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An unusually large congregation of Greenish Warblers *Phylloscopus trochiloides* in Sattal, Uttarakhand, India

Over two hundred Greenish Warblers *Phylloscopus trochiloides viridanus* were observed moving together at Sattal in April 2022. This sighting, of a large flock of *Phylloscopus* warblers migrating together in India, is rare.

On the morning of 20 April 2022, we (a group of nine birders) were birding in Sattal (29.36°N 79.53°E; 1,200 m asl), district Nainital, Uttarakhand (Parashar 2022). We saw a large number of Greenish Warblers. The birds that could be clearly seen had a dull green back, and some had a single thin wingbar [55]. They had a large and prominent yellowish white supercilium, with a black eye-stripe. The lower mandible was pale in all the birds seen. They matched the subspecies *viridanus*, which is expected in the Western Himalayas. Some birds were singing, while some were calling. Their vocalisations confirmed that they were Greenish Warblers. The nominate *P. t. trochiloides*, seen in Eastern Himalayas and north-eastern India, has darker green upperparts and crown, dusky underparts, and a darker bill (Singal 2016).

The Greenish Warblers were moving through foliage and their numbers were difficult to estimate. The birds were small, drab, moving rapidly, and blended with the leaves. A conservative estimate would be over two hundred birds, but there could be more. All the birds were moving uphill, in the same north-westerly direction. The group was so large that the flock took about 20 minutes to cross us. We also saw 15 Blyth's Leaf Warblers *P. reguloides* and one Sulphur-bellied Warbler *P. griseolus*, but the majority were Greenish Warblers.

P. t. viridanus winters in the plains of India, and breeds in North Eurasia, and in the higher altitudes of the Himalaya. It is common and widespread throughout its range. As per eBird records, it is commonly seen at Sattal in April and in November; small numbers are seen in winter, and none in summer. Thus, Greenish Warblers are seen at Sattal during passage migration, and they breed at higher altitudes of 2,700 m to 3,700 m in summer (Bird Count India 2022). Though numbers are highest in Sattal (eBird 2022a) and Nainital District (eBird 2022b) in April, we could not find any reports of hundreds of Greenish Warblers seen together. They are very common passage migrants along the Himalayan foothills, typically in small parties. But they have not been reported migrating in such large, single species flocks, as in this present observation, either along the Himalayan foothills or elsewhere in India.

In India we generally see only small numbers of warblers on passage migration. Were all these (over 200) Greenish Warblers moving together in the same direction - a large group on passage migration? In April, Greenish Warblers would be migrating



55. Greenish Warbler at Sattal.

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from the plains of India to Eurasia or the higher reaches of the Himalayan ranges. There are sites along flyways where migrating birds stop to rest or feed. Is Sattal such a place where Greenish Warblers congregate before they migrate farther? Or was this sighting an exception, maybe due to unusual circumstances, like a western disturbance over the Himalaya, that may have held back onward migration for a few days, compelling the warblers to concentrate at a single location, and causing a mass movement when it cleared?

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Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* anting with a Spirostreptidan millipede *Spinotarsus colosseus*

On 8 January 2022, we observed a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* picking a millipede *Spinotarsus colosseus* from a rotting tree trunk in Kottarakkara (9.01°N, 76.78°E), Kollam, India. Millipedes are commonly perceived as unpalatable and odoriferous, and ignored by most predators. Our initial