

Dear Recommender,

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our Stage 1 registered report (RR) again, entitled “Neophobia across social contexts in juvenile Herring gulls”.

We are grateful for the insightful comments provided by the reviewers. We have addressed and implemented these in the revised manuscript and have added point-by-point responses to individual comments below.

We would also like to point out that the testing of the gulls for this registered report is due to start in two weeks' time, on 26 June. We would be very grateful if we could have a decision on this registered report by then. We declare that this revised Stage 1 RR remains original and unpublished. All authors approved the submission of the revised Stage 1 RR in its current form.

Sincerely,

Reinoud Allaert (on behalf of all authors)

Review by anonymous reviewer 1, 20 May 2024 08:09

Lines 218-220: You state that the time in proximity to the food reward is measured cumulatively for the duration of the experiment. I think this should be restricted to the first 10 minutes after the bird has entered the arena to give each bird 10 minutes. As it is currently written, some birds would have more than 10 minutes (the ones that enter earlier).

We agree with your suggestion and have adjusted the manuscript as follows:

“The first 10 minutes start when the door begins to move, the second 10 minutes start for each bird individually when it leaves the start area. The test session ends 10 minutes after the bird has left the start area. “

Review by anonymous reviewer 2, 30 May 2024 14:05

Figure 1 and elsewhere. I apologize for missing to mention this point in the previous review round, but I am wondering why all alternative hypotheses include reduced variance. While for social conformity the reason is clear, it is not fully clear why the Authors expect reduced variance also in risk-dilution and negotiation hypotheses.

We have clarified this aspect and rephrased it in the main manuscript as follows:

“Such mitigating effects of social context on neophobia may be attributed to 'risk dilution' or 'social buffering'. These theories predict that neophobia, or fear responses in general, are reduced in the presence of others, as individuals in a group collectively share the potential risks associated with novel situations or threats, causing them to behave more similarly. “

“It has therefore been suggested that the slower approach latencies may be due to conspecifics 'negotiating', by using behavioural cues to coordinate their actions and deciding who will approach the novel object first. Consequently, this may lead to a convergence of individual behaviours, as group members align their actions based on these cues.”

L165-166 or elsewhere. It would be necessary to emphasize in the text that the housing groups of ten individuals will be divided into two subgroups, that will consist of known individuals (as it was emphasized in the answer to the Reviewer).

We have adjusted this in the main manuscript as follows:

“For testing purposes, each home enclosure containing ten birds is pseudo-randomly divided into two stable testing groups of five known individuals.”

L172-174. Thank you for clarifying the position of the control object. It would still be important to clarify whether the control object always (also outside of the control trial) stays behind the food plate, or is it moved to elsewhere in the compartment when novel object trials take place. Please also mention clearly in the text that the control object stays in the testing compartment during both the habituation and the test phase.

We have adjusted the sentence to clarify this:

“The familiar object remains in place, throughout the testing and habituation period to avoid dishabituation from the familiar object. It is replaced by the novel object only during the novel object testing sessions.”

L184. Please exchange to “six days” in this sentence.

Thank you for pointing out the inconsistency. We have adjusted the sentence accordingly

L186-187. Please state what kind of marker will be used on animals.

We will use Raidex markers to identify each bird. We have specified this in our manuscript:

“In order to distinguish the birds when they are being tested in a group, each individual is given a unique marker (marker pen, Raidex) a few days before the test, which can be easily detected by a roof-mounted camera, as the colour rings are not visible in the video recordings.”

L201-203. Perhaps I have misunderstood the Authors’ point, but it seems that the second 10 minutes count will only start once the last bird leaves the start box, and this is problematic as some birds may already touch the food by the point the last of them leaves the start box. It would be better if the second 10 minutes count is started for every bird separately (i.e., every bird will have slightly different ‘start’ and ‘end’ time, but all will have a test duration of ten minutes). Please try to clarify more in the text.

We agree that this was confusing and have implemented your suggestion as follows:

“The first 10 minutes start the moment the door starts moving, the second 10 minutes start for each bird individually once it left the start area. The testing session ends 10 minutes after the bird has left the start area.”