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Observations on the Nesting of the Endemic Indian Spotted Creeper (*Salpornis spilonota*) in Makrana, Rajasthan

Pawan Singh[1], Anita Sharma[2]

Department of Zoology, Samrat Prithviraj Chouhan Government College, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India
Corresponding Author: *pawan0809197[at]gmail.com*

Abstract: ***A nesting record of the Indian Spotted Creeper (Salpornis spilonota) was documented in an arid rangeland near Makrana, Rajasthan, from March to May 2026. The cup-shaped nest was located about 8 m above the ground on a Khejri tree (Prosopis cineraria). Both parent birds regularly fed the hatchlings and continued caring for two fledglings after they left the nest. The young birds became independent by mid-May. This observation provides useful information on the breeding behaviour and parental care of this little-studied endemic bird. It also highlights the importance of Khejri trees as nesting habitat in the arid region of Rajasthan.***

Keywords: Indian Spotted Creeper, Breeding, Nesting, Makrana

1. Introduction

Endemic species of animals are generally particular about their habitat and niche requirements as they are limited to a specific biogeographical area (Primack, 2014). Such species represents the characteristic of the particular habitat but still there is huge research gap about their ecological studies including their breeding behaviour (Walters,2003). Breeding observations of endemic birds provide crucial information on reproductive success, nesting ecology and population dynamics (Murray, 2000) They help to identify conservation threats and support effective habitat management for long-term species survival (Sutherland et al., 2004, Nance et al., 2023).

One such important and lesser-known endemic species is Indian Spotted Creeper (*Salpornis spilonota*). It primarily occurs in woodlands and dry deciduous forests of central and western parts of India and is the only species of creeper within its range (Grimmett et al., 2016). Despite its limited range it is found throughout the arid and semi-arid regions of central western India, the Indian Spotted Creeper is still mostly understudied and is not even reported the checklists of the area where it is frequently seen (Choudhary et al., 2020; 2024).

As per the literatures (Ali & Ripley 1983; Harrap & Kirwan, 2024). The breeding season of this species in India extends from December to May. The nest is built on a tree fork, usually where a horizontal branch joins the main trunk, at a height of 3–12 m above the ground. The nest is a neat, deep cup made of leaf stalks, rootlets, and bark chips, with the outside cemented using spider webs, insect cocoons, caterpillar excreta and vegetable down. The nest is camouflaged with lichen and lined with spider egg sacs Eggs in Indian region are pale grey or greenish-grey with dark brown specks and paler secondary blotches, especially at the broader end, with the approximately circumference of 19 x 13 mm (Ali & Ripley, 1983). In this article we provide the data on nesting characteristics of Indian Spotted Creeper from arid zone of Rajasthan, India.

Breeding data and data collection:
During the usual birding survey on March 15, 2026, around 8:00 a.m., in a rangeland 5 km far from Makrana, Didwana Kuchaman. An Indian Spotted Creeper was seen carrying food in its beak. The occurrence of an established nest is suggested by the regular visits to the same *Prosopis cineraria* tree (Figure.1). The nest site was successfully identified and confirmed observing their behavior from a distance, which caused the least amount of disruption to the breeding pair.

Figure 1: Indian Spotted Creeper in Nesting and parental care (Photos-Pawan Singh from Makrana (Didwana-Kuchaman).

2. Result

The nest was located on the outskirts of Makrana in a rangeland on a Khejri tree (*Prosopis cineraria*) (Figure 1). It was a cup-shaped nest situated approximately 8 m above the ground on a lower lateral branch. Twenty days after the first observation, on 5 April 2026, the parent birds were observed continuously feeding the hatchlings. By 2 May 2026, two fledglings were recorded perching near the nest on the same tree and were regularly fed by the parents. After 15 May 2026, the fledglings became independent and began feeding and flying on their own.

3. Conclusion

The Nesting observation above conclude Indian Spotted Creeper successful nesting and parental care in this region. Both parents actively feed the hatchlings until fledging demonstrating extended post hatching care. The fledglings remained dependent on both parents until Mid-May before fully independent. These observations highlight the ecological importance of khejri trees as a suitable nesting habitat and emphasize their conservation for sustaining breeding populations.

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