. T4 with white fringes on inner web.
WING Brownish, except for more greyish lesser and median coverts. Remiges with paler fringes, especially on secondaries.
MOULT & WEAR Tertials and tail feathers worn. No moult contrast visible in greater coverts.
BARE PARTS Upper mandible dark grey. Lower mandible largely dark grey but with pinkish lower part. Iris plain greyish-brown. Leg grey.
WING STRUCTURE P2 (primaries numbered from outside inwards) remarkably short, tip falling just short of tip of p8. P3-5 emarginated.
MEASUREMENTS Wing length 67 mm. Weight 13.7 g. Fat score 1 (cf Busse & Kania 1970).

Identification on morphology

The tail colour and pattern provide a strong identi-

7-10 Hume's Whitethroat / Humes Braamsluiper *Sylvia althaea althaea*, Meijendel, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands, 16 September 2014 *(Rinse van der Vliet)*

fication feature. In general, the Asian lesser whitethroat taxa have more white in the outer tail feathers. Nominate *althaea* has a large bill, which is clearly visible in the photographs. The wing length of 67 mm would not be unusual for a nominate *curruca:* 65.8 (60.0-72.0; Shirihai et al 2001) or 59-70 (72) mm (Demongin 2016). In nominate *althaea*, 80% have a wing length longer than 66 mm (63-76) (Loskot 2001, Demongin 2016). The Meijendel bird has a dark tail, sharply contrasting with the pure white parts. Such a dark tail with a strongly demarcated, deep white wedge on the tip of the inner web of t5 has been described for nominate *althaea* and *halimodendri* (Svensson 1992, Shirihai et al 2001, Demongin 2016). According to Shirihai et al (2001), both *halimodendri* and *S a margelanica* (hereafter *margelanica*) can show a similar white wedge on t5. Two proven *halimodendri* (by mtDNA) from Kazakhstan (Dutch Birding 38: 390, plate 596-597, 2016) and the Netherlands (Dutch Birding 29: 137, plate 183, 2007) showed an obvious white tip to the outer three tail feathers. The Dutch *halimodendri* (present in the winters of 2005/06 and 2006/07) had a wedge on t5 but not nearly as deep as in the Meijendel bird. All other lesser whitethroat taxa usually seem to lack this prominent wedge. A wedge as deep as in the Dutch bird therefore seems to be a strong pointer for nominate *althaea* that might be of use in the field as well, although more work is needed to sort this out. However, one Finnish mtDNA proven *blythi* also showed a clear wedge, although not quite as steep as in this bird. The length of p2 is an important feature within the lesser whitethroat complex. Nominate *curruca* has – on average – the longest one: p2 usually falls between p5 and p6 and sometimes between p4 and p7 as extremes (Demongin 2016). Asian taxa have a shorter p2

TABLE 1 Measurements (for wing, tail and bill length, average and range given; mm) and wing structure data of 'lesser whitethroat' *Sylvia althaea/curruca* taxa based on Shirihai & Svensson (2018) and both records of *S a althaea* from the Netherlands (2014) and Finland (2020)

taxon	**wing length**	**emargination in primaries**	**p2 similar to…**	**tail length**	**bill length**
althaea	69 (65-74)	p2-5, sometimes p6	p6/7 or p7 (66%) p7/8 (23%)	56 (51.5-63)	13.6 (12.3-14.8)
curruca	66.5 (60-72)	p2-5	p5/6 (72%) p6 (11%) p6/7 (14%) p5 or p4/5 (3%)	55 (51-62)	12.7 (11.0-13.8)
blythi	65 (61-70.5)	?	p6/7 (54%) p5/6 (20%) p6 (19%) p7 or 7/8 (13%)	55 (51-60)	12.7 (11.2-13.8)
halimodendri	63 (58-68)	p2-5, sometimes p6	p7 or p7/8 (52%) p6 or p6/7 (33%) p8 or p8/9 (14%) p9 (1%)	55 (50-60)	12.0 (10.6-13.7)
margelanica	69 (64-73)	?	?	60 (54-65)	12.1 (11.1-13.5)
minula	62 (59.5-64)	p2-5, often p6	p7 or 7/8 (57%) p8 (32%) p6/7 (11%)	54 (50-57)	11.6 (10.9-12.5)
althaea, Meijendel, Netherlands	67	p2-5, possibly weak in p6	p7/8	not measured	not measured, looking strong
althaea, Helsinki, Finland	68	p2-5, weak in p6	p7/8	58	not measured, looking strong

