



Supervisor's assessment for the MSc thesis:

Siddharth Khopkar: „Vocal Individuality in Yellow-rumped tinkerbirds (*Pogoniulus bilineatus*)“

Siddharth's thesis dealt with vocal individuality in one of the species of African barbets, a Yellow-rumped tinkerbird (YRT). His thesis is a part of the larger project in which we would like to compare vocal individuality across several barbet species to investigate life-history traits that favor evolution of high individuality in acoustic displays. Siddharth's thesis focused on the species for which we have the most recordings and for which we can at least partially assess how our non-perfect sampling associated with field work in Africa could affect estimates of individuality in this and possibly other barbet species. We selected African barbets, because species in this group are relatively common and diverse and because they represent non-songbirds with supposedly innate and very simple vocalizations in which it should be easy to estimate vocal individuality. Siddharth had to deal with imperfect sampling because the questions asked in the thesis were considered only after collection of data. The results of the thesis indicate that vocalizations of YRT are more plastic than we assumed and contain less individuality than we assumed.

Siddharth analyzed already collected data but this does not mean that he did not carry out field research at all. He initiated a small related project on arctic terns. He was able to secure part of the money from the Student Grant Agency of University of South Bohemia and applied also for another international grant (unfortunately not successful) and eventually, he went to Svalbard to conduct field research there.

Siddharth worked consistently on the thesis. It was sometimes me who slowed down the progress. Despite this consistent work on the thesis, finishing of the thesis was done in rush as it also corresponded with the first analysis and reporting of his parallel SGA project on arctic terns. Overall, I was happy with Siddharth's performance. He is very motivated and hard-working, willing to learn new methods. To complaint a bit, I would appreciate if Siddharth would come up more often with his own solutions supported by detail reading of previous studies. However, I realize that analyzing someone else's data is not always so exciting and motivating to penetrate deep in the topic. I would like to wish Siddharth good luck in his future career.

In České Budejovice, 12. 1. 2022,

RNDr. Pavel Linhart, PhD.