

Sopron on the Austrian border, and there were several records of fledgling hybrid **Grey × Purple Herons**. Several **Saker Falcons** and a **Booted Eagle** were in the Hortobagy Plain area on 5th August.

MOROCCO Up to three **Lesser Crested Terns** and two **Royal Terns** were at Oued Massa during 28th July – 2nd August.

TURKEY c40 **Greater Sand Plovers** were counted at Eregli Gölü on 7th July.

BAHRAIN August records included three **Crab Plovers** and a **Black-headed Bunting** on 17th, three **Baillon's Crakes** on 18th-20th, and a juvenile **Citrine Wagtail** on 20th.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Three **Montagu's Harriers** near Dubai from 19th July were the first summer record of this rare visitor. A **Citrine Wagtail** was seen on 19th-23rd and a **Caspian Plover** was seen on 20th August, while a **Great Snipe** in August was only the second certain record since 1987.

News this month was supplied by Philippe Dubois (France), Luc & Dirk Verroken and Frederik Willemyns (Belgium), Arnoud B. van den Berg (The Netherlands), Peter Barthel (Germany), Mads Jensen Bunch, Kim Christensen & Christiansø Bird Obs. (Denmark), Sebastian Ludvigsen (Norway), Johan Elmberg (Sweden), Annika Forsten (Finland), Andreas Ranner (Austria), Gerard Gorman (Hungary), Hans Westerlaken (Morocco), Nick Littlewood (Turkey), Erik Hirschfeld (Bahrain) and Colin Richardson (UAE).

Field identification of Brown, Siberian and Grey-streaked Flycatchers

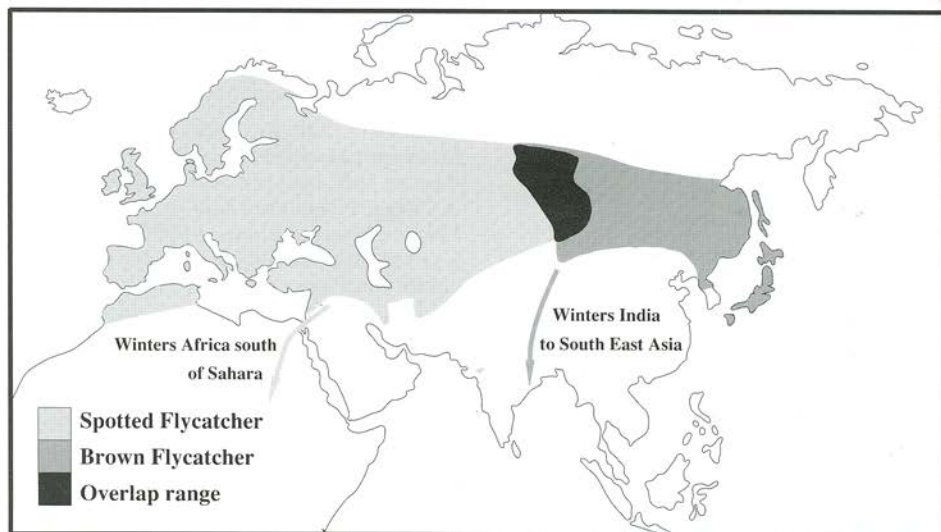
Per Alström and Erik Hirschfeld

Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica**, Siberian Flycatcher *M. sibirica* and Grey-streaked Flycatcher *M. griseisticta* all breed mainly in northeast Asia and winter chiefly in southeast Asia. Brown Flycatcher has been recorded twice in Europe: in Denmark on 24th-25th September 1959 and in Sweden on 27th-30th September 1986 (Christensen 1960, Douhan 1989). Siberian and Grey-streaked Flycatchers have not yet been recorded in Europe but, as long-distance migrants, they are possible future vagrants. Indeed, Siberian Flycatcher's vagrancy potential was demonstrated by a record from Bermuda (Wingate 1982).