and nominate *althaea* has one of the shortest, which results in a more rounded wing; usually, p2 falls between p6 and p8 but exceptionally even between p8 and p9. In the Meijendel bird, p2 indeed falls slightly short of p8 (between p8 and p9). Based on current knowledge, only *halimodendri* sometimes has a p2 that is nearly as short (p2=p5/6-p8; Demongin 2016). Within the Dutch lesser whitethroat project, the Meijendel bird had the shortest p2 of all sampled birds.

Nominate *althaea* is usually a relatively dark lesser whitethroat in which the mask only slightly contrasts with the other parts of the head. The Meijendel bird is certainly not pale but it does not seem to be very dark either, with the exception of the tail. The mask, however, is not very prominent.

The greyish-brown iris and the unmoulted tertials point towards a first calendar-year bird. There is no moult contrast visible in the greater coverts, a feature often visible in lesser whitethroats sensu lato of this age. The amount of white in the tail matches an adult rather than an immature (cf Svensson 1992) but at least first calendar-year nominate *curruca* are capable of moulting their entire tail (Demongin 2016). Assuming this is also true for nominate *althaea*, this does not seem to contradict the presumed ageing.

To conclude: although we expected nominate *althaea* to be slightly darker in general, the combination of long bill, dark tail, pattern of the outer two tail feathers and wing formula fits nominate *althaea* and rules out *blythi* and nominate *curruca*. Only *halimodendri* may come close in appearance but plumage features and structure fit nominate *althaea* better. One may wonder if this combination of features can be considered diagnostic, even in a vagrant context. In combination with the mtDNA analysis, however, the identification as nominate *althaea* is justified.

DNA analysis

Based on mtDNA cytb sequence variation, Olsson et al (2013) identified six genetically distinct populations (figure 1). These correspond with pre-

TABLE 2 Plumage descriptions of 'lesser whitethroat' *Sylvia althaea/curruca* taxa based on Shirihai & Svensson (2018) and both records of *S a althaea* from the Netherlands (2014) and Finland (2020)

taxon	**tail pattern 1cy**	**crown**	**ear-coverts**	**back**	**underparts**
althaea	t6 largely pure white, tip of t5 white	darker (lead)grey (fore)crown	darker than crown	grey but in autumn often more brown-tinged	whiter, less buffy warm than others
curruca	t6 not pure white	greyish	darker than crown	dull earth-brown	often faint pinkish flush
blythi	t6 not pure white	greyish	darker than crown	sometimes paler and browner than *curruca*	often faint pinkish flush
halimodendri	more pure white t6 than *curruca*	paler and sandier grey-brown than *curruca*	not clearly dark	paler and sandier grey-brown than *curruca*	often pinkish-buff flank
margelanica	t6 largely pure white	grey	darker than crown	slightly darker than *minula*	side tinged creamy-buff (not pink)
minula	t6 largely pure white	grey	slightly darker than crown	trifle paler than *halimodendri*	side tinged creamy-buff (not pink)
althaea, Meijendel, Netherlands	outer tail feather (t6) with completely white outer web; inner web largely white, contrasting with sharply demarcated blackish wedge at base; t5 with strikingly deep, pure white wedge on inner web, sharply contrasting with otherwise very dark feather; t4 with white fringes on inner web	grey, fore crown not darker than crown	lore and ear-coverts darkest parts of head, creating dark grey mask, although contrast not very prominent	dark greyish-brown, just slightly contrasting with greyish neck	upper chest and front side of flank greyish-brown, contrasting with whiter lower breast and belly
althaea, Helsinki, Finland	largely pure white t6, tip of t5 clearly pure white	grey, fore crown darker than crown	clearly darker than crown	difficult to interpret from images, brownish hue in sunshine photographs	white or whitish

viously described taxa nominate *althaea, blythi, curruca, halimodendri, margelanica* and *minula*. Nominate *althaea*, *blythi*, *halimodendri* and *margelanica* are part of a clade (*S althaea*; Redactie Dutch Birding 2014) that separated between 4.2 and 7.2 million years ago from the second clade (*S curruca*), with nominate *curruca* and *S c minula* (hereafter *minula*). Nominate *curruca* and *minula* diverged between 2.3 and 4.4 million years ago. Divergence between the four taxa of the first clade occurred later, between 1 and 2.5 million years ago (Olsson et al 2013).

