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POSTER

The influence of aviation noise on passerine vocalization and ecology

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Birds rely on vocal signals to defend breeding territories, attract mates and maintain contact with flock members. Urban and road noise can decrease the signal-to-noise ratio, resulting in the masking of calls or song. Individuals can combat signal masking by altering the amplitude, frequency or temporal parameters of the signal. Unlike the constant, low-frequency noise associated with urban areas and road traffic, aircraft noise consists of infrequent bouts of extreme amplitude. The effect of aircraft noise on birds has yet to be studied in detail. Strategies to overcome masking from aircraft noise probably differ from those used by birds exposed to other sources of anthropogenic noise. Over the course of three field seasons we will examine the effects of aircraft noise on bird song structure and function. This will be achieved by comparing the singing behaviour and song structure of four passerine species between control sites and sites around Manchester International airport. Comparisons of nesting success, vigilance and population density will provide additional information on the effects of aircraft disturbance on bird ecology. With the likely addition of a new runway for the south of England this is the ideal time to improve our understanding of the impacts of aircraft