

PLATE 13: RICHARD'S PIPIT

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* See also plates 17, 18, photos 73–84, 106, text p. 217

c.17–18 cm. Favours grassy, often slightly wet areas. A large pipit with unusually long legs and hind claw and generally rather upright carriage. Shows brown, rather heavily streaked crown and upperparts, a band of short, fine streaks across the breast, unstreaked flanks, prominent supercilium and pale, unmarked lores. Very like Paddyfield Pipit (Plates 14, 17) and Blyth's Pipit (Plates 15, 17, 18); often considered conspecific with former. See also Long-billed Pipit (Plates 12, 17).

In most plumages rather easily told from Tawny Pipit by: browner base colour above; much darker, broader streaks on the upperparts; more distinctly streaked breast (but Tawny can be very similar: Plates 11 **b** and 17 **b**); and pale, unmarked lores (though from certain angles Richard's may seem to have a dark loreal stripe).

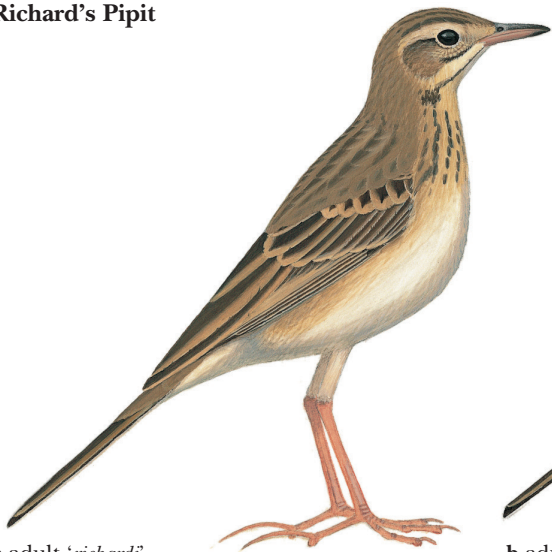
However, juvenile Tawny Pipits (Plates 11 **g** and 18) and Tawny Pipits with much juvenile plumage retained in autumn (not uncommon; Plate 18) are heavily streaked above and on breast, and could easily be confused with Richard's in any plumage. Adult and first-winter Richard's differ from such Tawny Pipits by the pattern above, and adult Richard's also by broader, more diffuse, buffier fringes to the secondary coverts and tertials. The pattern of the lores (see above) is an important character.

Juvenile Richard's (**g**) and Richard's with much juvenile plumage retained in autumn (Plate 18) are more difficult to tell from Tawny Pipits in corresponding plumages. The pattern of the lores is the best character (see above). Newly moulted feathers on upperparts, showing the typical colour and pattern of each species, usually appear rather early. Also, Richard's is slightly larger and heavier, with a proportionately heavier, less pointed bill, longer neck (when stretched), tail, legs and hind claw, and looks more 'disproportionately' built than Tawny Pipit. When alerted Richard's tends to adopt a more upright position than Tawny. Unlike Tawny, Richard's frequently hovers before landing.

The vocalisations are characteristic, although the song is very similar to that of Paddyfield Pipit, and the calls resemble one of the calls of Tawny and Blyth's Pipits, respectively.

- a** **Adult *A. r. 'richardi'*** (slightly worn, spring). N Asia. Moulting contrast among greater coverts (outers unmoulted) reveals it as a spring bird and not an autumn adult (cf. **c**).
- b** **Adult *A. r. 'sinensis'*** (slightly worn, spring). SE eastern China. Moulting contrast among greater coverts (outers unmoulted) reveals it as a spring bird, not an autumn adult (cf. **c**). Smaller and proportionately shorter-tailed than '*richardi*', with slightly darker upperside and deeper rufous breast/flanks.
- c** **Adult *A. r. 'richardi'*** (fresh, autumn). This individual shows a slightly different head pattern than previous ones.
- d** **First-winter *A. r. 'richardi'*** (fresh, autumn). Ageing by moulting contrasts among median and greater coverts and tertials; retained juvenile feathers show narrower, clearer-cut and whiter tips than newly moulted, adult-type feathers.
- e–f** **Adult *A. r. 'richardi'*** (fresh, autumn).
- g** **Juvenile *A. r. 'richardi'*** (fresh). Easily told from other plumages by extensively dark-centred, pale-fringed feathers above. Note pattern of secondary coverts and tertials.

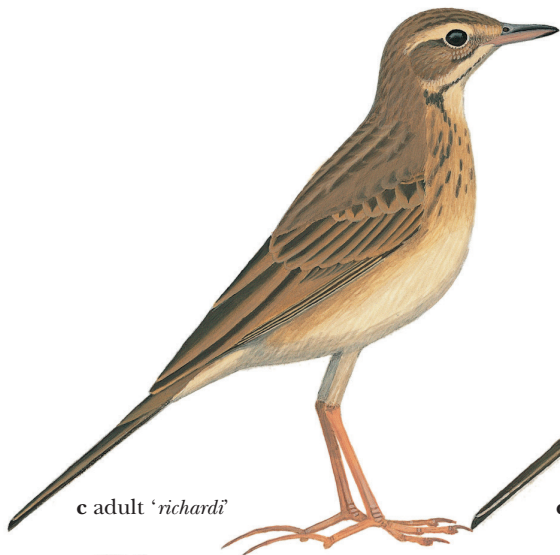
Richard's Pipit



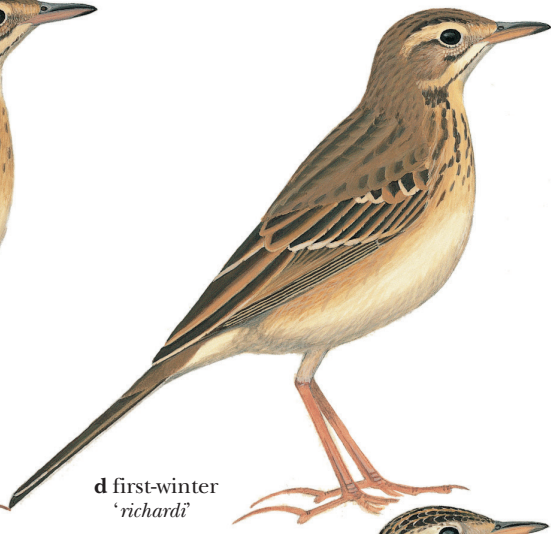
a adult '*richardi*'



b adult '*sinensis*'



c adult '*richardi*'



d first-winter '*richardi*'



e

adult '*richardi*'



f



g juvenile '*richardi*'