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Received: 29.7.2026.
Accepted: 2.11.2026.

UDK 598.284:591.52(497.54)
DOI 10.21857/y26kecd5o9

FIRST OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTED BREEDING EVIDENCE OF RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Cecropis daurica rufula* IN EASTERN CROATIA

Prvo opažanje i dokumentirano gniježđenje daurske lastavice Cecropis daurica rufula u istočnoj Hrvatskoj

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ABSTRACT

In spring of 2025, at least two pairs of Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula* were observed on the northern edge of Papuk Nature Park. In Pušina village, a characteristic-shaped nest was also discovered in an abandoned house. These sightings represent the first observation and first documented breeding evidence of the Red-rumped Swallow in eastern Croatia.

The Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula* is a common breeding species on the Balkan Peninsula. According to EBBA2 Atlas (EBCC 2022), it breeds along the entire Adriatic coast in Croatia, as well as in the regions of Lika and Gorski kotar (eBird 2026, Observation.org 2026). In continental Croatia, however, there have been no recent records of the species, except for a single observation from the vicinity of Sisak (Mužinić *et al.* 2013) and an older record near Jastrebarsko (Gjetvaj & Kirinčić 1983).

The Red-rumped Swallow's expansion was first documented in the 1950s, when records began appearing outside its previously known breeding range. In Croatia, range expansion was more pronounced in the 1980s, and by the 1990s the species was a regular breeder along the Croatian coast, in central Serbia, and in Herzegovina (Stipčević & Lukač 1992). Continued northward expansion has also been documented more recently, as evidenced by records from neighbouring countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the species is now present in central Bosnia, with breeding confirmed near Derventa, close to the Sava River (Iviš 2008/2009, Topić & Topić 2018, Drocić & Drocić 2013). Several confirmed breeding records have been reported from Vojvodina (Stojnić 2000, Vučanović 2010,

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Đapić 2012), while breeding has also been confirmed in Hungary near Lake Balaton (Bodor 2017).

During bird surveys conducted in Papuk Nature Park in early May 2025, three Red-rumped Swallows were observed in the village of Kokočak, where they remained in the area for some time. This observation was particularly surprising, as the species had never been recorded in eastern Croatia. At the same time, the presence of numerous abandoned buildings in the village immediately raised the possibility that the birds might be breeding there. In mid-June, two individuals were observed again at the same locality, actively foraging, although the nest was not found. However, a few days later, in the nearby village of Pušina (Fig. 1), two adult Red-rumped Swallows were observed by chance from a vehicle, perching on a wire next to an abandoned house. A characteristic-shaped nest was immediately noticed inside the building (Fig. 2). To avoid disturbing the birds, the site was left shortly afterwards and was not revisited. Consequently, the breeding outcome remains unknown.

These records represent the first documented breeding of the Red-rumped Swallow, as well as the first records of the species in eastern Croatia. Although a second nest was not located, it is highly likely that the other pair was also breeding. With numerous abandoned buildings in the surrounding area, it is also possible that these were not the only breeding pairs present. Red-rumped Swallow was again observed in the village of Pušina in June 2026, although the nest was not located (Domagoj Tomičić, pers. comm.). These findings suggest that the Red-rumped Swallow may become a regular breeding species in the wider Papuk Nature Park area, as well as in other parts of eastern Croatia where suitable breeding habitat is available.

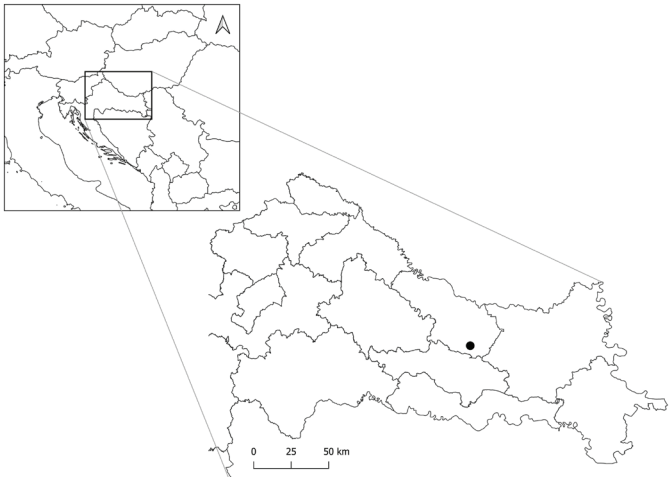


Figure 1. Location of Kokočak and Pušina villages in Virovitica – Podravina County, Croatia (circle)
Slika 1. *Lokacija naselja Pušina i Kokočak u Virovitičko – podravskoj županije, Hrvatska (krug)*



Figure 2. Nest of Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula* in abandoned house in Pušina village (photo: J. Ledinšćak)

Slika 2. *Gnijezdo daurske lastavice Cecropis daurica rufula u napuštenoj kući u naselju Pušina (foto: J. Ledinšćak)*

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SAŽETAK

Daurska lastavica *Cecropis daurica rufula* je u Hrvatskoj tijekom 1980-ih godina započela značajniju ekspanziju prema sjeveru, a već tijekom 1990-ih postala je uobičajena gnjezdarica duž hrvatske obale koja danas predstavlja glavninu njezina područja gniježđenja u Hrvatskoj, dok je još prisutna i u Lici te Gorskom kotaru. Na području istočne Hrvatske do sada nije bilo zabilježenih nalaza ove vrste. Tijekom proljeća 2025. na sjevernoj granici Parka prirode Papuk, opažena su barem dva para daurske lastavice na dvije različite lokacije. U naselju Pušina, u neposrednoj blizini opaženih ptica, u napuštenoj kući pronađeno je i gnijezdo karakterističnog oblika. Ova opažanja predstavljaju prvi dokumentirani pokušaj gniježđenja, kao i prve nalaze daurske lastavice u istočnoj Hrvatskoj. Uspješnost gniježđenja nije bila poznata. S obzirom na dostupnost pogodnog staništa za gniježđenje u okolici, prvenstveno napuštenih građevinskih objekata, moguće je da je na širem području gnijezdilo i više parova. Prisutnost ptica na istoj lokaciji i tijekom proljeća 2026. mogla bi ukazivati na buduću redovitu pojavu daurske lastavice na ovom području, te daljnje širenje areala prema sjeveru.