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## SHORT NOTE

### A Caspian Tern feeding on the ground

On 11 May 1985, while at Manawatu River estuary, Foxton Beach, I observed a Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) foraging on the ground. The weather had been stormy for the previous few days and heavy squalls were still frequent.

When I saw the solitary tern through my telescope, my attention was drawn to its unusual feeding behaviour. It was feeding much in the manner of Red-billed Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*), walking across the mud pecking and probing. I watched it for about 15 minutes as it wandered around a small area, seeming to find plenty of food. It was too distant and the light too poor for me to tell what food was being taken, but whatever it was, it seemed to be plentiful.

Shallow pools were on the mud, and twice I saw the tern foot-paddle in the pools, presumably to stir up small invertebrates, but conceivably to wash mud from its feet. The tern was feeding alone.

R. G. Bijlsma (*British Birds* 78: 146-147) observed the foraging behaviour of Caspian Terns in Egypt in October 1981. He recorded that "sometimes they hunted the shore by walking short distances but this hunting method was comparatively rarely observed," but he gave no description of this hunting method. In an added comment, E. K. Dunn said that "ground foraging by this species is especially interesting and not recorded before in the literature."

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