### HOCHSCHULE HANNOVER

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND ARTS

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Fakultät IV Wirtschaft und Informatik

# Improvements on AFB

Advancing the Metaheuristic for TSP



Pit Hüne; Tim Cares, 24.10.2023

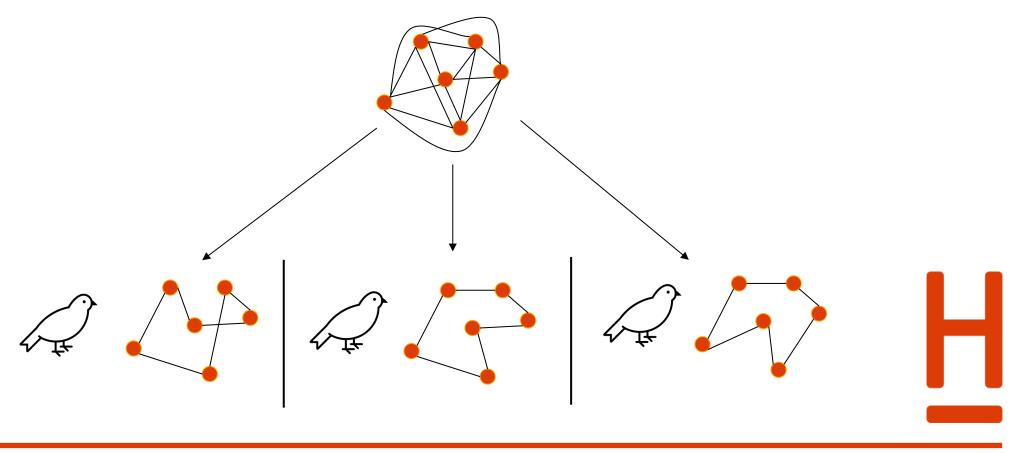
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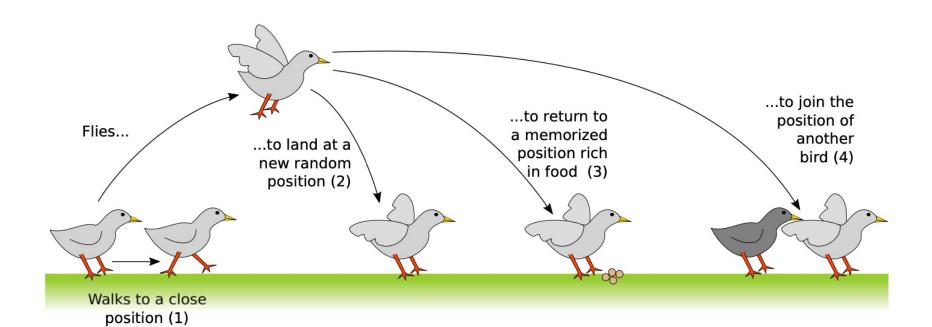


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- Each Birds represents one possible solution (one tour)
- Each operation performed by a bird, alters its respective solutions





