

Abstract

The face plays an extremely important role in human communication. It enables individual recognition and provides other information about the person, such as social or emotional information. Human psychology has shown that face recognition uses a specific cognitive process called holistic processing. In recent decades, it has been shown to play an important role in animal communication as well. In the first part of my thesis, I tested whether changing the uniform configuration of a bird's face would affect the ability of the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) to recognize a potential predator. Due to unfavourable conditions in both breeding seasons when the experiments were conducted, no firm conclusions can be drawn from the results. They only suggest that the shrike perceives the configuration changes.

An essential characteristic of all predators is their size, which affects the ability of prey to defend themselves. Several studies have already found that birds discriminate between different predators of different sizes. In the second part of my thesis, I evaluated experiments in which shrikes were exposed to dummies of two predator species with modified size. The shrikes responded with less aggression to the enlarged jays, whereas aggression increased only slightly to the shrunken crows. Thus, it is clear that the shrike perceives predator size as a separate parameter and responds to it.