DNA from feathers of the Meijendel bird was extracted and the sequence of a fragment of 555 base pairs of the mtDNA cytb gene was obtained and compared with 212 similar sequences described by Olsson et al (2013). The results were deposited in GenBank (MW727221). For further technical data and details of the DNA analysis, see figure 1 and https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7498548. Based on the sequence variation we constructed a network (figure 1) that illustrates the marked genetic mtDNA differentiation among the six lesser whitethroat populations. The mtDNA

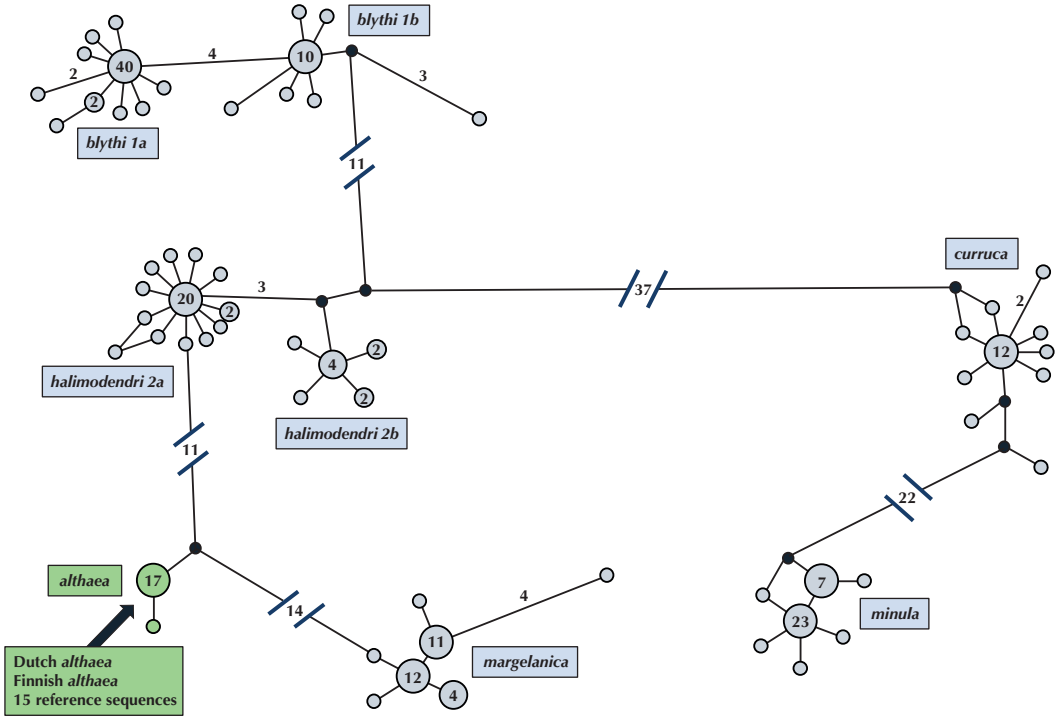


FIGURE 1 Network of variation in mtDNA cytochrome B gene fragment (cytb; 555 base pairs) of six 'lesser whitethroats' sensu lato (ie, *Sylvia althaea* and *S curruca*). For this network, sequences of 212 individuals as described by Olsson et al (2013) and Hume's Whitethroat *S a althaea* from Finland and the Netherlands were combined. Each circle represents unique cytb sequence of 555 base pairs. Relative diameter of each circle is indication of its frequency in total dataset (n=214). Number inside circles: number of times that sequence was observed. Circle without number: sequences found in one individual only. Small black dot: inferred (not observed) sequences necessary to construct network. Short line between circles without number marks differences between two haplotypes on one position (out of total of 555 positions), other longer line marks two or more (as indicated by numbers along lines) different positions. Specific haplotypes of *S a althaea* shown in green. / Netwerk van variatie in cytochroom-B-genfragment (cytb; 55 baseparen) van zes braamsluipers sensu lato (ie, *Sylvia althaea* en *S curruca*). Voor dit netwerk zijn sequenties van 212 individuen zoals beschreven door Olsson et al (2013) en Humes Braamsluiper *S a althaea* uit Finland en Nederland gecombineerd. Iedere cirkel is unieke cytb-sequentie van 555 baseparen. Relatieve diameter van cirkel is indicatie voor frequentie van sequentie in totale dataset (n=214). Nummer in cirkel: aantal malen dat sequentie is waargenomen. Ongenummerde cirkel: unieke sequenties die bij slechts één exemplaar is waargenomen. Kleine zwarte stip: veronderstelde (niet waargenomen) sequentie nodig om netwerk te construeren. Ongenummerde korte lijn tussen cirkels markeert verschil van één positie (op 555 posities). Genummerde lijn markeert twee of meer (aangegeven door nummer) verschillende posities. Specifieke haplotypes van *S a althaea* aangegeven in groen.

cytb sequence haplotype (shown in green in figure 1) of the bird trapped at Meijendel matches with the haplotype of 15 nominate *althaea* individuals sampled in Kyrgyzstan (Olsson et al 2013) and is very distinct from the haplotypes of all other lesser whitethroat taxa.

Finland, 8 November to 8 December 2020

