

Observations of Lemon-rumped Warbler fledglings overwintering in the outskirts of Pin Valley National Park

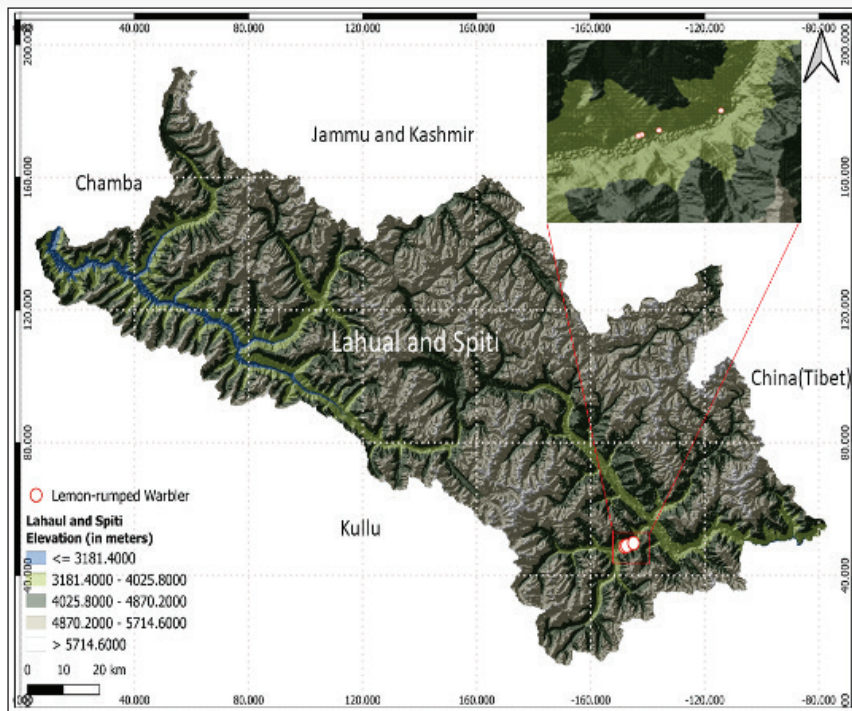
Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*, also known as Pale-rumped Warbler is a species of Old World warbler belonging to *Phylloscopidae* family. This species is widespread from western Himalaya to central China and is known to breed within the range of 2,200–4,200 m, wintering in hillside woods around 2,100 m. They are found mostly between mid- to high-elevation coniferous and mixed woods, however it may migrate to foothills during the winter (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). Breeding season of Lemon-rumped Warblers is mainly reported during the April–July (Alström & Christie 2020), which shifts to late May–June in Kashmir. Globally, eggs are laid late May to June and fledglings are reported in late July. Fledgling is defined as a stage in a bird's life cycle that develops the initial set of feathers that makes it able to fly on its own. A bird in this stage often has a distinct appearance from an



Lemon-rumped Warbler observed on 13 November 2022 in buffer area of Pin Valley National Park.



Habitat of Pin Valley National Park buffer area close to Tangti Village (3,556 m).



An elevation map of Lahaul and Spiti district, indicating the sighting locations of Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*.

adult as the feathers in this stage remains probably loose and fragile since it has not yet developed its complete adult plumage.

Two Lemon-rumped Warbler adults and two fledglings were observed foraging on the Violet Willow *Salix daphnoides* near Village Tangti situated at Pin Valley National Park buffer area (32.2661 N & 78.3511, 3,556 m) at 1500 h on 13 November 2022. Birds sighted had pale olive-yellow upper parts, pale underparts, prominent brow and crown stripes, pale rump and double wing bar which distinguishes it from related locally found species like Sulphur-bellied Warbler and Tickell's Leaf Warbler that lack wing bars (Grimmett et al. 2020). There are few recent e-bird records (32.7221 N & 76.6611 E, 2023); (32.7262 N & 76.6664 E, 2021); (32.7240 N & 76.6672 E, 2021) of Lemon-rumped Warbler from Lahaul region after the year 2015 in the month of December, January and February; but none of the observations from ebird (e-Bird 2022) or any other literature sources indicates the observations during winter months in Spiti Valley.

Overwintering is the process by which some organisms survive the winter season or that time of the year when winter circumstances (low or sub-zero temperatures, ice, snow, and scarce food supplies) make it difficult or nearly impossible for them to execute out normal activities or even to survive. In some situations, winter is not always cold but rather by dry weather conditions; living through such times is also referred to as overwintering.

For birds that inhabit alpine environments overwintering is a crucial aspect of biology and has fuelled the evolution of extreme traits like migration (Williams et al. 2015). When examining climate-driven range changes, season-specific habitat characteristics should be taken into account, especially when studying overwintering populations.

Also, e-bird observations suggest that the majority of bird communities from Pin Valley having migratory traits already shift to their wintering grounds indicating that observed warbler individuals were overwintering. Keeping the season, temperature and local environmental factors in

mind this observation adds up to the significant sighting lists from Himachal Pradesh.

References

Alström, P. & D.A. Christie (2020). Lemon-rumped Warbler (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*). In: del Hoyo, J., A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D.A. Christie & E. de Juana (eds.). *Birds of the World. version 1.0*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA.

eBird (2022). eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org>. Downloaded on 10 March 2023.

Grimmet, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (2000). *Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Oxford University Press, New York, 384 pp.

Rasmussen, P.C. & J.C. Anderton (2005). *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide. 1st ed.* Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington, D.C. and Barcelona. 2 vols. 378 pp, 683 pp.

Williams, C.M., H.A.L. Henry & B.J. Sinclair (2015). Cold truths: how winter drives responses of terrestrial organisms to climate change. *Biological Reviews* 90(1): 214–235.

Arnab Chattopadhyay¹, Tushar Parab² & Salvador Lyngdoh³

¹⁻³ Department of Animal Ecology and Conservation Biology, Wildlife Institute of India, Chandrabani, Dehradun, Uttarakhand 248001, India. Emails: ¹arnabchatterjee1912@gmail.com, ²tushar@wii.gov.in, ³salvador@wii.gov.in (corresponding author)

Citation: Chattopadhyay, A., T. Parab & S. Lyngdoh (2024). Observations of Lemon-rumped Warbler fledglings overwintering in the outskirts of Pin Valley National Park. Bird-o-soar #229, In: *Zoo's Print* 39(3): 22–24.