Typical individuals of these three species are not difficult to separate, but Brown and Siberian Flycatchers can sometimes be confused, and Siberian and Grey-streaked Flycatchers can be very similar and difficult to distinguish. Grey-streaked Flycatcher could also be confused with Spotted Flycatcher *M. striata*. (This paper does not consider the races of Brown Flycatcher breeding in India and Southeast Asia, the latter often treated as a separate species, Brown-streaked Flycatcher *M. williamsoni*, which are resident or short-distance migrants and thus unlikely candidates for vagrancy to Europe.)

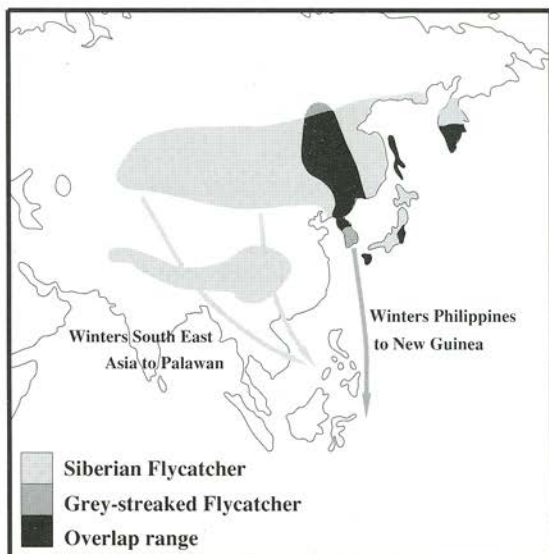
Previous accounts of the identification of these species have been rather oversimplified and have not discussed the identification pitfalls caused by individual variations. The information in this paper, which is a condensed version of one published in *Vår Fågelvärld* (Alström & Hirschfeld 1989), is based on field studies of many individuals on the breeding grounds, during spring and autumn migration and in the winter quarters, and the study of many specimens.

* Watson (1986) has shown that the name *M. dauurica* precedes the name *M. latirostris*.



Ageing

In juvenile plumage, all three species show prominent pale spots on the entire upperparts, dark spots on the breast and distinct double wingbars. The partial post-juvenile moult takes place before the autumn migration and the resulting first-winter plumage is basically similar to the respective adult's. The odd juvenile scapular or uppertail-covert is sometimes retained, but the juvenile greater coverts and tertials are not normally renewed, although occasionally a few inner greater coverts and one or more tertials may be replaced.



In first-winters, the retained juvenile greater coverts show prominent, clear-cut pale spots on the tips which form distinct wingbars. In adults, the greater coverts show narrow, more diffuse and more brownish tips which form much less distinct wingbars. In autumn, the wings of adult Spotted and Siberian Flycatchers are more worn than in first-winters (because adults moult their wings in the winter quarters). In Brown, Grey-streaked and some Siberian Flycatchers, first-years can be identified by the pale tips to the greater coverts through to spring, although these feathers become progressively more worn than in autumn, making the pattern increasingly more difficult to judge.

Colour plate opposite by Per Alström

Siberian Flycatcher

typical spring adult of nominate race.
Note dark breast & flanks, loral pattern, short bill with little pale on side of lower mandible, long primary projection, and dark markings on undertail coverts



Brown Flycatcher

typical spring adult



Siberian Flycatcher

first-winter with unusually pale breast and flanks; dark centres of undertail coverts concealed (as figure below). Note colour of wing-bars



Brown Flycatcher

first-winter with unusually dark breast and flanks.



Siberian Flycatcher

first-winter with unusually distinctly streaked breast.



