

# Parrots imitate individuals when addressing them

November 21 2012

---



Balsby TJS, Momberg JV, Dabelsteen T (2012) Vocal Imitation in Parrots Allows Addressing of Specific Individuals in a Dynamic Communication Network. *PLoS ONE* 7(11): e49747. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0049747 Credit: Thorsten Balsby

Whether living with pirates or in the wild, parrots have exceptional abilities to mimic the sounds they hear. One species, the orange-fronted conure, may have evolved this ability in order to communicate with specific individuals in other flocks, according to research published November 21 in the open access journal *PLOS ONE* by Thorsten Balsby from the University of Aarhus, Denmark and colleagues from the University of Copenhagen.

In the wild, orange-fronted conures live in dynamic [flocks](#) where individuals flit in and out, so each parrot encounters many different individuals every day. Each animal also has its own unique call. Both in the wild and in the researcher's experiments, parrots that heard an imitation of their own calls responded more frequently and faster to the calling individual than parrots that did not hear this imitation.

Based on these observations, the authors suggest that the parrots may have evolved their abilities as mimics so they could 'begin a conversation' with a specific individual by mimicking their call.

**More information:** Balsby TJS, Momberg JV, Dabelsteen T (2012) Vocal Imitation in Parrots Allows Addressing of Specific Individuals in a Dynamic Communication Network. PLoS ONE 7(11): e49747. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0049747](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0049747)

Provided by Public Library of Science

Citation: Parrots imitate individuals when addressing them (2012, November 21) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-11-parrots-imitate-individuals.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.