

recorded on several occasions in the Kashmir Valley. All these records, along with a historical record from Kashmir Valley are given below in Table 1.

The increasing number of observations in recent years suggests that the Eurasian Reed Bunting might be a regular winter visitor to the Kashmir Valley. The record of Eurasian Reed Bunting from Dal Lake by HS is the first photographic record of the species from Jammu & Kashmir, which is after 115 years of initial report by Ward (1908). Given the general scarcity of contemporary records from India, these consistent sightings from Kashmir are of particular significance and merit further documentation and monitoring.

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Simultaneous nest-use by Eastern Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Interspecific nesting interactions are an important aspect of avian behavioural ecology, particularly in human-modified environments (Newton 1998). The Eastern Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* is a mud-nesting aerial insectivore that constructs flask-shaped nests under eaves, bridges, and cliffs (Turner & Kirwan 2024). The House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, a secondary cavity nester, is known for its adaptability and opportunistic nesting behaviour (Lowther & Cink 2020). Nest usurpation by House Sparrows and the species breeding in Eastern Red-rumped Swallow nests has been reported (Samson et al. 2017; Kukreti 2024), however, simultaneous occupation of the same nest by both species remains rare. A large-scale study of more than 2,700 swallow nests has shown that sparrow usurpation is increasing and can result in breeding failures, including eviction of adults, eggs, and chicks (Tella et al. 2024). These findings highlight the potential consequences of such interactions and place our observations within a wider pattern of breeding challenges for swallows.

The study site was situated on the campus of College of Forestry in Ranichauri, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India (30.312°N, 78.408°E; 1,600–2,000 m asl), with an area of 206 ha, consisting of forest, orchards and multiple buildings. Observations were conducted opportunistically in the morning hours, during the period from 10 May to 30 June 2025, covering the pre-monsoon breeding season. A total of 12 swallow nests were monitored, of which three nests showed simultaneous occupation by sparrows and swallows. The campus is surrounded by mixed oak-pine forest and agricultural terraces, with various concrete buildings for offices or accommodation. Eastern Red-rumped Swallow nests located under eaves and in abandoned buildings were monitored through direct visual observation. Photographs were taken to document nest occupancy and interspecific interactions. Recommended practices and guidelines in Barve et al. (2020) were followed for documentation of the nest observations.

In the Ranichauri campus, House Sparrows placed nesting material of pine needles or grass in swallow-built nests. It was observed that the sparrows bred in the same nest structure, while swallows continued using the same structure [167–170]. Broken white-coloured eggs, along with their contents, were reported on the ground below the nest site, where nests were located in the balcony of faculty quarters, which was mostly safe from other predators. Though this was not directly observed, it is suspected that the House Sparrows likely removed or ejected the eggs of the swallows from the nest. Since the broken eggs which were found on the ground appeared to be freshly laid bird eggs, it is likely that these did not go through the entire incubation period. It was also noted that the sparrows occupied the outer chamber of the structure while swallows continued to use the adjacent mud tunnel structure, suggesting spatial separation within the nest structure. The sparrows added feathers and grass to the outer portion while swallows maintained the mud tunnel. House Sparrows nesting in abandoned or inactive nests of Eastern Red-rumped Swallow has been previously reported from Pauri Garhwal district in Uttarakhand (Kukreti 2024) and also from Tamil Nadu (Samson et al. 2017). Given these opportunistic observations, I am unable to describe the full adaptive behaviour for both the species from this short span of time.



167. Eastern Red-rumped Swallow perched on an iron grill of a balcony, near the nest, dated 20 May 2025.



169. Eastern Red-rumped Swallow visiting nest structure while male House Sparrow is at nest, dated 01 June 2025.



168. Eastern Red-rumped Swallow at nest, dated 24 May 2025.



170. Eastern Red-rumped Swallow visiting nest structure while female House Sparrow is at nest, dated 01 June 2025.

Cohabitation may be driven by various factors, such as, nest site scarcity in urban and semi-urban areas (Newton 1998), temporal overlap in breeding seasons (Lowther & Cink 2020; Turner & Kirwan 2024), or habituation between species due to repeated exposure, e.g., Kukreti (2024). While such behaviour can reduce construction effort and increase nest durability, it may also intensify competition, raise predation risk, and lower reproductive success if aggression occurs (Newton 1998). Similarly, a study in Portugal and Spain underscored that usurpation of nests of European Red-rumped Swallow *C. rufula* (formerly treated as conspecific with the Eastern Red-rumped Swallow) by House Sparrow, as the main cause of breeding failure (Tella et al. 2024). Such studies have shown that sparrow usurpation can lead to breeding failures in swallows, underscoring the ecological costs of such interactions. These observations highlight the nesting flexibility of both species and the potential risks of interspecific nest use. Although rarely reported, concurrent nest use by Eastern Red-rumped Swallow and House Sparrow warrants further study, particularly in increasingly urbanized landscapes.

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