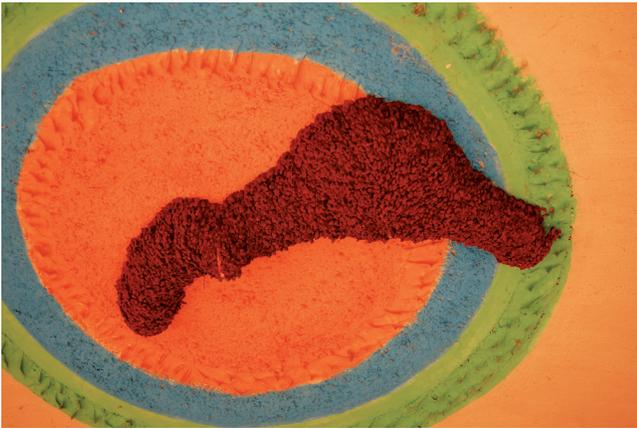


More unusual nests of Red-rumped Swallows *Cecropis daurica*

Palkar (2006) reported some unusual nests and nesting behaviour of Red-rumped Swallows *Cecropis daurica*. In this note, we follow up with a few more interesting instances of unusual nests.

Chiplun (17.52°N, 73.52°E), Maharashtra

On 17 October 2007, we observed a two-tunnel nest, as reported in Palkar (2006), in Parashuram village [52]. The tunnels were on either side of a chamber that resembled head of a bison. However, the swallows used only one of the two to enter and exit the nest. Interestingly, they returned to the same nest for the next 13 years, where they successfully nested annually. A pair of swallows started building a new nest in 2021, which was attached to the old one from the outside [53]. This was a one-tunnelled, retort-shaped nest. We saw another pair of swallows (the 'original' pair?) enter the old "bison head-shaped" nest after a few days, and both of these nests are presently active.



52. Observation I - An unusual bison head-shaped nest of Red-rumped swallows observed on 17 October 2007.



53. Observation I - In 2021, Red-rumped swallows build a new retort-shaped nest attaching to the old bison head-shaped nest from the outside.

Dusky Crag Martins *Ptyonoprogne concolor* first made two oval saucer-shaped nests against the roof of a hostel veranda at DBJ College in 2014, which remained active for only one year. In 2015, the Red-rumped Swallows took over these nests and used mud pellets to transform the saucer-shaped nest into a retort-shape, one with a tunnel. Swallows successfully nested and raised chicks in those nests for a year, but an Indian House Swift

Apus affinis pair took over in 2016, and has been nesting there since then [54–56]. After taking over the nest from the swallows, the swifts covered the tunnel's opening with feathers.



54. Observation II - The Indian House Swifts taken over these nests from Red-rumped Swallows.



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56. Observation II - The Indian House Swifts taken over these nests from Red-rumped Swallows.

A swallow pair began building a nest near a ceiling fan in a house that was under construction in Pedhe village in 2015. The

swallows soon finished the nest construction and the pair began incubating the eggs. The house owner opted not to use the fan because the nest was so close to it; however, before moving in, the owner began painting the house to give it a final touch. After seeing regular bird visits into the nest, the owner chose to paint over the active nest rather than breaking it [57, 58]. Surprisingly, even after the owner had moved in, swallows continued to incubate eggs, and feed the chicks in their painted-over nest. Before entering the nest to feed the chicks, the pair used to perch on the ceiling fan. The swallows successfully nested and raised chicks while people were residing in the same house, but they did not return to the nest the following year. Palkar (2006) reported a similar observation on a nest inside a temple that had been painted over during renovation.



57. Observation IV - A painted-over nest of Red-rumped swallow near a ceiling fan inside house.



58. Observation IV - A painted-over nest of Red-rumped swallow near a ceiling fan inside house.

All: Sachin Balkrishna Palkar

Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun (30.28° N, 77.97° E); Uttarakhand

On 03 May 2021, a pair was seen visiting the Wildlife Institute of India's hostel building frequently. We noticed the swallows had begun building a nest around a pre-existing hole in a wall inside the hostel [59]. The hole was a man-made excavation in the wall for some unknown reason. The hole was approximately

14–16 cm deep and 9–10 cm in diameter. Swallows appeared to have taken advantage of the existing hole by using it as an egg-laying chamber; however, they began to build a cup-like construction around the hole, which may serve as an entrance tunnel. The construction was finished on 13 May 2021 [60], and the swallows began incubating the eggs within a few days. The pair nested and raised chicks in this unusual nest, but we later discovered two unfledged dead chicks beneath it.



59. Observation III - Red-rumped swallow constructing nest around a pre-existing hole in a wall.



60. Observation III - A cup-shaped structure around a pre-existing hole in a wall that may serve as an entrance tunnel.

Reference

Palkar, S. B., 2006. Unusual nests of Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* in Ratnagiri district (Maharashtra, India). *Indian Birds* 2 (4): 108.

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