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## PhD exit seminar: Interspecific eavesdropping on alarm calls by superb fairy wrens

Tuesday 29 October 2013 1pm

Pamela Fallow Magrath Lab, EEG, RSB

Gould Seminar Room (Rm 235) Gould Building (Bldg. 116), Linnaeus Way, ANU



Photo credit: David Kleinert

Alarm calls are used by many vertebrates as an effective means of signalling the presence of danger to conspecifics. Furthermore, individuals commonly eavesdrop on the alarm calls of other species and so reduce their risk of predation. Some eavesdroppers not only identify heterospecific alarm calls but also gain information about threats, such as the type of predator or magnitude of risk. Despite the importance of interspecific eavesdropping, the mechanisms by which some animals identify heterospecific alarm calls are largely unclear. I used playback experiments to investigate how superb fairy wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*) identify alarm calls of other species and modify antipredator responses. Fairy wrens produce aerial alarm calls in response to sighting predatory birds in flight, prompting conspecifics to flee to cover. They also respond to the aerial alarm calls of other bird species that live in their vicinity. My work reveals detailed eavesdropping on heterospecific alarm calls and some acoustic “rules of thumb” used in alarm call identification.

Presented by

Research School of  
Biology

ANU College of  
Medicine, Biology  
& Environment

Contact details

E [luke.holman@anu.edu.au](mailto:luke.holman@anu.edu.au) T 02 612 55082  
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