



Siberian Lesser Whitethroat (*S.c.blythi*), Stanford Reservoir, 12th October 2015

Adam Homer and I (Mick Townsend) were ringing at Stanford Reservoir on Monday 12th October 2015 and were in the process of taking down the nets and packing up after a very successful morning both for numbers and quality (e.g. Yellow-browed Warbler). The last net to take down was positioned through a hedgerow along the disused rail track. As we approached the net I noticed a peculiar looking Lesser Whitethroat, very late in the year for the species here in Northamptonshire.

After extraction we took a closer look at the bird noting that the eye colour was not right for the usual Lesser Whitethroats we handle, more reminiscent of adult Common Whitethroat, brown with a black iris. The overall colour of the upperparts was a brown /sandy tone with buff flanks. The bill was a dark blue/black but the base of the lower mandible was pale blue. The legs were dark brown/black with cream soles to its feet.

After ringing and processing the bird I phoned Kester Wilson who has experience of Siberian Lesser Whitethroat, and he thought the bird could be of the race *blythi*. Photos were taken by Paul Riddle and the bird was released. During the ringing process a number of body feathers came away from the bird which were collected for DNA analysis and sent to Dr Martin Collinson (University of Aberdeen). The results of the DNA profile identified the bird as *Sylvia curruca blythi*, a first confirmed record for Northamptonshire.