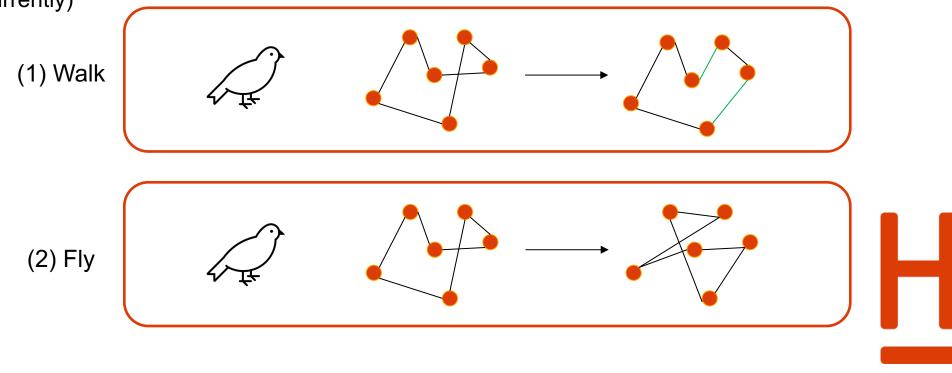


Each action of a bird corresponds to a change of its own solution

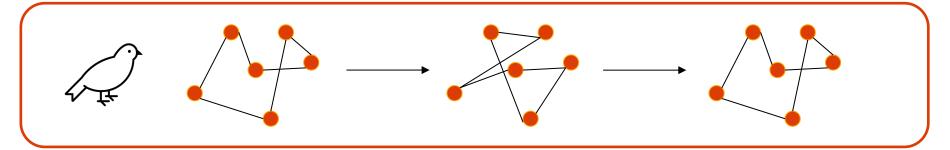
· Each solution is valid

The number of candidate solutions (or agents respectively) does not change

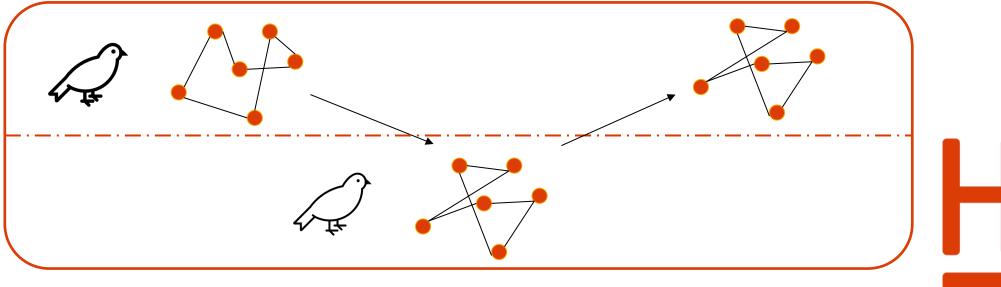
(currently)



#### (3) Return



#### (4) Join



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### Methodology

- To benchmark our improvements, we select five feasible solutions from TSPLIB
  - Each problem has a different order of magnitude to account for the variety of different configurations possible
- Each problem is run 10x, to account for the randomness (50 test in total)
- We record the mean percentage error, and the mean time in seconds

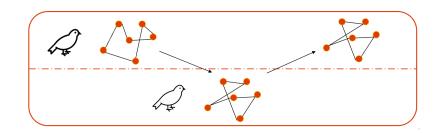
Problems: eil101, pa561, pr1002, u2156, pr2392



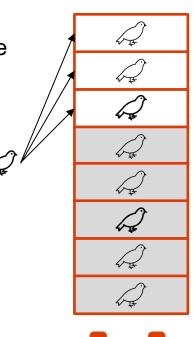
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### **Top-b Join**

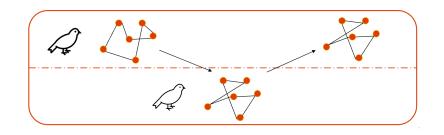


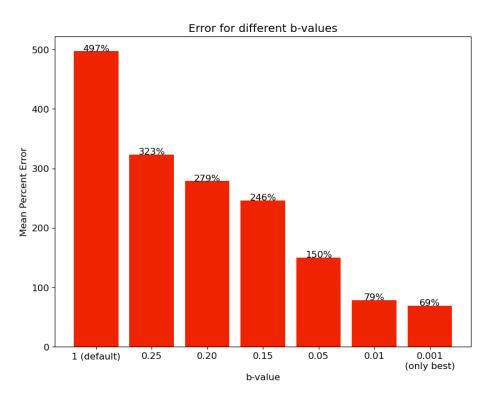
- Default behavior: If a big bird joins another, he chooses one randomly
- Contradicts the idea that birds tend to join others, if they found a good food source
  - Good food source translates to a good solution
- That is why we decide to allow a big bird to only join the top-b percent
  - Pick one of the top-b birds randomly
- Means ordering the birds by their tour length after each iteration/phase
  - Increases runtime due to sorting complexity

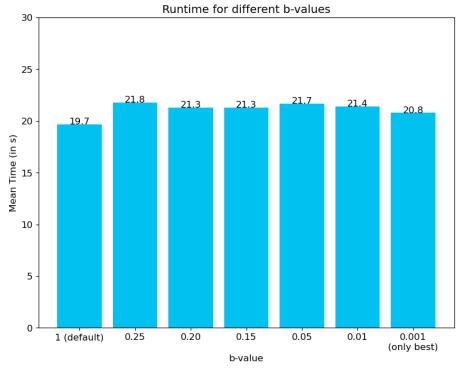




### **Top-b Join**



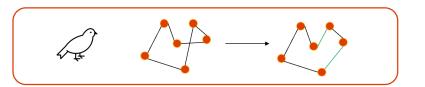




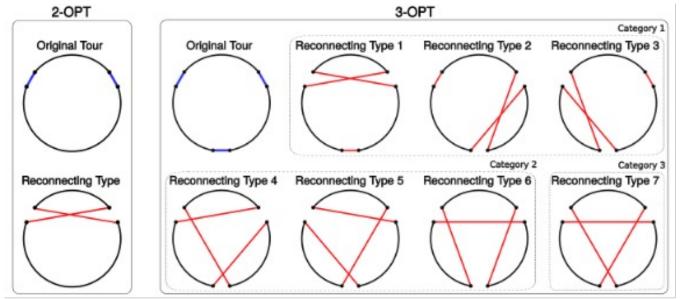
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### 3-Opt



