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Coprophagy in Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, at Mamachiwadi beach, Maharashtra, India

Coprophagy is the behaviour of consuming faeces, and includes the consumption of faeces of other species (heterospecific coprophagy), or consumption of faeces of other individuals of the same species (allocoprophagy), or consumption of one's own faeces (autocoprophagy) (Hirakawa 2001). It is observed in various animal groups, including mammals, insects, and even some birds (Hurd et al. 1991; Soave & Brand 1991). The diet of Little Stint *Calidris minuta* consists mostly of invertebrates (del Hoyo et al. 1996; Snow & Perrins 1997). However, heterospecific coprophagy and allocoprophagy are sometimes considered non-feeding behaviours that inoculate the gut with microbes found in other individuals (Engel & Moran 2013).

On 16 April 2024, we visited Mamachiwadi beach (19.476°N, 72.755°E; 20 m asl), in Palghar District, Maharashtra, to observe migratory birds. At 0745 h, we noticed that the tide had receded and saw a few people defecating on the beach in the open. At the same time, we observed three Little Stints feeding on human faecal matter lying on the beach. While watching these long-distance migrants feeding on human excrement was unpleasant, we photographed the feeding behaviour for record purposes. The birds repeatedly approached the spot and fed on the waste. It is unclear to us whether the birds were feeding on the actual faeces or insects there in. We could not find any literature on Little Stint engaging in coprophagy, however, it has previously been documented in Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Kasambe & Kasambe 2022). Hence, our report of Little Stint engaging in coprophagy is an important addition to its diet and foraging behaviours during migration.

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A Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* x Northern Pintail

Anas acuta hybrid at Sultanpur National Park,

Haryana, India

In a thrilling encounter, the authors were fortunate to witness a rare hybrid of the Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* x Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, at Sultanpur National Park, a designated Ramsar site in Haryana, India on 12 January 2025 [266]. On the morning of our visit, we spotted a single male Mallard x Northern Pintail hybrid foraging among a flock of Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*, Gadwall *Mareca strepera*, Northern Pintail, and Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*. The bird was photographed with a female Northern Pintail [267]. It was interesting to note that we did not observe even a single Mallard in the wetland at this time.

The individual displayed morphological features of the two species: The green head of the Mallard but not as bright and distinctive, and greyish-blue pointed tail feathers like the Northern Pintail, and showed a triangular white patch on the neck, and mottled brown and grey body, with a dark grey bill, long and pointed, resembling that of a Northern Pintail. The Mallard x Northern Pintail hybrid is an uncommon occurrence in the wild (Gunter 1941; Sharpe & Johnsgard 1966; Clark et al. 2020), resulting from the cross-breeding of the two species, and this often happens where habitat of both species overlap during breeding seasons or mating time (Guay et al. 2014). However,



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266. Mallard x Northern Pintail hybrid at Sultanpur National Park.