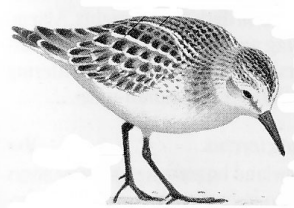


Rarities

During the autumn and winter there has been quite a nice sprinkling of reasonably rare birds on the Peninsula.

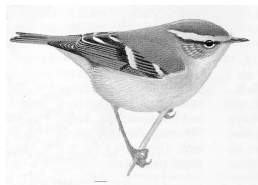
It started off in September with Curlew Sandpipers at the Gann. Now these are not really rare, just uncommon migrants which are seen perhaps every few years in this area. However, this small group of between 3 and 5 stayed around for quite a while and gave good views - which was handy as they do look very like Dunlin and are not easy to pick out at first. They do have slightly longer legs, necks and bills and a more pronounced eyebrow but it is only when they fly that they are completely distinctive - a big white rump gives them away.

The Curlew Sandpipers were accompanied by Little Stints. Now these are easier because they are very tiny – smaller than any other wading birds on the shore. The juveniles (which these were) do also have a reasonably distinctive plumage. Again they are not really rare, but probably less common than the Curlew Sandpipers.



An October visitor from America, however, was really rare – a Semi-Palmated Sandpiper. (No, I am not making that up!). They are very like Little Stints and you really need to be able to see the slightly webbed feet (hence semi-palmated) to confirm its identity. Luckily the bird was very tame and happily displayed its feet to excited observers!

Lastly we have the Yellow Browed Warbler. Several hundred of these tiny little birds, no bigger than a Goldcrest, now visit UK shores every autumn and are seen from time to time in Dale. Let me quote from the Pembs Birds website entry for Nov 4th:



“Highlight was a cracking Yellow-browed Warbler in Dale, in a garden opposite the WI hut (the garden with chickens in). It was showing well at midday in an apple tree”.

So if you see chaps with binoculars peering into the Allenbrook Garden in November you will know what it is all about!

Rosemary Royle