eBird, 2025. Webpage URL: https://ebird.org/region/IN-AS. [Accessed on 22 November 2025].
Hub Network, 2025. Endangered White-eared Night Heron spotted in Namdapha–only second record in India.
Martínez-Vilalta, A., Motis, A., Kirwan, G. M., & Sharpe, C. J., 2023. White-eared Night Heron (*Oroanassa magnifica*), version 1.1. In: *Birds of the World*. Ithaca, NY, USA: Cornell Lab of Ornithology. https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/wenher1/.
Pilgrim, J. D., Walsh, D. F., Tu, T. T., Tu, N. D., Eames, J. C., & Hung, L. M., 2009. The Endangered White-eared Night Heron *Gorsachius magnificus* in Vietnam: status, distribution, ecology and threats. *Forktail* 25:142–146.
Sadi, S. H., Goldberg, N., Beck, J., Chowdhury, S. U., Das, D. K., Eaton, J. A., Gallardy, R., Mubassir, A. A., Robi, R. I., Sharma, P., Spencer, A. J., Tonmoy, S. R., & Watson, S., 2023. White-eared Night Heron *Gorsachius magnificus* records in the Bangladesh Sundarbans: A new species for the country. *Indian BIRDS* 19 (2):50–52.
Shafi, S., Maurya, K. K., Chanchani, P., Chandrashekar, S., Kumar, A., Ojha, G., & Kumar, A., 2018. Extraordinary discovery in Bihar, India: an apparent White-eared Night Heron *Gorsachius magnificus* in Valmiki Tiger Reserve. *BirdingASIA* 29 (June):9–10.

– Sunit Kr. Das, Dipankar Lahkar, Swapnil Sarmah, Aniruddha Dhamorikar, Jyotishman Deka, Pranav Chanchani, Anupam Sarmah & C. Ramesh

Sunit Kr. Das, WWF India, Parvati nagar, Tezpur: 784001, Assam, India. E-mail: sdas@wwfindia.net [Corresponding author]
Dipankar Lahkar, Aaranyak, 13, Tayab Ali Byelane, Bishnu Rabha Path, Guwahati, Assam, 781028, India. E-mail: dipankar.lahkar@gmail.com
Jyotishman Deka, Office of the Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve, Assam, India. E-mail. Jyotideka551@gmail.com
Swapnil Sarmah, WWF India, Parvati nagar, Tezpur: 784001, Assam, India. E-mail: swapnilsarmah848@gmail.com
Aniruddha Dhamorikar, WWF India, Parvati nagar, Tezpur: 784001, Assam, India. E-mail: adhamorikar@wwfindia.net
Pranav Chanchani, WWF-India Secretariat, 172 B, New Delhi, 110003, India. E-mail: pranav@wwfindia.net
Anupam Sarmah, WWF India, Parvati nagar, Tezpur: 784001, Assam, India. E-mail. asarmah@wwfindia.net
C. Ramesh, Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve, Assam, India. E-mail: fd.manastr@gmail.com

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.

Reference

del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., & Sargatal, J., 1996. *Handbook of the birds of the world. Volume 3. Hoatzin to Auks*, 1st edn. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. Vol. 3 of 17 vols. Pp. 1–821.
Engel, P., & Moran, N. A., 2013. The gut microbiota of insects - diversity in structure and function. *FEMS Microbiology Reviews* 37 (5):699–735.
Hirakawa, H., 2001. Coprophagy in leporids and other mammalian herbivores. *Mammal Review* 31:61–80.
Hurd, P. L., Weatherhead, P. J., & McRae, S. B., 1991. Parental consumption of nestling feces: good food or sound economics? *Behavioral Ecology* 2 (1):69–76.
Kasambe, R., & Kasambe, V., 2022. Coprophagy and coconut in the diet of migratory Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*). *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 60 (5):59 (2020).
Snow, D. W., & Perrins, C. M., 1997. *The birds of the Western Palearctic*, Concise. Oxford University Press, London. Pp. 1–1739.
Soave, O., & Brand, C. D., 1991. Coprophagy in animals: a review. *The Cornell Veterinarian* 81 (4):357–364.

– Akash Mhadgut & Vaibhav Haldipur

Akash Mhadgut, Maharashtra, India.
Vaibhav Haldipur, Maharashtra, India. Email: vaibhavhaldipur2000@gmail.com [Corresponding author]

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,

Jagdeep Singh

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

Photo: Jagdeep Singh

267. Mallard x Northern Pintail hybrid with a female Northern Pintail.

sightings of such hybrids are comparatively scarce in India, especially on the non-breeding grounds during the non-breeding season, which makes our encounter worth documenting.