Grey-streaked Flycatcher

typical first-winter. Note distinct underparts streaking, less buff wingbar & larger bill than Siberian



Spotted Flycatcher

typical first-winter



Brown and Siberian Flycatchers

Brown Flycatcher typically shows a faint greyish wash on the breast and, fainter still, on the flanks. Siberian Flycatchers of the subspecies *gulmergi*, *cacabata* and *rothschildi* (from the Himalayas and central China) are predominantly dark below with a whitish stripe down the centre of the underparts; they are very unlikely to be confused with Brown. Siberian of the northern, nominate, subspecies is also normally much darker below than Brown and generally diffusely streaked, especially on the central breast. However, occasionally Siberian is atypically pale on the breast and flanks, and some Brown Flycatchers are unusually dark on the breast and flanks and may even show some diffuse breast streaking. Such individuals can be identified by the following:

Head pattern The lores are conspicuously pale and unmarked in Brown Flycatcher. In Siberian, the lores are much less distinctly pale, and are often washed brown, with the lower part of the lores frequently appearing dark and forming a dark triangle between the eye and the bill. In some Siberians there is a sharply contrasting whitish half-collar, which is not seen in Brown.

Wings In spring, the wingbars and pale fringes to the tertials are generally less distinct (more worn) in Brown than in Siberian, but the opposite is generally true in autumn adults. This is a result of different moult strategies: Brown moults the wings on the breeding grounds prior to the autumn migration, whereas Siberian usually moults its wing feathers after arrival in the winter quarters. Some Brown Flycatchers, however, also moult a few inner greater coverts and up to all of the tertials in spring. In first-winters the wingbars are usually whitish in Brown Flycatcher and rich buff in Siberian (although buffish in very fresh Brown and whitish in worn Siberian). The underwing coverts and axillaries are pale buffish in Brown Flycatcher and rich buff or pale rufous in Siberian.

Primary projection Brown Flycatcher has a distinctly shorter primary projection than Siberian. In Brown, the primary projection is shorter than the tertials (usually c80-90% of tertials, measured from the tip of the longest tertial to the tip of the longest greater covert), whereas in Siberian the primary projection is equal to or distinctly longer than the tertials (usually c15-20% longer).

Undertail coverts Brown Flycatcher has all whitish undertail coverts, whereas the centres of the undertail coverts of Siberian have dark markings (which, however, are often completely concealed in the field).

Bill Brown Flycatcher has a proportionately larger bill than Siberian. Seen from below, the edges of the bill are slightly convex in Brown but straight or slightly concave in Siberian (fig. 1). Especially from a side view, the base of the lower mandible shows more pale in Brown Flycatcher than in Siberian (the pale usually reaching beyond the nostril only in Brown).

Siberian and Grey-streaked Flycatchers

Most individuals are quite straightforward to identify, since Grey-streaked Flycatcher is more distinctly streaked on the breast and flanks than Siberian. Some Siberian Flycatchers, however, are unusually distinctly streaked and can be very similar to Grey-streaked. The following differences are useful:

Size and structure Grey-streaked Flycatcher is slightly larger than Siberian and often appears to have a proportionately slightly smaller head and more elongated body.

Head Pattern The submoustachial stripe tends to be more distinct and more streaked in Grey-streaked Flycatcher than Siberian but there is much overlap. The lores are often distinctly brownish only in Siberian Flycatcher.

Wings In all plumages, the wingbars of Grey-streaked Flycatcher differ from Siberian in the same ways as Brown Flycatcher, but the underwing coverts are usually slightly paler in Grey-streaked than in Siberian.

Underparts Grey-streaked Flycatcher has the flanks and sides of the breast whiter with more distinct streaks than Siberian, but the difference can be slight.

Undertail coverts Grey-streaked Flycatcher has all whitish undertail coverts like Brown Flycatcher, whereas the centres of the undertail coverts of Siberian have dark markings (which, however, are often concealed in the field). The basal half of the undertail covert feathers can, however, be tinged dark in Grey-streaked.

Bill Grey-streaked Flycatcher has an appreciably longer and deeper bill and, seen from below, it is marginally narrower at the base and broader near the tip than Siberian. Grey-streaked shows a less extensive pale base to the lower mandible than Siberian; this is not always apparent on the side of the bill, but frequently the lower mandible looks nearly all-dark in Grey-streaked.

