

First nesting record of Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* in South-East Asia

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Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* is a widespread and fairly common species, breeding across southern Europe, north and central Africa, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, southern Siberia, southern and eastern Tibet, much of China, the Korean peninsula, and Japan, wintering largely within this range (Turner & Rose 1989). Although known to nest as close to Vietnam as south-west Yunnan (Meyer de Schauensee 1984), it has apparently not been previously recorded nesting in South-East Asia (Robson 2008).

While passing through Dau Cau village, Duc Hong commune, Trung Khanh district, about 8 km south of Trung Khanh town, Cao Bang province, East Tonkin, Vietnam, on 23 April 2009, we noted an unusual nest on a building. The nest was a domed shape with a long tubular entrance, and was fixed to the underside of a ledge built to keep the rain out of a window below. Recognising this mud nest as belonging to a hirundine but not being familiar with similar nests from northern Vietnam, we stopped to identify the species that had built it. We soon observed Red-rumped Swallows finishing construction of the nest with mud from a streambank very nearby. A photograph of the nest was taken and submitted as evidence along with this note.

The birds were identified as Red-rumped Swallow of the subspecies *japonica* owing to their small size, narrow streaking on the underparts, and near-complete rufous nuchal collars. The closely related Striated Swallow *H. striolata*, sometimes even considered conspecific, probably breeds in West Tonkin, Vietnam, and occurs across northernmost Vietnam in winter (Robson 2008), but was not seen during this trip. The relevant subspecies, *H. s. mayri*, is more similar to Red-rumped Swallow than the boldly streaked *H. s. stanfordi* resident in central and southern Vietnam, but still differs in the same features.

Although Red-rumped Swallows were quite frequently seen in the area, no further similar nests were seen that day

or next day in Trung Khanh district. Another nest was, however, noted on 26 April 2009 in Quoc Toan commune, Tra Linh district, Cao Bang province, close to the junction between provincial road 205 and National Highway 3.

This second nest was similarly constructed under a wide ledge above a window. This architectural feature is not typical of traditional building styles in rural Cao Bang province but may be becoming commoner as an increasing number of houses are built out of concrete, reflecting changes in wealth and taste. We speculate that this continuing trend may facilitate a southwards spread of nesting Red-rumped Swallow into northern Vietnam.

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Cronism by the Shikra *Accipiter badius*

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Cannibalism (eating a member of the same species), cainism (eating a sibling) and cronism (eating an offspring) are recorded in raptor populations worldwide (Polis 1981, Dios 2003). However, very few observations of such intraspecific predation by Indian raptors exist, rare exceptions being in

Ishtiaq & Rahmani (2000) and Rana & Prakash (2003). Here we report and discuss an instance of cronism by a common accipiter species, the Shikra *Accipiter badius*.

We observed a territorial Shikra pair at Mandakini Enclave, New Delhi, from December 2008. Adults were