References

Clark, R. G., Fleskes, J. P., Guyn, K. L., Haukos, D. A., Austin, J. E., & Miller, M. R., 2020. Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (S. M. Billerman, Editor). *Birds of the World*.

Guay, P.-J., Taysom, A., Robinson, R., & Tracey, J. P., 2014. Hybridization between the Mallard and native dabbling ducks: causes, consequences and management. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 20:41.

Gunter, G., 1941. A Mallard-Pintail Hybrid. *The Auk* 58 (4):570.

Sharpe, R., & Johnsgard, P., 1966. Inheritance of Behavioral Characters in F2 Mallard x Pintail (*Anas platyrhynchos* L. x *Anas acutas* L.) Hybrids. *Behaviour* 27 (No. 3/4):259–272.

– Jagdeep Singh, Amandeep Singh & Onkar Singh Brraich

Jagdeep Singh, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Zoology and Environmental Sciences, Punjabi University, Patiala 147002, Punjab, India.
E-mail: jagdeepsingh1656@gmail.com [Corresponding author]
Amandeep Singh, Gill Patti Road, Village Nehian Wala, Bathinda 151201, Punjab, India.
Onkar Singh Brraich, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology and Environmental Sciences, Punjabi University, Patiala.

The Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* Punjab, India in western Maharashtra, and notes on its movements in the Indian peninsula

The Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* is widely distributed from South Asia through Southeast Asia to Indonesia (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Fry & Kirwan 2020). In India, it breeds in the Himalayan foothills from Himachal Pradesh through Uttarakhand to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, the hills of north-eastern India, the hills of the northern Eastern Ghats and eastern Central India, the Western Ghats south of southern Maharashtra, and the Andaman Islands.

On 29 November 2023, at 1723 h, we recorded a Chestnut-headed Bee-eater at Vetal Hill, Pune, Maharashtra (18.527°N, 73.815°E). A distinct call was first detected above the tree canopy, and comparison with Xeno-canto recordings (https://xeno-canto.org/species/Merops-leschenaulti) confirmed it as a Chestnut-headed Bee-eater. We followed the call to a savanna patch on the hill, where 25 Green Bee-eaters *M. orientalis* were observed flying overhead. Shortly afterwards, a solitary bee-eater was seen flying high, showing a rusty-colored head, yellow cheeks and throat, turquoise rump, and no tail-streamers **[268, 269]**. These features, combined with its vocalization, confirmed the bird as a Chestnut-headed Bee-eater. Records from western India, outside the Western Ghats, are few, with only two historical reports—one from Mumbai on 30 August 1978 and another from Gujarat on 5 June 1981 (Kannan & Bertrand 1980; Monga 1983).

268. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater showing no tail projections.

Both photos: Siddhant Mhetre

269. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater showing rusty cap and yellow throat.

While the breeding distribution of Chestnut-headed Bee-eater is fairly well understood, there are substantial gaps in our understanding of their non-breeding movements and distribution (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Praveen 2025). It is described as largely resident, though several populations show regional movements linked to rainfall and breeding. It is a summer visitor to the Himalayan foothills from Uttarakhand through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, where it breeds between February and June before withdrawing from much of its northern range in winter (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The species also emigrates from high-rainfall areas during the monsoon months (June–October) and occurs widely but locally across the submontane tracts of the Himalaya, north-eastern India, and the Western Ghats south of Goa (Ali & Ripley 1983). Field guides describe it as resident and partially migratory across the Himalaya, north-eastern India, and the Western and Eastern Ghats, extending to Sri Lanka (Grimmett et al. 2016). However, these sources provide little insight into where Himalayan birds move after breeding or how northern and peninsular populations are connected.

This record prompted a closer examination of the Chestnut-headed Bee-eater's movements across India. We use district aggregation to denote three regions: Himalaya (till Sikkim), Western Ghats and North-eastern Ghats. The large number of districts in the Peninsular India that do not belong to the two Ghats was designated as Central India & Peninsular Plains. We used district-wise eBird bar charts (eBird 2025) for India and Nepal and calculated reporting frequency of complete checklists in each of the four regions (Fig. 1). Clearly, the Chestnut-headed Bee-eater population in the Himalaya are largely migratory although their exact wintering destinations remain uncertain. The North-eastern Ghats may hold a small