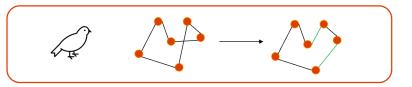
- When performing the walk-operation, so the local search, a bird uses 2-opt to search for a potential better solution
- Naturally, we also tested 3-opt as a more powerful alternative

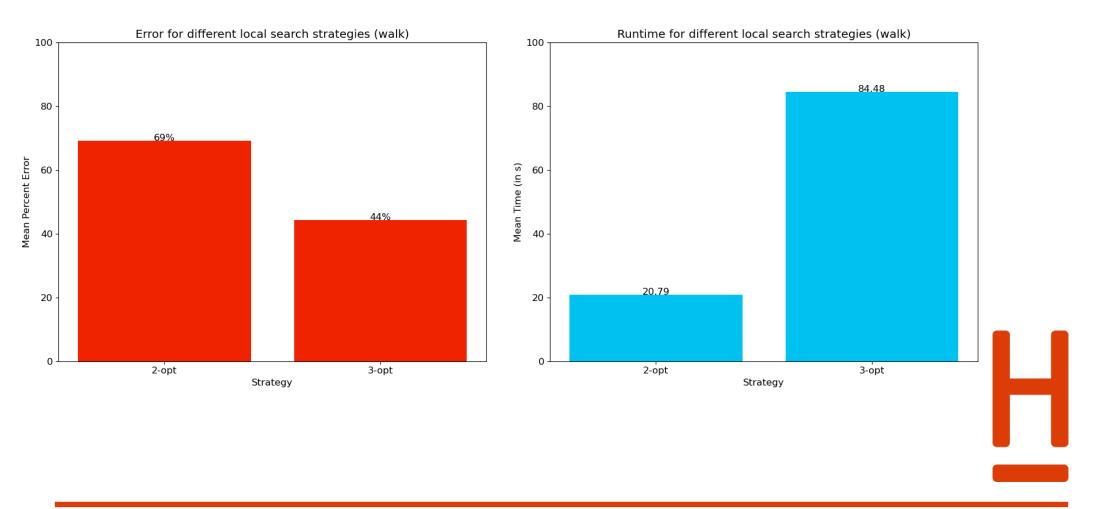


Source: Jingyan Sui, Shizhe Ding, Ruizhi Liu, Liming Xu, Dongbo Bu. Learning 3-opt heuristics for traveling salesman problem via deep reinforcement learning. Proceedings of The 13th Asian Conference on Machine Learning, PMLR 157:1301-1316, 2021.



### 3-Opt

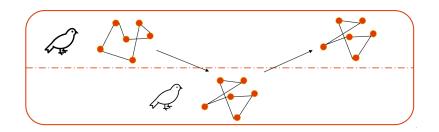




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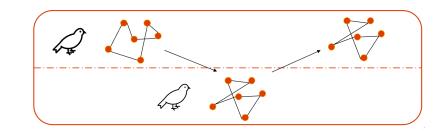
### **Delegating Responsibility**

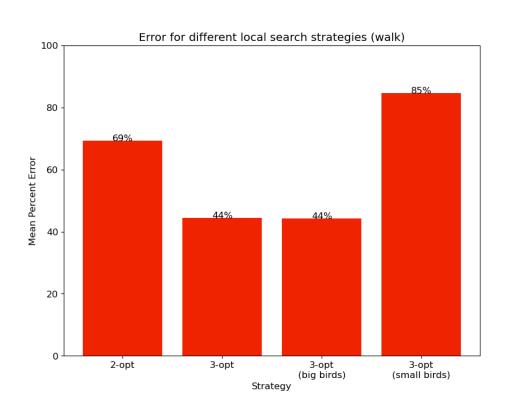


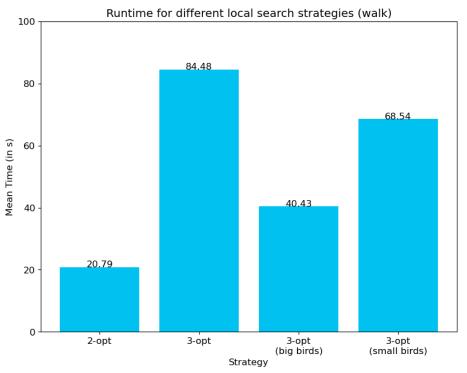
- Seen before: 3-opt (+ sorting for top-b join) yield very high computation effort
- How can one make the algorithm faster while keeping the performance close to before?
- Answer: Allow only big/small birds to perform 3-opt, the other 2-opt
  - Both were tested, but big birds make more sense regarding their "superiority"