While on a regular birdwatching outing on Sunday 8 November 2020, Matias Castrén, Virpi Castrén and Jukka Lahtinen found a very late lesser whitethroat in a city park in Lauttasaari, close to downtown Helsinki, Finland. The bird was foraging on insects high up in birch canopy. It continued to forage for half an hour at the site, when it disappeared behind some nearby buildings. The conditions for photographing were difficult but some reasonable images were obtained. Some local twitchers were alerted on the site as late autumn lesser whitethroats always contain the possibility for an eastern taxon. From the photographs, indeed, some of the characters suggestive of one of

11-12 Hume's Whitethroat / Humes Braamsluiper *Sylvia althaea althaea*, Helsinki, Finland, 8 November 2020 *(Jukka A Lahtinen)*. Seemingly rather heavy billed with dark mask and greyish-brown upperparts. Short p2 and slight emargination on p6 visible. **13** Hume's Whitethroat / Humes Braamsluiper *Sylvia althaea althaea*, Helsinki, Finland, 8 December 2020 *(Jukka A Lahtinen)*. T6 nearly all white and tip of t5 largely white.

the eastern or Asian taxa could be seen: apart from the grey-brown colouration of the upperparts, t6 was completely white, there was a large white wedge on the tip of t5, p2 was short and the bird looked large compared with a regular Finnish lesser whitethroat.

The bird was not seen again until 28 November, when Petteri Lehikoinen found a rattling lesser whitethroat half an hour after sunset on the same spot where the bird had been seen three weeks earlier. From then on, it was easier to see and it attracted many birders until 8 December, when Pekka Rusanen caught it for ringing. Based on plumage features, it became clear that the bird was the same individual JL had found and photographed three weeks earlier. It had probably been there all the time, without being noticed by birders. During this latter observation period, the bird was occasionally very vocal, and several good quality recordings were made of its contact calls. It seemed to move around in the neighbourhood and to feed silently during the day but in the late afternoon it appeared at the original spot and was calling actively. The rattle call typically consisted of 4-11 notes but sometimes shorter, only 1-3 notes.

The bird was photographed and measured in the hand but because of poor light conditions the colour hues were difficult to assess. Some feathers were obtained during ringing and these were sent to the University of Oulu, Finland. DNA was extracted from the feathers and the cytb gene was analysed in January 2021 by Laura Kvist and coworkers. The sequence was found to be identical to the nominate *althaea* samples in GenBank.

Since the news about the 2014 Dutch nominate *althaea* had only been shared by Ławicki & van den Berg (2017), the Finnish record was initially considered to be the first for Europe. The Finnish national rarities committee accepted the record on 9 March 2021 based on the DNA and supporting plumage details and call characteristics.

Description

The description is based on photographs by JL and measurements taken by PR.

GENERAL IMPRESSION Appearing large for lesser whitethroat, with strong bill appearing long and thick at base. Colouration generally cold and weakly saturated.

