

**Supervisor's opinion on the master's thesis by BSc. Agnishikhe Munipapa Reddy Ashok Kumar,
titled The Effect of Season and Dominance Hierarchy on Strategic Interaction Among Birds in
Mixed-species Aggregation**

Agnishikhe proposed for a master project in her first semester of study of Ecology master programme. It was obvious that she was fond of the interspecific interactions in mixed-species bird flocks from the very beginning. Despite, I was no specialist in this field of research; I agreed to mentor her master project. We together designed a project at winter feeding places, which is actually the only real mixed-species bird aggregation in Czech republic comparable to what we encounter in tropical rainforests. Despite this aggregation occurs on anyone's garden, surprisingly little is known about the details of interactions of particular species involved in this aggregation. Agni showed really high effort during the field work, collected impressive amount of observations, which allowed us to conduct robust analyses of the mixed-flock structure, interspecies hierarchy and occurrence of strategic interactions. During all stages of the scientific work, Agni was extremely independent. As I am not an expert in this research field, Agni was the person introducing me into the literature. We designed the methods of the observations, during which Agni showed critical thinking and came up with many interesting ideas on how to improve the methodology. The data were collected exclusively by Agni, which took a lot of time spent in the field. Agni showed high ability to focus on details, to follow strictly the experimental protocol, but to deal with unexpected complications at the same time. She is very communicative, so we discussed a lot all the details, so that she was sure to conduct the research appropriately. Agni also performed very well when analysing the data. She was able to master the statistical methods, which were new for her (and for me as well), she conducted all analyses in R by her own, with no help from my side, which is also quite extraordinary in master students. She was able to formulate the question of the study based on previous studies, to test these question and discuss her results. When preparing the text of her master thesis, she was again very independent and my impact on the text is only minor. The thesis is written in a form of a manuscript, which I believe would be published without larger complications. I therefore believe that this master thesis will be also defended without problems and rated positively.

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RNDr. Petr Veselý, Ph.D., školitel