



Reports on Occurrence of Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* and Pallas's Leaf Warbler *P. proregulus* in Estonia from 1973–2010

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The present summary analyzes the observations of Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* and Pallas's Leaf Warbler *P. proregulus* performed until 2010 and which have been gathered from Estonian bird observation databases and literature. Until 1997, both species were among the species treated by the Estonian Rarities Committee. As the number of observations has increased everywhere in Europe within the past decades, these species are not kept in the list of rarities committees of the majority of European countries (except for regional rarities committees in some countries). Within the past thirty years, Yellow-browed Warbler and Pallas's Leaf Warbler have regularly appeared in Estonia as well. In 2003 and 2008, a greater number of individuals have been encountered (Figure 1) and these observations are in correlation with the invasions observed in the adjoining countries. The year 1989 can be considered as an exception in which only one observation of Yellow-browed Warbler and two observations of Pallas's Leaf Warbler were registered in Estonia during the major invasion noticed elsewhere.

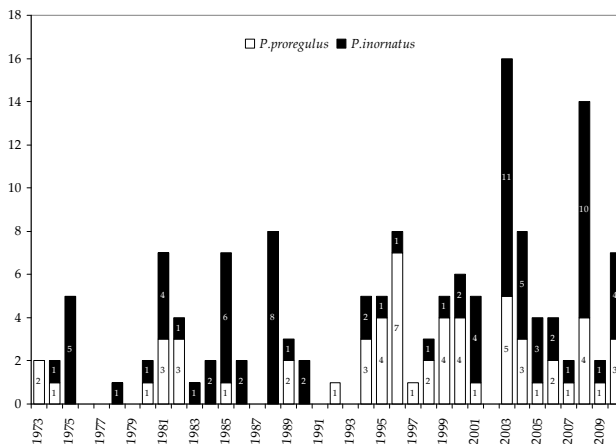


Figure 1. Observations of Pallas's Leaf Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler in Estonia 1973–2010.
Joonis 1. Kuld- ja vööt-lehelinnu vaatlused Eestis aastatel 1973–2010.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler breeds in South Siberia, Mongolia and in some areas in Tibet and China. The bird spends the winter in subtropical Asia. It is one of the most common vagrants of Siberia in Europe (although the distance to breeding grounds is approximately 3000 km) and hundreds of individuals are encountered in West Europe in the best years (Tarsiger 2010). For instance, 1783 individuals were encountered in Great Britain from 1958–2003 (Fraser & Rogers 2006). Pallas's Leaf Warbler was first encountered in Estonia in Kabli on 17.10.1973 (eElurikkus 2011), in Latvia in 1967 (Latvijasputni 2010), and in Finland already in 1934 (Tarsiger 2010). Most numerous observations in Estonia were made in 1996 in which 7 individuals were caught in Pärnu County (116 individuals in Great Britain at the same time) and in 2003 in which 5 birds were seen in Saaremaa (Figure 1). At the same time, new records were registered elsewhere in Europe as well – 132 individuals in Finland and 303 in Great Britain. The average number of individuals observed in Estonia from 1973–2010 was 1.57 individuals. 60 individuals were observed in total.

Yellow-browed Warbler breeds from the Urals to East Siberia and towards south up to Mongolia, Manchuria and probably also up to North Korea. Our nearest breeding grounds are located in the north easternmost part of Europe. The species winters in South China and Southeast Asia (Fraser & Rogers 2006). It is the most common vagrant of Siberia in Europe and in the best years even up to a couple of thousand individuals can be encountered here and single individuals even spend the winter in West Europe. Therefore, the species is more common in Europe than the Pallas's Leaf Warbler. For instance, 9093 individuals were encountered in Great Britain from 1958–2003 (Fraser & Rogers 2006). Pallas's Leaf Warbler was first encountered in Kabli on 13.10.1974 (eElurikkus 2011), in Latvia in 1967 (Latvijasputni 2010) and in Finland in 1962 (Tarsiger 2010). The year 2003 was record-breaking in which 11 individuals were encountered in Estonia (Figure 1) and this coincides with the major invasion noticed in the entire Europe. At the same time, record-breaking 853 and 155 individuals were observed in Great Britain and Finland respectively but only 3 in Latvia (Latvijasputni 2010). In 2008, observations of 10 individuals were registered (Figure 1) and this

