

Abstract

The topic of this master thesis was the effects of pattern, size and background contrast of prey on discrimination learning of avian predators. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of selected components of warning coloration on aversive discrimination learning of avian predators of different age and sex. The chosen model organism was the Great tit (*Parus major*). The comparison was done between hand-reared naïve birds and wild-caught adults of different age and sex. The experiment was taking place in the experimental cage with one way mirror. The experiment used a design of simultaneous task with two prey which differed in one component of the coloration (pattern, size and background contrast). The differences in the ability of discrimination learning was found just between hand-reared naïve birds and wild-caught adults. Better results were shown by the wild-caught adults. The ability of discrimination learning of wild-caught adults was not influenced by the age and sex. Pattern was the only significant component of the warning coloration due to which the birds were able to memorise the discrimination task.

Key words: avoidance learning, unpalatable prey, pattern, size, background, contrast