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What's the Deal with Birds?

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Abstract

Many people wonder: what's the deal with birds? This is a common query. Birds are pretty weird. I mean, they have feathers. WTF? Most other animals don't have feathers. To investigate this issue, I looked at some birds. I looked at a woodpecker, a parrot, and a penguin. They were all pretty weird! In conclusion, we may never know the deal with birds, but further study is warranted. This is a copy of this article 10.33552/SJRR.2020.02.000540.

Keywords

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Introduction

Birds are very strange. Some people are like “whoa they’re flying around and stuff, what’s the deal with that?” This sentiment is shared by people across socioeconomic backgrounds. Figuring out what the deal is with birds is of the utmost scientific importance. It is now widely appreciated that the majority of socially monogamous passerine species are weird. The author set out to test hypotheses about bird weirdness by observing several bird species and attempting to determine what their deal is.

Material and Methods

Study Species and General Field Methods

Three birds were studied: a woodpecker, a parrot, and a penguin. Observations were conducted at Samsonvale, Queensland. To eliminate potential confounds, only animals known to be birds were included, excluding bugs, bats, and other non-birds.

Detailed Behavior Analyses

The study describes experiments involving bird plumage colour, song characteristics, territorial responses, aggression, and duetting behaviour. Principal components analysis (PCA) was used to generate composite measures representing aggression and duetting.

Results

The birds were found to be weird in different ways. The woodpecker repeatedly struck trees with its bill, the parrot was noisy and possessed a large bill, and the penguin resembled a fish and swam underwater. Measures of weirdness and bird appearance were reported as significantly repeatable. Aggression was not significantly associated with cuckoldry rate, whereas stronger duet responses were associated with lower cuckoldry rates.

Discussion

This study represents an attempt to quantify the deal with birds. The findings were ambiguous but suggest that aggression and duetting are repeatable behavioural traits. Several hypotheses are discussed regarding the potential role of duetting in mate guarding, territorial defence, and pair-bond maintenance. The author concludes that birds remain unusual and worthy of future study.

Ethics

Data Accessibility

Funding

Conflict

Acknowledgements

All work was conducted with approval from appropriate animal ethics and permitting agencies.

All data associated with this project are archived at Dryad.

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No conflict.

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