

## **Dusky Warbler at Samphire Hoe 25th - 28th November 2004**

(P Holt, I A Roberts et al)

### **Distribution of Dusky Warbler:**

Breeds from Siberia eastwards, with northern populations wintering from northern India and Nepal east through China and South-east Asia. Vagrancy to Western Europe thought to result from reverse migration or westward displacement in anti-cyclonic conditions. There had been 293 previous British records, c.28 in Kent.

### **Circumstances of the find:**

Paul Holt found a Dusky Warbler at Samphire Hoe at c.12:30 on 25th November 2004. It was favouring low vegetation on the small hill to the east of the office and calling frequently. The news was put out and Ian Roberts and others arrived soon after. The bird continued to call regularly but became elusive and gave only brief views that afternoon, generally in flight.

It remained in the same area until 28<sup>th</sup> November and reasonable views were possible with patience. The following description was pieced together from 8 hours observation over the bird's four day stay:

### **Description of the bird:**

Upperparts: Supercilium obvious, and whitish, particularly in front of the eye, appearing off-white behind the eye. Supercilium appeared relatively straight. Radde's generally expected to show a more yellowish supercilium, kinked at the rear end. Upperparts a dull brownish, lacking any olive tones, which Radde's tends to show.

Underparts: a dull dingy off-white, with some buff suffusion, but lacking any yellow. Vent lacked the warm yellow of Radde's. Legs a dull pinkish colour, not blackish like Chiffchaff.

Call: a sharp, hard 'tack' or 'tick' which was very distinctive, and enabled location of the bird at c.200 yards. The call was given both in flight and when perched. Radde's has a softer, more liquid 'chup' or 'choop'.

### **Comments on the record:**

The record was accepted by the BBRC, appearing in the 2004 rarity report, and was among 20 recorded in Britain in that year. The late date is not unusual for the species, indeed there was one found in Suffolk on 15<sup>th</sup> December in the same year, illustrating just how late the autumn can last!

This record increases the Folkestone and Hythe area list to 282 species.