

Abstract

Brood parasitism is a breeding strategy which imposes significant selection pressure upon the host as well as the parasite. Consequently, specific adaptations were formed on both sides. One of the adaptations could be vocal behaviour of brood parasite juveniles. Several conducted studies suggested that juveniles of the common cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) adapt the form of their begging calls according to the host species they parasitize on. However, the outcomes of these studies were ambiguous. Therefore one of my tasks was to verify those findings. Two reed warblers - the great reed warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) and the reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) - living in sympatry were selected as the hosts. The structure of begging calls of common cuckoo juveniles raised by these two host species did not differ in any of the measured parameters (syllable duration, minimum and maximum frequency, peak frequency, frequency bandwidth and calling rate). On the contrary the structure of begging calls of own host juveniles varied significantly among the individual species. Moreover, a considerable individual variability was detected in both groups of cuckoo juveniles.

Recent studies have revealed that juveniles already perceive sound and acquire knowledge of their parents' voices in the process of embryonic development. This fact was examined by comparing begging calls of juveniles incubated in the egg in natural environment and in the incubator but no differences were discovered. Furthermore, no important differences were monitored in individual measured parameters for these two groups during ontogeny of begging calls traced from the day of the hatch till the day of the fledge. The same applies to cuckoo juveniles raised by various hosts. The description of ontogeny of begging calls of common cuckoo juveniles for the above mentioned parameters whose development is tightly correlated is also a part of this thesis.