

listed by Blanford makes the holes or that any other does not. He notes that the Rufousbellied Pied Woodpecker *Hypopicus hyperythrus* (which, incidentally, Ripley calls a sapsucker in the SYNOPSIS) systematically visits such holes and suggests that this is one, if not the sole, perpetrator. When concluding, Osmaston suggests that the holes are made horizontally (he does not refer to rings round the stem?) merely because the bird finds it more convenient to work sideways rather than upwards or downwards.

My first impression also was that the boring was for insects, but I am inclined to think that the distance between the rows is an index of the size of the bird—each row serving as a foothold for working on the next. The bark of the apple trees on which I found this pitting was smooth, unlike the rough bark on which woodpeckers usually hunt for insect food. The possibility that strikes me is, therefore, that the woodpecker starts the pecking at a level where some foothold is available and then works upwards using each ring of pits as a foothold for making the next ring. Osmaston's suggestion about *H. hyperythrus* being the maker of such pits is strengthened by its having a brush-like tip to its tongue, but as regards the locality in which I noticed the pitting I do not know if this species could have been responsible as it is not mentioned for this area in Bates & Lowther's BREEDING BIRDS OF KASHMIR (1952), the woodpeckers listed being *Picus squamatus*, *Dryobates himalayensis* and *Dryobates brunneifrons*, the last of which I noticed in the neighbourhood.

75, ABDUL REHMAN STREET,  
BOMBAY-3,  
October 11, 1967.

HUMAYUN ABDULALI

#### 10. OCCURRENCE OF THE HOUSE MARTIN, *DELICHON URBICA* (LINN). IN SAURASHTRA, GUJARAT

On 3 April 1967, Y. S. Shivraj Kumar of Jasdan and myself were walking in the evening on the dam of the Jasdan tank when we saw quite clearly the House Martin (*Delichon urbica*), a single bird, hawking with swallows, crag martins, and swifts. The House Martin had a forked tail and was easily recognizable by the long white patch on the rump and upper tail coverts and also its pied head pattern. We looked up 'Birds of Gujarat' by Sâlim Ali (1954)<sup>1</sup> in which he mentions this bird

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<sup>1</sup> *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 52 : 375.



at Navsari. Our sighting of the House Martin must be the second record for its occurrence in Gujarat.

DIL BAHAR,  
BHAVNAGAR,  
April 12, 1967.

R. S. DHARMAKUMARSINHJI

[This is a rare and sporadic winter visitor from the Himalayas, chiefly on the western side of the Peninsula. In addition to Gujarat, as above, has been recorded from Maharashtra (Prakasha on Tapti R., W. Khandesh; Sinhgad near Poona), Madhya Pradesh (Sehore), Mysore (Haliyal near Londa; Belgaum; Shimoga), Madras (Coimbatore; Nilgiris, between Ootacamund and Coonoor), and there is a specimen labelled 'Travancore' in the British Museum collection. Apparently the eastern-most record is from Bilaspur, c. 22°N., 82°E.—Eds.]

# 11. WIRE NESTS OF REDVENTED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS* *CAFER* (LINNAEUS)

On 14 October 1967, I came across three nests of Redvented Bulbul, *Pycnonotus cafer* (Linnaeus) with 10-15 day old fledglings, in the Hadapsar Industrial Estate at Poona. Two of these nests which were located in the large compound of a factory manufacturing electric motors and fans etc. were partially constructed out of fine copper wire (S.W.G. 34) generally used for winding of rotor and field coil of stator of electric motors. Almost 50% of the nest lining of these nests was done with this wire, which had apparently been picked from the heaps of discarded wire pieces in the compound.

So far only House Crows (Hume 1889 : 9 ; Baker 1932 : 16 ; Dewar 1929 : 27-28 ; Lamba 1963 : 125) and Doves (Walsh 1924 : 1055-1056) have been recorded to incorporate metallic wires and strips in the nest structure. The belief (Lamba 1967 : 154) that these unusual materials are used as an easily available substitute for the normal nesting materials and comparative scarcity of the same in the nesting area is amply strengthened by this find.

WESTERN REGIONAL STATION,  
1182/2, F.C. ROAD,  
POONA-5,  
October 17, 1967.

B. S. LAMBA



Dharmakumarsinhji, Raol Shri. 1968. "Occurrence of the House Martin, *Delichon Urbica* (Linn.) in Saurashtra, Gujarat." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 65, 221–222.

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