HEAD Generally dark because of very dark grey ear-coverts. Rest of head uniformly grey. Forehead slightly darker than crown.
UPPERPARTS Back brownish-grey, nape contrastingly pale grey. During field observations, brownish colouration of back diffusely extending onto nape towards crown.
UNDERPARTS White in photographs taken in shade. However, in direct sunlight, slight brownish hue visible.
TAIL Tail feathers generally dark greyish brown, apart from paler central pair. Outer tail feather mostly white, with narrow dark brown wedge, about half of feather in length, running from base of inner web towards tip of feather. Border between dark brown and white clear cut. In second outermost tail feather, white squarish wedge in distal one fifth of inner web of feather.
MOULT & WEAR Appearing relatively worn, especially on primaries, tail feathers and uppertail-coverts.
BARE PARTS Bill largely dark grey but base of lower mandible pale grey. Iris greyish-brown and generally quite dark. Leg dark grey.
WING STRUCTURE Wing fairly long but round in shape caused by very short p2 (primaries numbered from outside inwards). On closed wing, tip of p2 falling between tips of p7 and p8. P3-5 emarginated and indication of emargination on p6.
MEASUREMENTS Wing length 68 mm, tail length 58 mm and fat score 0. Bill not measured but seeming long.

DNA analysis

DNA from the feather sample of the Finnish bird was extracted and a 637 bp fragment of the mtDNA cytb gene was analysed. This individual was identical in its cytb sequence (GenBank accession number OL765300) with the one found in the Netherlands in September 2014 over the overlapping 555 bp sequence length (figure 1). For further technical data and details of the DNA analysis, see figure 1 and https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7498548.

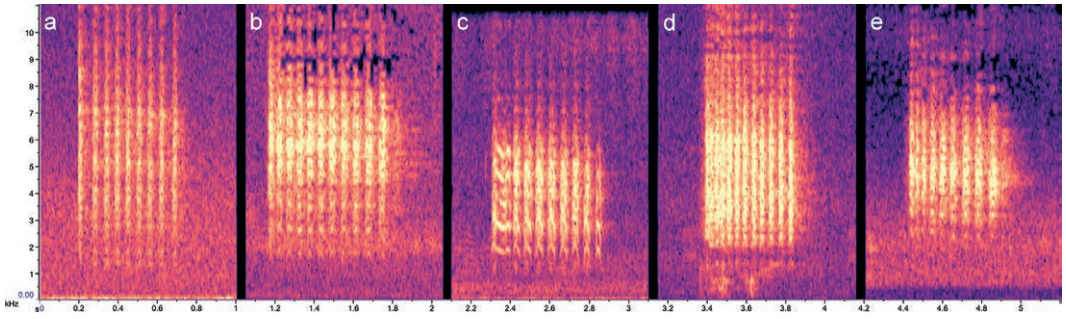
Vocalisation

Lesser whitethroats have rattling calls, which can be divided roughly into two types: a straight rattle and a so-called 'blue tit rattle' (figure 2). In the straight rattle, the notes are short and usually of similar length. In the blue tit rattle, the notes are longer and the first note is often clearly longer than the following ones. Due to the longer duration of the notes, the descending shape of the notes and their harmonies are more prominent in spectrograms in the blue tit rattle, compared with the straight rattle. By ear, the emphasised harmonies of the blue tit rattle can be heard as a nasal tone and, in turn, the slower pace makes it sound like stuttering.

The blue tit rattle seems to be the most used call type for *halimodendri*. The recordings and field experiences seem to favour that *halimodendri* does not give the typical clicking *tet* call of nominate *curruca* (Hannu Jännes in litt). However, it remains unclear whether the blue tit rattle is actually characteristic for *halimodendri*. This does not seem to be supported by a recording of the blue tit rattle in the montane region of Ladakh in northern India in July (Sharma 2017), as only nominate *althaea* should be breeding in that area. However, other recordings from Ladakh suggest that the straight rattle is the most common rattle type for nominate *althaea*.

