

JUNGLE MYNAH "ANTING" WITH A MILLIPEDE

At 1315 hours on 11 March, 1974, 5 metres above sea level in the city of Suva, Fiji Islands, I saw a Jungle Mynah (*Acridotheres fuscus*) take a red millipede (*Trigoniulus lumbricinus*) from a grassy road verge, and, holding it in its bill, rub it against the plumage of its breast; then, raising each wing individually, it rubbed it under the wings and against the flanks. The mynah next dabbed the millipede on the ground several times, and recommenced rubbing it against the plumage of its breast, then its belly. Disturbed by my close approach, the bird flew to a nearby tree, perching on a branch some 5 metres above the ground, against which it dabbed the millipede several times, then again rubbed it against the plumage of its breast, belly, underwing and flanks. This basic action of dabbing followed by rubbing was repeated several times in the next two minutes, and from a range of about 5 metres I could clearly smell the acrid juices secreted by the millipede. The mynah then flew off, still carrying the millipede in its bill.

The above behaviour took place on the fringe of a badly overgrown suburban garden in light drizzle. The millipede concerned is quite common in Suva gardens. The mynah was wet and bedraggled, probably having just bathed in one of several road-side puddles, in which several other mynahs were bathing.

It should be noted that this is the second record of a passerine in Fiji actively anting with a millipede, the Black-faced Shrikebill (*Clytorhynchus nigrogularis*) having been seen anting with another species of millipede in dense forest understorey about 300 metres above sea-level in southern Viti Levu (Clunie 1974, *Notornis* 21: 80-81).

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FERGUS CLUNIE

Fiji Museum,
P.O. Box 2023,
Suva,
Fiji