

Supervisor statement on Master thesis by Monica Romero titled **Responses of Blue Tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) and Great Tits (*Parus major*) to con- and hetero-specifics alarm calls.**

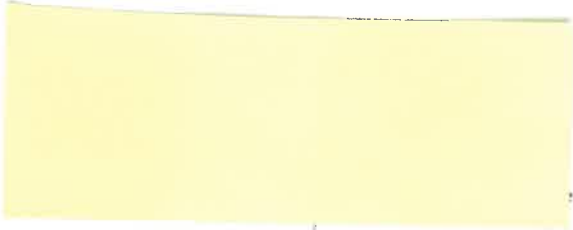
Monica came to me at the beginning of her Master studies in Ecology with interest in behavioural ecology of vertebrates. Her previous research focused on Andean Bears, so I tried to figure out something more exotic. Therefore, I offered her to join our research of ravens in the Alpes. Snowy Austrian mountains were obviously exotic enough for Monica, so she agreed. The topic of her theses focused on the ability of ravens to recognize and appropriately respond to alarm calls of various, allopatric corvid species, including the south American Inca Jay, which at least partially recalled Mónica's home 😊. Monica spent five weeks in the Alpes, at the beginning of the year 2020 and conducted 31 playback trials with ravens. Shortly after her return from the Alpes, Sars-Cov-2 arrived as well. And this was the reason, why Monica was not allowed to take her second season in the Alpes. We waited until the latest term in February 2021 and when the situation was still inconvenient, we chose the B-plan.

I suggested Monica to transfer her topic, i.e. responses to heterospecific alarms, to another and better accessible group of birds, titmice. They were available at our winter feeders and were known for their rich antipredatory communication. And this is how this thesis arose. Monica showed a stunning effort when collecting the data and was able to conduct 75 experiments in two weeks. This allowed us to statistically test the differences in responses of the two most common titmice species to 5 playback treatments. The results of the study are interesting, and sometimes surprising. Obviously, a bioacoustics analyses is needed to be able to evaluate similarities between individual used playbacks. This could explain why central-European titmice respond to North American species. Nevertheless, the deadline to deliver the theses approached rapidly and we were not allowed to conduct such analyses. Anyway, Monica also showed high skills in the work with literature as well as in writing her own text. The theses needed only minor corrections from my side and thus we made it before the deadline, and I believe the thesis is of a really good quality and deserves publication.

Regarding Monica's personal qualities, I must highlight her responsibility, reliability, and independence. She is detail-oriented, hard-working, persistent and she has a curious and flexible mind. Monica showed high enthusiasm in studying both ravens as well as titmice, she was able to individually plan her experiments, participated on preparing the playbacks, conducted all analyses only by herself and wrote the theses with only small contribution of the supervisor. Thanks to Monica's diligence and enthusiasm she was able to rapidly skip to another topic, using different experimental modus. I believe Monica has all essential abilities and strong dedication to undertake a fruitful academic career. Thus, I also believe that her master theses will be successfully defended and positively rated.

In České Budějovice

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RNDr. Petr Veselý, Ph.D.