The straight rattle of nominate *curruca*, *blythi* and nominate *althaea* sound very similar to each other. Although there are small differences in the

FIGURE 2 One-second recordings of rattle of 'lesser whitethroat' taxa: **a** *Sylvia curruca curruca*, Parainen, Finland, 23 June 2018 *(Antero Lindholm)*; **b** *S althaea blythi*, Tuusula, Finland, 11 December 2015 *(Juha Honkala)* (identification confirmed by DNA); **c** *S a halimodendri*, Almaty province, Kazakhstan, 7 July 2005 *(Antero Lindholm)*; **d** *S a althaea*, Ladakh, India, 19 June 2014 *(Alexander Hellquist)*; **e** *S a althaea*, Helsinki, Finland, 2 December 2020 *(Jukka A Lahtinen)*. Rattling of *halimodendri* often if not always seeming to be so-called 'blue tit rattle', in which first syllable is longer than others and syllables are generally longer than in straight rattles of other taxa. Rattle of nominate *althaea* may be characterised by rapid onset and slowing pace towards end.



available data from breeding grounds, the sample size is remarkably small and the differences may reflect differences between individuals rather than taxa. Both nominate *curruca* and *blythi* seem to share a feature where the first syllable of the rattle often is distinct from the others and resembles the normal clicking *tet*. On the other hand, all recordings of rattles of nominate *althaea* show decreasing pace during the rattle and the first syllables are very short. The first two syllables may even coincide, forming a first syllable longer than the other syllables, much like in the blue tit rattle.

The call of the Finnish individual was a loud straight rattle. The pace is faster at the beginning and slowed towards the end as the notes lengthened in duration (figure 2e). Due to its structure, the rattling corresponds well with the available material of nominate *althaea* but the value of the rattling structure for the identification of this taxon remains partly unknown.

The uncertainties of the characteristic differences in the rattles between the taxa derives from the shortage of reliably annotated reference recordings. There is only little reference material available for lesser whitethroat rattles, and especially less so from the breeding grounds in the breeding season. Recordings from wintering grounds or along migratory routes possess significant uncertainties for the identification, as several taxa may coexist and the identification of subspecific identity based on plumage and structure alone may not be reliable. Nevertheless, it is evident that all lesser whitethroat taxa have a rattle call, and there may be some differences between taxa, but confirming these still requires further evidence and scrutiny and a larger sample than currently available. However, it seems that in autumn rattling is likely more common for other taxa than nominate *curruca* (Alexander Hellquist in litt) and thus a rattle alone in autumn may be an indication of eastern origin and worth paying attention to.

Distribution and vagrancy

The fairly regular occurrence of *blythi* and *halimodendri* in northern Europe is hardly surprising based on their distribution and migration patterns. It seems safe to assume that in the past they have been overlooked, due to identification challenges. For information on the first records of these taxa in the Netherlands, see, eg, van den Berg (2012). In all these records, the identification was proven by DNA analysis. A record of nominate *althaea*, however, was quite unexpected as it has a more southerly distribution in mountainous areas from western Iran eastwards through Afghanistan and north-western Pakistan to Kashmir and Tien Shan mountains, migrating into the Indian Subcontinent (cf Olsson et al 2013, Dickinson & Christidis 2014). Given the second observation in Finland within a few years, nominate *althaea* may occur in Europe more often than expected.

Acknowledgements

We thank Alexander Hellquist, Hannu Jännes and Antero Lindholm for the valuable discussion on the vocalisations of lesser whitethroat taxa and Jukka Lahtinen for providing the original account of the discovery of the Finnish individual.

