



Linking fission-fusion dynamics to social complexity in a large-brained songbird

Matthias-Claudio Loretto^{a,b}, Richard Schuster^c & Thomas Bugnyar^{a,b}

^a Department of Cognitive Biology, University of Vienna, Austria

^b Core Facility Konrad Lorenz Research Station for Behaviour and Cognition, University of Vienna, Austria

^c Department of Biology, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

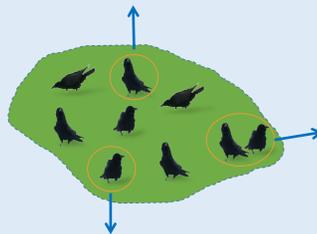


Background

The development of socio-cognitive skills depends on dealing with social relationships, which in turn require repeated encounters/interactions between individuals. How does this work in groups with a high degree of fission-fusion dynamics?

Non-breeding ravens

- Form groups at food sources and roosts
- High degree of **fission-fusion dynamics**



Breeding ravens

- Long-term monogamous
- Highly territorial year round



Do non-breeding ravens meet each other repeatedly?

Methods

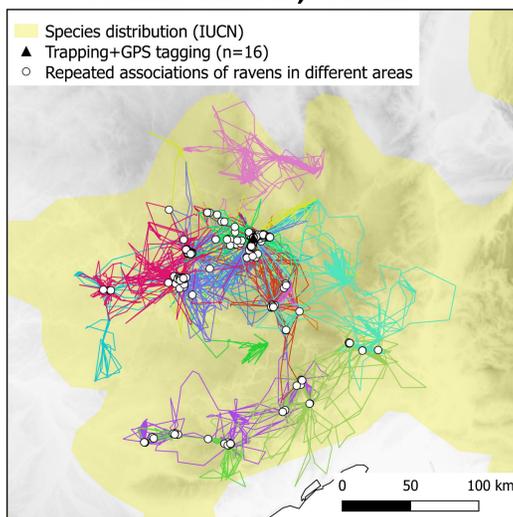
1. GPS tracking of non-breeding ravens in two study areas during up to 4 years + identifying repeated associations
2. Analysing association patterns of 186 individually marked ravens at a permanent food source in Austria during 4.5 years



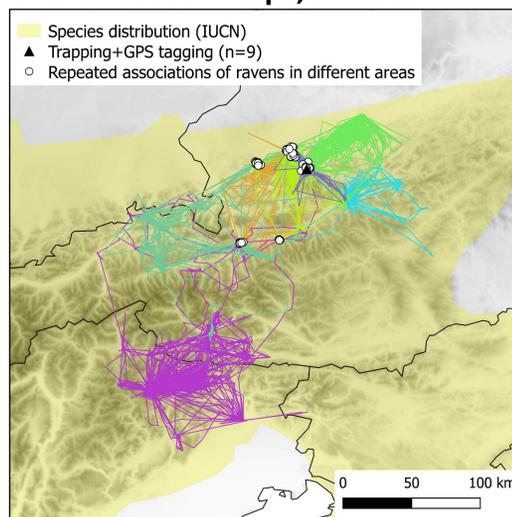
1. GPS tracking of non-breeding ravens during up to 44 months



Massif Central, France

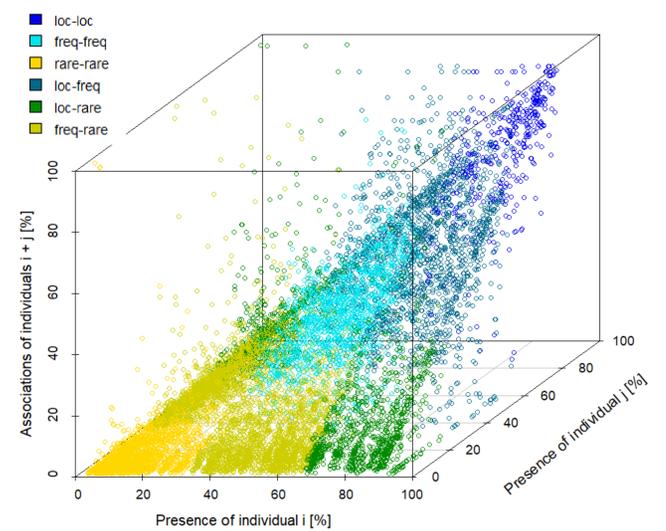


Eastern Alps, Austria



Coloured lines represent the movements of different non-breeding ravens. White circles indicate locations where 2 GPS-tagged ravens met within short distance, mostly at rich food sources or night roosts.

2. Association patterns of 186 ravens at a permanent food source



Large individual variation in the use of a food source; ravens are classified as locals (loc), frequent visitors (freq) and rare visitors (rare).

Conclusion

- Non-breeding ravens show a large variation in the degree of fission-fusion dynamics.
- Individuals meet repeatedly at the same or different locations.

Such a system with repeated associations/interactions between non-breeding ravens offers the opportunity to develop social relationships and socio-cognitive skills!



- Some dyads of ravens (locals) associate and likely interact almost daily over long time periods
- Sex or genetic relationship did not influence presence or association patterns!

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