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Stealing songs. The ecology of vocal mimicry in the superb lyrebird. PhD exit seminar.

Thursday 15 November 2012 1pm

Anastasia Dalziell Division of Evolution, Ecology & Genetics, RSB, ANU

Gould Seminar Room (Room 235) Gould building, 116 Daley Road, ANU



Avian vocal mimicry is one of the most spectacular forms of animal communication but surprisingly little is known about mimicry produced in the wild. In this talk I examine the form and function of mimetic song in a world-famous but poorly understood mimic: the male superb lyrebird. I show that males compartmentalise their large repertoire of mimicked sounds into two distinct groups. I will also discuss mimetic accuracy, the intimate association between mimicry and dance, and why males imitate alarm calls during copulation. I will argue that the complexity of lyrebird mimicry highlights the need for a more comprehensive account of the evolution of vocal mimicry in birds.

Presented by

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