Samenvatting

Nominaat Humes Braamsluipers in Nederland in september 2014 en Finland in november-december 2020 In 2014 en 2020 werden nominaat Humes Braamsluipers *Sylvia althaea althaea* (hierna nominaat *althaea*) vastgesteld in respectievelijk Nederland en Finland. Beide gevallen worden in dit artikel gedocumenteerd. Op 16 september 2014 werd bij Vrs Meijendel, Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland, Nederland, een braamsluiper gevangen die afweek van een 'gewone' Braamsluiper *S curruca*. In het kader van een lopend project bij een aantal ringstations om van braamsluipers veertjes te bemonsteren voor DNA-analyse werden ook van deze vogel enkele borstveertjes verzameld. Omdat hij in uiterlijk duidelijk afweek werden meer foto's gemaakt dan gebruikelijk en hij werd gemeten en beschreven. De combinatie van lange en forse snavel, donkere staart, witte tekening op de buitenste twee staartpennen en vleugelformule paste goed op nominaat *althaea* en sloot Siberische Braamsluiper *S a blythi* en nominaat Braamsluiper *S c curruca* al uit. Op 8 november 2020 werd nabij Helsinki, Finland, een late en wat afwijkende braamsluiper ontdekt. Deze bleek op 28 november nog aanwezig. Op 8 december werd hij gevangen en beschreven, zijn ratelroepjes werden opgenomen (snelle opeenvolging van noten aan begin en daarna iets vertragend) en enkele veertjes werden veiliggesteld. Op basis van morfologie was voor beide nog geen eenduidige determinatie mogelijk. Uit de DNA-analyse van de veertjes bleek vervolgens dat ze de eerste gevallen betroffen van nominaat *althaea* voor respectievelijk Nederland en Finland en ook de eerste twee voor Europa. Nominaat *althaea* heeft vergeleken met andere oostelijke braamsluipertaxa een meer zuidelijke verspreiding in berggebieden van West-Iran oostelijk naar Afghanistan, Noordwest-Pakistan tot Kashmir en het Tien Shangebergte, en overwintert in het Indiase subcontinent. Op basis van verspreiding en trekgedrag is het een nogal onverwachte dwaalgast in Noordwest-Europa.

References

van den Berg, A B 2012. Vangst van een Siberische Braamsluiper in Bloemendaal op 17 en 20 oktober 2012 – achtergronden en hints voor herkenning. Website: www.dutchbirding.nl/news.php?id=768.

Busse, P & Kania, W 1970. Operation Baltic 1961-1967. Working methods. Acta Ornithol 12: 233-267.
Demongin, L 2016. Identification guide to birds in the hand. Beauregard-Vendon.
Dickinson, E C & Christidis, L (editors) 2014. The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world. Fourth edition, vol 2: Passerines. Eastbourne.
Edwards, S V, Arctander, P & Wilson, A C 1991. Mitochondrial resolution of a deep branch in the genealogical tree for perching birds. Proc R Soc Lond B 243: 99-107.
Ławicki, Ł & van den Berg, A B 2017. WP reports: February to mid-March 2017. Dutch Birding 39: 118-132.
Loskot, V 2001. Name-bearing types of subspecies of *Sylvia curruca* (L.) and *S. althaea* Hume in the collection of the Zoological Institute, St. Petersburg (Aves: Sylviidae). Zoosyst Ross 10 (1): 219-229.
Olsson, U, Leader, P, Carey, G, Khan, A, Svensson, L & Alström, P 2013. New insights into the intricate taxonomy and phylogeny of the *Sylvia curruca* complex. Mol Phylogenet Evol 67: 72-85.
Redactie Dutch Birding 2014. Naamgeving van taxa in Dutch Birding. Dutch Birding 36: 40-42.
Sharma, P 2017. Lesser Whitethroat (Hume's) *Sylvia curruca althaea*. Macaulay Library, Cornell Lab of Ornithology (ML219837341), https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/219837341.
Shirihai, H & Svensson, L 2018. Handbook of Western Palearctic birds 2 – Passerines: flycatchers to buntings. London.
Shirihai, H, Gargallo, G, Helbig, A J, Harris, A & Cottridge, D 2001. *Sylvia* warblers. Identification, taxonomy and phylogeny of the genus *Sylvia*. London.
Svensson, L 1992. Identification guide to European passerines. Fourth edition. Stockholm.

Rinse van der Vliet, Den Haag, Netherlands (rinsev@hotmail.com)
Peter de Knijff, Afdeling Humane Genetica, LUMC, Leiden, Netherlands (knijff@lumc.nl)
Laura Kvist, Ecology and Genetics Research Unit, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland (laura.kvist@oulu.fi)
Petteri Lehikoinen, Finnish Museum of Natural History, Helsinki, Finland (petteri.lehikoinen@helsinki.fi)
Aleksi Lehikoinen, Finnish Museum of Natural History, Helsinki, Finland (aleksi.lehikoinen@helsinki.fi)
Vincent van der Spek, Den Haag, Netherlands (v.vanderspek@gmail.com)
William Velmala, Department of Biology, University of Turku, Turku, Finland (william.velmala@utu.fi)