

Bugs & ALL

Invertebrate Conservation & Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA)

Newsletter of the

BUTTERFLY

Spotless Grass Yellow (*Eurema laeta*) butterflies feeding on Horse Dung



IUCN Red List:
Not Assessed

Spotless Grass Yellow butterflies feeding on Horse Dung

Insecta

[Class of Insects]

Lepidoptera

[Order of Butterflies]

Pieridae

[Family of Yellow and White Butterflies]

Eurema laeta

[Spotless Grass Yellow]

Species described by
Boisduval in 1836

The Old World Genus *Eurema* is widespread throughout the tropics extending to Japan over 70 species of which 7 species are recorded from India. Adults are known to be attracted to flowers and congregate in large numbers to mud-puddle along with other Pierid butterflies. Various workers in India and abroad have worked on foraging ecology, feeding and puddling from mud, dung, carrion or sweat (Norris 1936; Downes 1973; Adler 1982; Arms et al. 1974; Adler & Pearson 1982; Beck & Fiedler 1999; Collenette 1934; Berger & Lederhouse 1985; Boggs & Jackson 1991; Launer et al. 1993; Sculley & Boggs 1996; Smedley & Eisner 1995, 1996; Pivnick & McNeil 1987; Boggs 1987). On 12-09-2016 while travelling in Uttarakhand it was noted that several dozens of *Eurema* butterflies had emerged and were flying along the road on coordinate (N30°08'48.4" and E 079°9'13'54.4") between

Bug Ball

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Karnprayag and Gairsen, the road to Nauti village bifurcates.

Congregation of 5-10 individuals of *Eurema laeta* was observed settling at the particular spot beside the road. Investigation revealed that they were settled on horse dung. The entire area was wet with a moderate waterfall nearby and roadside ditches had puddles. The dung was a day or two old and damp. Butterflies of the *Eurema laeta* were flying around and settling on the dung. They were observed and photographed there for over 15 minutes.

Global Distribution:
Throughout Pakistan,
India and Sri Lanka to
Japan and Australia

Both seasonal forms of the spotless grass yellow, *Eurema laeta* (Boisduval 1856) were present. While not all individuals in the area were attracted to the dung, those that were returned repeatedly to settle there even after being disturbed. Other butterflies of the genus were mud-puddling individually or severally at other spots where no dung was present.

Conclusion

Both sexes are fond of flowers and males sometimes come to damp patches in huge numbers. Males often come to water, and even females do so during the wet season. Though originally a savannah species, the most important habitat is now agricultural lands and disturbed areas in the forest zone. Intact forest is not a suitable habitat for them.

The present observations add to the known repertoire of attractants for adult members of this genus.

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