also coincides with the numerous occurrence noticed elsewhere in Europe (e.g. record-breaking 245 individuals in Finland, 4 in Latvia (Latvijasputni 2010)). The average number of individuals observed per year in Estonia from 1974–2010 is 2.21. In total, 84 individuals were observed.

Most of the observations of the Yellow-browed Warbler and Pallas's Leaf Warbler have been made in Pärnu County and Saaremaa (Figure 2). The great number of observations in Pärnu County is due to the long-term activity of Kabli and Lao bird observatories. The observations of Saaremaa have been mainly performed in Sõrve Bird Observatory. So far these species have not been encountered in the inland of Estonia.

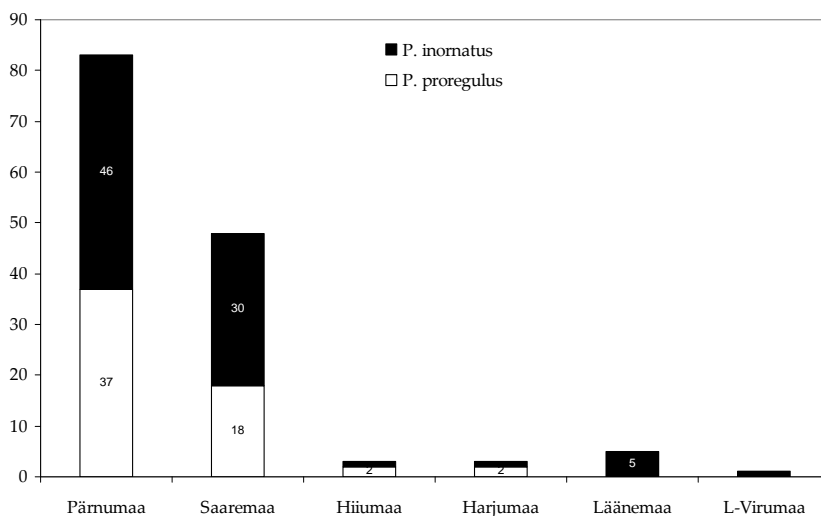


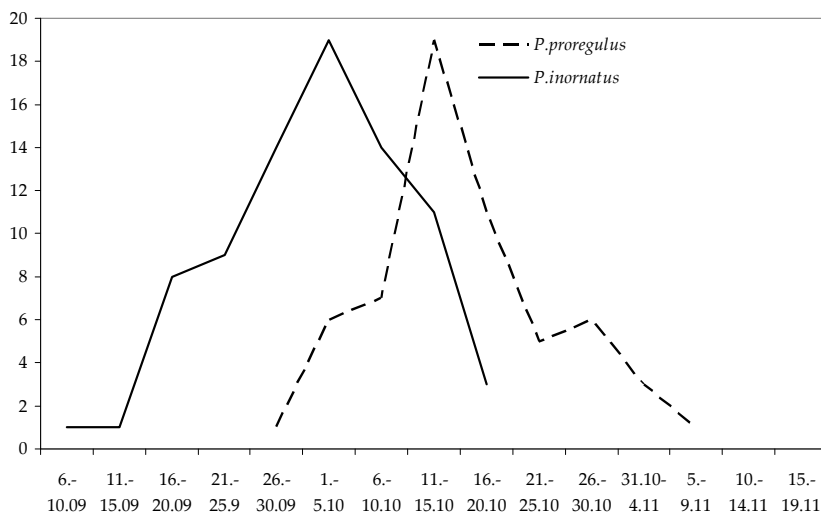
Figure 2. Observations of Pallas's Leaf Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler by counties in Estonia 1973–2010.
Joonis 2. Kuld- ja vöötlehelinnu vaatluste jaotumus maakonniti Eestis aastatel 1973–2010.

