Social alliances and their benefits in Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)

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**Introduction**

In group living individuals social context represents one of the most potent stressors. Affiliative interactions may buffer individual stress responses and ultimately enhance reproductive success.

**Methods**

- individually marked birds
- free flying colony of the Konrad Lorenz Research Station
- focal observations (5 min)
- May to November 2015
time course of initiated and received affiliative behaviour
- collection of droppings
- excreted corticosterone immune-reactive metabolites
- enzyme-linked immunoassay

**Results**

Our results suggest that being well embedded in a social network benefits individual stress management. Especially socially bonded adults seem to buffer their stress load by exchanging high frequencies of affiliative behaviour.

**Conclusion**

Do affiliative interactions influence the amount of excreted corticosterone immune-reactive metabolites?

**Figure 1. Corticosterone metabolites & affiliative behaviour.** Individuals initiating and receiving affiliative behaviour with a higher frequency excreted lower concentrations of corticosterone metabolites, compared to individuals less involved in affiliative behaviour.

**Figure 2. Affiliative behaviour & life stages.** Adults were involved in more affiliative interactions as compared to subadults.

**Acknowledgements:** This study was funded by the project Sparkling Science SPA-05/026. We are grateful for the permanent support by the "Verein der Förderer der Konrad Lorenz Forschungsstelle" and the "Herzog von Cumberland Stiftung".