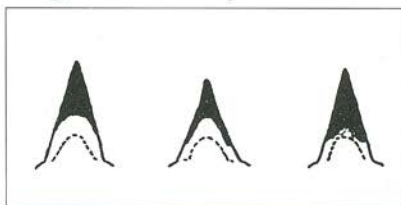


Fig. 1. Bills viewed from below of, from left to right, Brown, Siberian and Grey-streaked Flycatchers. (Per Alström)

Grey-streaked and Spotted Flycatchers

Grey-streaked and Siberian Flycatchers are only superficially similar to Spotted Flycatcher and are not difficult to separate.

Size and shape Spotted Flycatcher is larger with a proportionately longer bill and shorter primary projection than Grey-streaked.

Head pattern The forehead is often distinctly paler than the crown in Spotted Flycatcher, unlike Grey-streaked and Siberian. Also, the forehead and forecrown are distinctly streaked in Spotted, while Grey-streaked and Siberian show, at the most, only faint dark spots visible under favourable conditions. In Spotted, the lores and eye-ring are brownish and do not stand out, whereas Grey-streaked and Siberian show distinct whitish eye-rings and more distinctly pale lores.

Wings The greater coverts, and to a lesser extent the secondaries, show broader pale edges in Spotted Flycatcher than in Grey-streaked and Siberian Flycatchers.

Underparts In fresh plumage, Spotted Flycatcher shows a pale buffish tinge to the underparts which is lacking in Grey-streaked and Siberian. Spotted Flycatcher also has a distinctly streaked breast and unstreaked, or nearly unstreaked, often warm brownish, flanks.



Plate 1: First-winter Siberian Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*, Japan, October 1983 (Susumu Ishie). Note especially the dark breast, short bill, long primary projection, pattern of lores and colour of wingbars.



Plate 2: First-winter Siberian Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*, Japan, October 1983 (Kaoru Ishie). Wingbar and flanks look whitish but this appears to be a photographic effect caused by the strong light.



Plate 3: First-winter Siberian Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*, Japan. Central breast distinctly streaked but sides of breast and flanks more uniformly brownish. This individual shows a prominent whitish half-collar.



Plate 4: First-winter Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*, Japan, October 1983 (Susumu Ishie). Note pattern on lores, comparatively long bill with extensive pale base to lower mandible, and relatively short primary projection.



Plate 5: First-winter Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*, Japan, October 1983 (Susumu Ishie). Note pattern on lores, comparatively long bill with extensive pale base to lower mandible and relatively short primary projection.



Plate 6: First-winter Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*, Japan, October 1983 (Kaoru Ishie). Note distinctly streaked breast and flanks. The submoustachial stripe is less well-defined and more barred than usual.



Plate 7: First-winter Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*, Japan, October 1983 (Susumu Ishie).

The submoustachial stripe is more typical than in the individual in plate 6.



Plate 8: First-winter Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Van, Turkey, September 1989 (Göran Ekström). Note distinctly streaked forehead and forecrown, comparatively poorly marked face and unstreaked flanks.



Plate 9: Siberian Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*, Beidaihe, China, May 1991 (Göran Ekström). Underparts rather pale in this individual. Note small dark bill, not contrastingly pale lores, distinct pale wing-bar and tertial edgings, long primary projection, and dark spots on distal undertail coverts



Plate 10: Siberian Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*, Beidaihe, China, May 1991 (Göran Ekström). An extremely distinctly streaked individual, but with streaks still less well-defined than in Grey-streaked; dark markings on longest undertail coverts diagnostic

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Peter Colston, Jon Fjeldså, N.-O. Preuss, Kees Roselaar, G.F. Mees and Carl Edeltam for giving us access to skin collections. We are also most grateful to Göran Ekström, Kaoru & Susumu Ishie, Hannu Jännes, Hannu Kettunen, John Larsen, Urban Olsson, Kiyoaki Ozaki, Yoshimitsu Shigeta, Martti Siponen, Koichiro Sonobe and Dan Zetterström for lending photographs.

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Plate 11: Adult Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*, Beidaihe, China, May 1991 (Göran Ekström). A typical individual.

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