

FEMALE BAYA WEAVER *PLOCEUS PHILIPPINUS* PARTICIPATING IN NEST-BUILDING, DEHRADUN, UTTARAKHAND

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Reviewer: Peter Smetacek

INTRODUCTION

On a palm tree, adjacent to the boundary of our house (30°19'29.2"N and 77°59'57.9"E, 644 m amsl), in Vasant Vihar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Baya Weavers (*Ploceus philippinus*) have been nesting for the past five years. They arrive by the first half of April and leave by the end of September every year. There are two large palm trees on which the nesting takes place. There are many palm trees in the park adjacent to this location and surrounding lanes but they prefer only these two trees. We keep two bird feeding trays with assorted grains and two water troughs for drinking and bathing on our lawn. The male and female bayas along with other bird species regularly visit for feed and water. For the past two years we have been growing 'bajra'(Millet) during

this time and bayas, munias, parakeets, silver bills, babblers and house sparrows relish 'bajra'(Millet) seeds. There are also few sugarcane plants in our kitchen garden. The bayas have been regularly collecting strips from sugarcane as nesting materials.

Recently we observed that female bayas are also visiting the sugarcane plants and peeling strips and taking them to nests. There are a few ropes in the kitchen garden to support vines of bitter gourd. We observed female bayas collecting fibers from these ropes as well. Ali & Ripley (1999) mention that "He alone builds the nest; the female takes no part in the work except in scantily lining the egg chamber after she has accepted the nest". This

activity of female bayas of collecting nesting material and flying to the nests with strips of sugarcane and sometimes fibers of ropes took us by surprise.

We thought that this new trend of female bayas helping in nest building should be brought to the notice of ornithologists and

scientists. It cannot be an isolated event and possibly is happening in other areas as well. We should observe carefully other nesting sites of bayas. The subtle changes in habitat, increasing biotic pressures and climate change effects could be the reason for this new behavior.



Fig.1 Female baya gathering threads from rope.



Fig.2 Female baya collecting nesting material from sugarcane.

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REFERENCE

Ali, S.& S.D. Ripley. 1983. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan: Together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*. Compact edition. Oxford University Press, Delhi. 737 pp.