

Unusual nesting site of the Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* in human habitation in Jaipur, Rajasthan

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The nest of Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* is a natural depression or scrape in the ground sometimes lined with mud pellets or goats' droppings and prepared with bits of cow dung or pebbles and sited on waste or stony land, fallow fields, dry bed of village tanks, and shingle banks or islets in rivers (Ali & Ripley 1980).

The species is also known to nest at unusual sites like the flat concrete roof of a residential bungalow in New Delhi (Ali & Ripley 1980), and on the ballast of railway lines, so close to the rails that the rail-boards of carriages actually pass over the nests (Baker 1929; McCann 1941).

Notes about the nesting on rooftops have accumulated over the years, and various reasons have been offered to explain the phenomenon (Gole & Mundkur 1980; Tehsin & Lokhandwala 1983; Patnaik 1980; Mundkur 1985). However, this habit is not new (Baker 1935).

Recently I discovered an unusual nest of the species near my residence in Jaipur (Rajasthan, India). This nest was on top of a stone boundary wall, and birds were incubating on 29 June 2009.

The nest was in an irregular depression, c. 30 cm at its maximum width, on top of the c. 1.60 m high wall. The birds had actually filled the uneven depression with pieces of pebbles, grit, and limestone (c. 66) to create a somewhat flat surface in the depression. It is difficult to say why the bird chose this site to lay eggs even though fairly suitable open area was available in the vicinity, and the species has been observed breeding successfully on open ground.

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L: The nest with four eggs; R: Bird incubating.