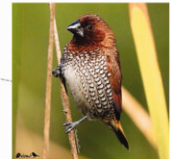
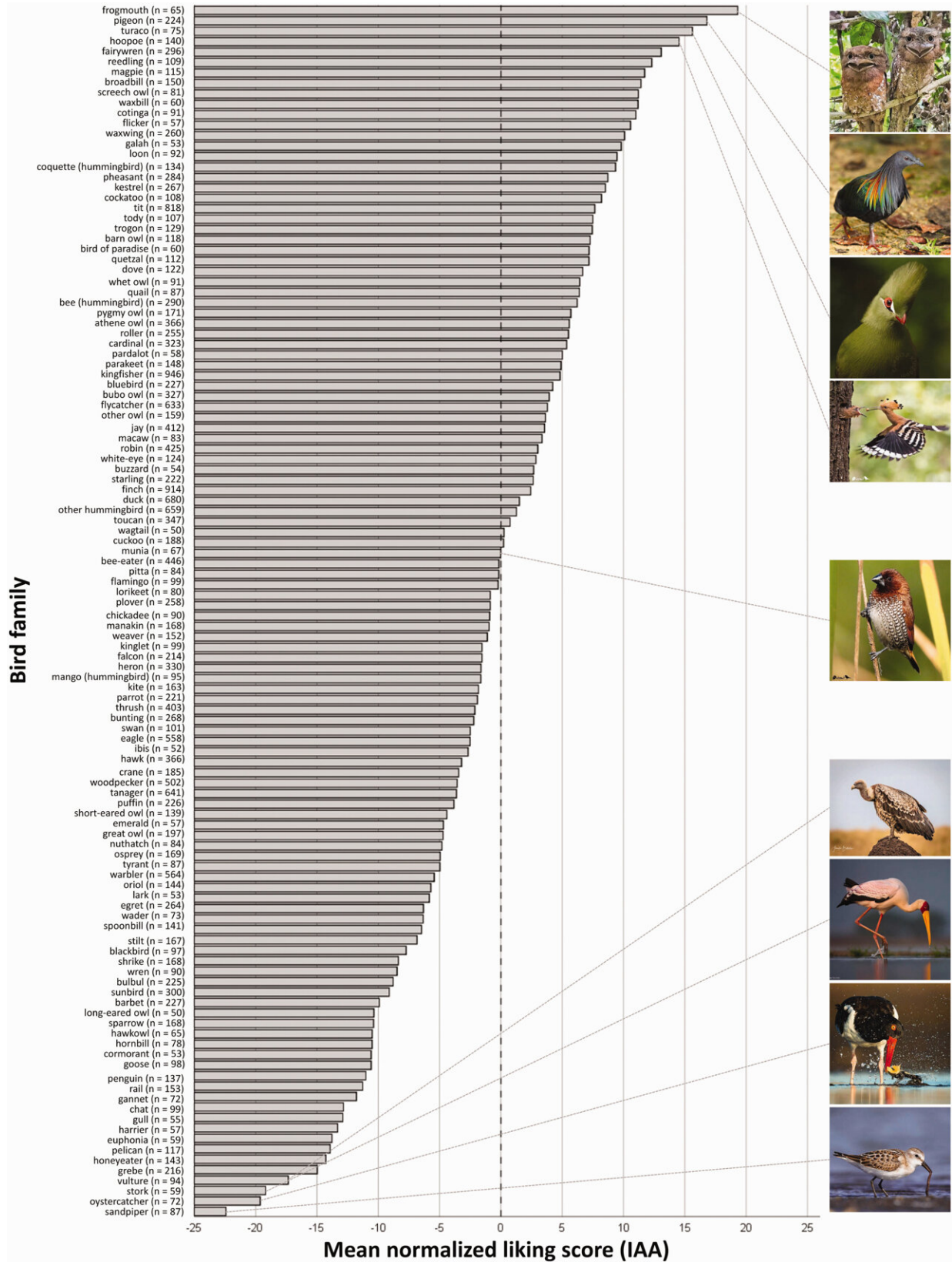


The most 'Instagrammable bird' on the internet

May 6 2021, by Bob Yirka



Bird family ranking. We analyzed 116 bird families with at least 50 images each and found substantial differences in mean IAAs ($\eta^2 = .045$). The photos illustrate the four most and least liked birds, respectively, as well as the bird with the IAA score closest to zero. Credit: *i-Perception* (2021). DOI: 10.1177/20416695211003585

A pair of researchers from the University of Konstanz and the University of Jena, respectively, have found the most "Instagrammable bird" on the internet. In their paper published in the journal *i-Perception* Katja Thömmes and Gregor Hayn-Leichsenring describe their analysis of "likes" by Instagram users for pictures of birds.

No one really knows what makes one post on a social media site more likable than others, though some have suggested it comes down to relatability. People can relate to cute kids or animals and click the "like" button when they see them. In this new effort, the researchers sought to learn more about the likeability of just one type of creature—birds. They came up with a way to find the most popular breed of bird on Instagram.

To figure out which breed is more popular than another, the researchers came up with a measurement index—they call it the Image Aesthetic Appeal (IAA). Just counting likes is not enough, because that discounts birds that do not get many views. Their index normalized the absolute number of likes across time and reach. Next, they selected nine popular Instagram accounts that typically featured pictures of birds and then analyzed 27,621 pictures of birds that had been posted. After applying their IAA index, they found that the frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)—a bird native to Australia and some parts of Southeast Asia—was the most instagrammable bird on the site.

The researchers note that prior research efforts have found that colorful

birds quite often receive many likes, but the birds that have some degree of relatability get the most. The relatability factor with birds usually comes down to the eyes—for most [birds](#), eyes are situated on the side of the head. The eyes of the frogmouth, which looks a lot like an owl, are front-facing—as are [human eyes](#). Interestingly, the plumage on its face gives the bird a perpetually angry expression, which is certainly an emotion most humans can relate to, the researchers note.

More information: Katja Thömmes et al. What Instagram Can Teach Us About Bird Photography: The Most Photogenic Bird and Color Preferences, *i-Perception* (2021). [DOI: 10.1177/20416695211003585](https://doi.org/10.1177/20416695211003585)

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