In case of both species, more than 70% of individuals have been caught in bird observatories (61 Yellow-browed Warblers, 46 Pallas's Leaf Warblers) but within the last decade exceedingly more observations have been made in open landscape (23 and 14 respectively) and this is mainly because Lao bird observatory does not function since

2005 and mass ringing in Sõrve bird observatory has also been terminated. Therefore, the number (%) of ringed individuals has decreased compared to findings of landscape and thereby the total number of observations has decreased as well. At the same time, bird watchers have learned to recognize the species better (call is characteristic of both species) and to look for them consciously which increases the number of individuals found from landscape considerably. The first observations in open landscape were made surprisingly late in Estonia: Pallas's Leaf Warbler in 1998 and Yellow-browed Warbler in 1995 by the Finns (eElurikkus 2011). This also illustrates the poor level of recognizing and looking for birds in Estonia.

The occurrence of Pallas's Leaf Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler converges on a short period of time from September to November (Figure 3). Yellow-browed Warbler is the earlier species and first individuals are spotted in Estonia often in September. A bird ringed in Lao on 10.09.1985 was extraordinarily early. The first peak has converged on the first pentad of October. After the middle of October, the number of observations of Yellow-browed Warbler decreases considerably (Figure 3). Out of the 138 observations performed in Latvia, the majority have been made during the first third of October (Latvijasputki 2010) and the observations in Finland also converge in the beginning of October (Lintutiedotus 2010). In Estonia there are no observations from the spring period so far. In Finland and Sweden, Yellow-browed Warbler has been spotted also in spring (Artportalen 2010, Lintutiedotus 2010), but generally both species are extremely rare everywhere in Europe during springtime. In Sweden the species has also been encountered in January (Artportalen 2010).

In Estonia, Pallas's Leaf Warbler is usually encountered in October (Figure 3). The peak of occurrence remains between October 11-15. This is similar with the statistics of 38 observations of Latvia in which the majority of observations have been made in the middle of October (Latvijasputki 2010). There is only one observation in Estonia from September – ringing in Sõrve on 27.09.2000 (data of M. Martinson). The last individuals are encountered even in November and the latest observation is from Lohusalu on 18.11.2001 (Estbirding 2011).



Joonis 3. Kuld- ja vööt-lehelinnu vaatlused pentaadide lõikes Eestis aastatel 1973–2010.

Figure 3. Observations of Pallas's Leaf Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler by pentads in Estonia 1973–2010

In Finland, the species has been encountered twice in December (Lintutiedotus 2010) and it has even spent the winter in Sweden a couple of times (Artportalen 2010) but generally the species is extremely rare in December in North Europe. In Estonia, the number of observations decreases considerably after the middle of November. Several spring observations are also known from Sweden (Artportalen 2010) but these are exceptional single cases similarly to the Yellow-browed Warbler.

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Literature. — Artportalen 2010. <http://artportalen.se> (01.01.2010). — eElurikkus 2011. http://elurikkus.ut.ee/observations.php?lang=est&mk=&kingdom=3&pclass=21630&qresult=yes&time_sc=week&sort1=3&sort2=DESC (08.05.2011). — Estbirding 2011. www.estbirding.ee (08.05.2011). — Fraser, P. & Rogers M. 2006. Report on Scarce Migrant Birds in Britain in 2003 Part 2: Short-toed Lark to Little Bunting. *British Birds* 99: 129-147. — Latvijaspurni 2010. <http://www.latvijaspurni.lv/> (01.01.2010). — Lintutiedotus 2010. <http://www.santamargarita.fi/lintutiedotus/> (01.01.2010). — Tarsiger 2010. www.tarsiger.com (01.01.2010).