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SHORT NOTE

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MANEUVER BY INDIAN HOUSE CROWS (*CORVUS SPLENDENS*) IN URBAN HABITAT — PERCHING AND FEEDING ON MOVING VEHICLES: OBSERVATIONS FROM PUNE, INDIA

The Indian House Crow (*Corvus splendens* Vieillot, 1817) is a common bird in India representing the family Corvidae of the order Passeriformes (Ali and Ripley 1972). The literature describes the House Crow as an opportunistic bird, scavenger that feeds on plant and/or animal sources, including human refuse and animal carrion (Koul and Sani 2013, Kumar and Ojha 2021). They provide valuable services by consuming refuse and carrion (Anjum et al. 2022).

Benmazouz et al. 2021 reported that Corvids have positively adapted to urban environments with easy access to food sources, nesting and roosting sites, resulting in an increased population. Additionally, dumping or garbage sites have become its habitat, as evident in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan (Anjum et al. 2022). We observed a similar situation in Pune.

In this note, an account of the feeding maneuver of House Crows observed in areas connected to the garbage ramp in the Kothrud area of Pune city, Maharashtra, India (18.5246° N, 73.8786° E) is presented (Figure 1). In multiple visits from April to October 2025, we noted at least 24 free-ranging House Crows exhibiting the ability to perch on moving open-waste-transport vehicles (https://www.pmc.gov.in/en/b/vehicles-solid-waste-management) to access edible waste, primarily wet waste from hotel industry. These observations were made in the first half of the day on the open public roads (Figure 2). A two-wheeler scooter was used to pursue the municipal waste transporting vehicles, maintaining a safe distance to avoid disruption of the ongoing House Crow activity. It was observed that the House Crows could travel from a few meters to a few hundred meters of distance in one go. At least a House Crow was seen perched—traveling on the truck continuously for a maximum distance of 1110 meters at a speed of an average of 30 kilometers per hour. This noteworthy behavior demonstrates their feeding strategy and adaptability. Further, a question arises. Does their ability to perch and forage from trucks in motion suggest an adaptation to resist and stabilize against air flow and vehicular turbulence?

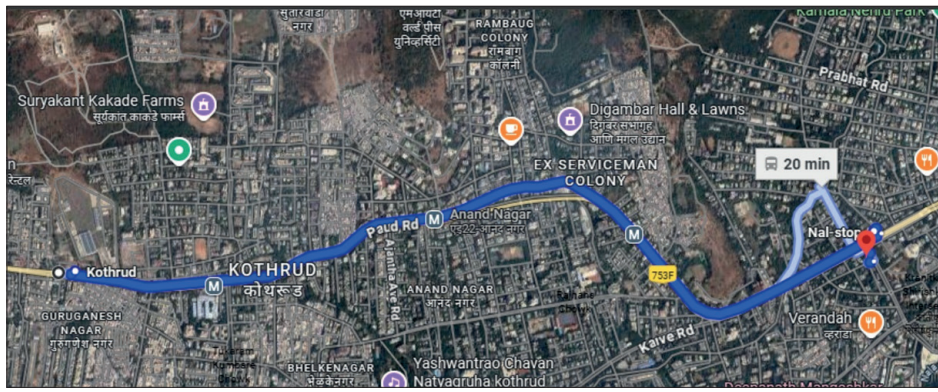

Fig. 1. The map of the public road in Kothrud area of Pune city where observations were noted (© Google Maps).

Fig. 2. The pictures of House crows (*Corvus splendens*) perched on moving open-waste-transport vehicles to access edible waste (© Tanay Deodhar and Rushikesh Sankpal).

The Corvids are considered intelligent among bird taxa (Emery and Clayton 2004). Mukherjee et al. (2013) validated that American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) were able to judge vehicular traffic flow. Nevertheless, House Crow's seafaring behavior and voluntarily traveling on ships has significantly contributed to their distribution to faraway areas (Cheke 2008). Such behavior (and smartness) may have ecological consequences of species distribution, and potential public health concerns related to

pathogen transmission (Benmazouz et al. 2021, Kumar and Ojha 2021). Our observations about the maneuvers shown by the House Crows from Pune will not only interest general ornithologists but also ignite the minds of ecologists and evolutionary biologists.

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