

LÜHITEATED * NOTES

*Unfertilised clutch in Common Linnet (*Acanthis cannabina*)*

The phenomenon of unfertilised eggs in a passerine nest is not very common (*e.g.* among starlings a mean of 5% of all the eggs in the nest are unfertilised – data of the author); therefore, it is rather unlikely that all the eggs in a clutch remain unfertilised. However, such an incidence has been observed in June 2008, in Tääksi, Viljandimaa.

On May the 30th in 2008 a Common Linnet nest was discovered in the hopvines. The clutch size remained unknown in order to avoid the disturbance of an incubating female. Also during the second observation that took place on the 14th of June the female bird was sighted on the nest whereby the clutch size once again remained unknown. We managed to count the eggs (there were 5) as late as on the 19th of June when the adult birds could not be sighted near the nesting site. By that time it was already certain that these eggs will not hatch and it was only a matter of time that the nest will be deserted. On June the 27th the male bird was sighted incubating and fled from the observer pretending to be injured. On the 30th of June new nest material was covering the eggs and was implying that it had been occupied by another species, probably by Chaffinch. However, the Chaffinch nest was never finished. On July the 8th the Linnet nest was removed from the hopvines and the eggs were examined. It appeared that all the eggs were unfertilised.

Considering the period from the day the nest had been discovered until the day the last observation had been made the Linnets must have been incubating the clutch for at least 29 days! Yet, such a period is not very exceptional as there is data of a Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) in Western Europe that also had been incubating the eggs for one month before deserting the nest.

Late breeding in Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

On July the 10th in 2008 I discovered a Redwing nest located in grapevines within a farmyard in Viljandimaa. The clutch consisted of 5 eggs that were being incubated. Nestlings were ringed on day 7–8 post-hatch, on July 27th. The first fledgling left the nest on July 30th at 14.40 and the last on July 31st at 10.35. After leaving the nest the fledglings did not wait for the adults to return but immediately headed for a nearby (20 m away) forest patch with a dense understorey.

Among thrushes the fledging of the second brood normally takes place during the first decade of July. In this case, however, the breeding attempt of the Redwings took place exceptionally late in the season. Unfortunately it remains unknown if this clutch was a replacement clutch or a third breeding attempt. However, according to the ornithological data of Estonia Blackbird is considered to be the only species having three breeding attempts during one breeding season. Yet, there has never been an encounter of the nestlings of the latter species as late as August.

Jaanus Aua

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) nested in nest box

In 2008, around Midsummer's day, in the course of checking nest boxes I encountered a Robin nest with 7 eggs, in Kuhjavere, Viljandi County. The particular nest box was mounted on a birch 1.5 m from ground, at the edge of a clear-cut area, within a mixed forest patch. The diameter of the nest was 11,5 x 11,5 cm with a height from bottom to entrance hole 16.5 cm and the diameter of the hole being 4 cm. Thus, the entrance hole being slightly larger compared to the standard nest box

attracting tits. All 7 nestlings hatched on July the 2nd and were ringed on July the 10th. By the afternoon on July 17th all fledglings had already left the nest.

It is rather rare for Robins to breed in nest boxes. During 1976–2008 only one similar breeding attempt has been registered in Kuhjaverre. Latter nest was encountered in July 1982 and produced 6 fledglings. Moreover, it was also erected in order to attract tits, however, mounted slightly lower from ground than and with a larger entrance hole than usually.

Jaanus Aua