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SHORT NOTE

FIJI WHITE-THROATED PIGEON NESTING IN AN EPIPHYTE FERN

The White-throated Pigeon (*Columba vitiensis*) is generally (Mayr 1945: 65, Goodwin 1970: 90) said to build its nest 3-6 metres above the ground in forest trees. Kleinschmidt (Anon. 1876: 173) reported nesting only 4-8 feet above the ground in Fiji. There is one definite record of the New Caledonia race (*C. v. hypoenochroa*) nesting on the ground (Warner 1949: 90), confirming what the Layards (1882: 528) had been told.

On 27 September 1975, 300 m a.s.l. on the cliffed but partially bush-clad southern face of Joske's Thumb, a 442 m volcanic plug in southern Viti Levu, Fiji, I found a White-throated Pigeon's nest in a large "bird's nest fern" (*Asplenium nidus*) 3 m above the ground in a stunted tree. The pigeons had built in the centre of the epiphyte fern. The large surrounding circle of fronds, clustered about the humus and leaf-litter covered rhizome, formed a cup support fully as firm as the ground and completely concealed the nest from below. I discovered the nest only because I glanced down while descending the cliff directly above it, and noticed the incubating bird.

The nest was a typical pigeon's nest of twigs some 25 cm in diameter, and contained a single white egg measuring 40 mm by 28.9 mm, at an early stage of incubation.

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