### **Delegating Responsibility**

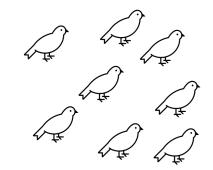






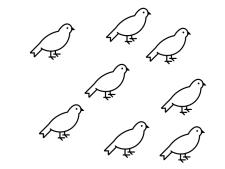
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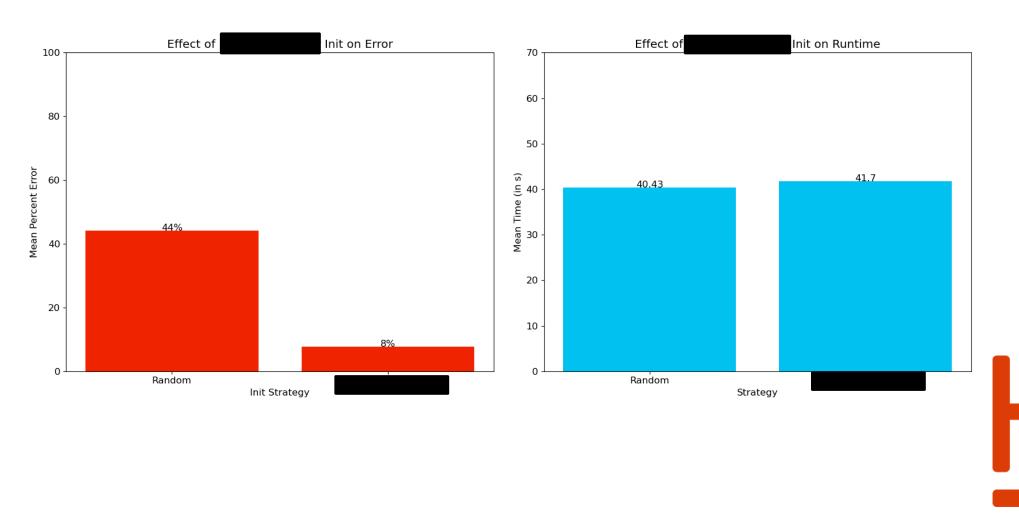








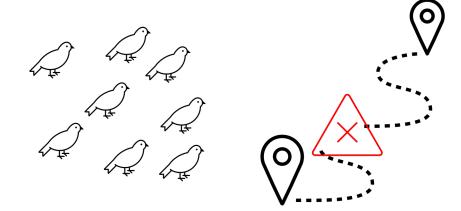




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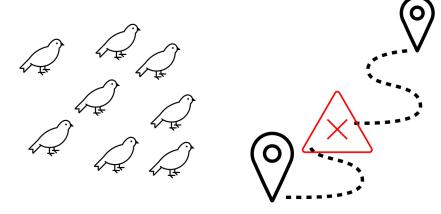
### **Early Stopping**

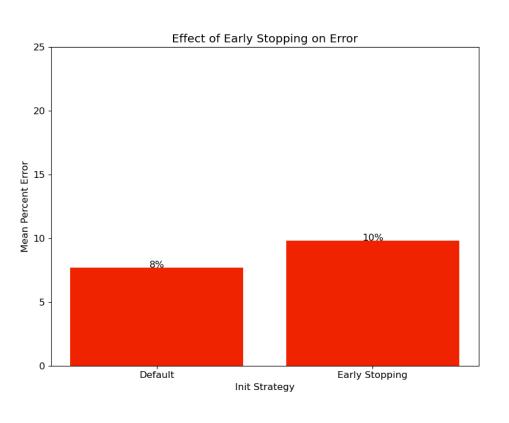


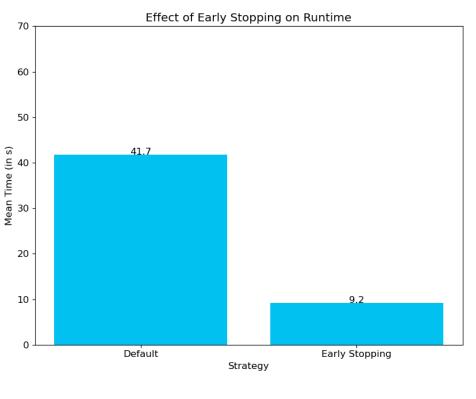
- Algorithm shows very fast convergence behavior
  - Especially for problems with a rather low number of cities
- How many iterations are needed to achieve a good result for a given problem is difficult to estimate
- Therefore, a predefined number of iterations yields unnecessary long computation times that do not improve the results
- One solution is to stop the algorithm, if the current solution(s) do not improve



## **Early Stopping**



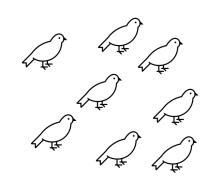


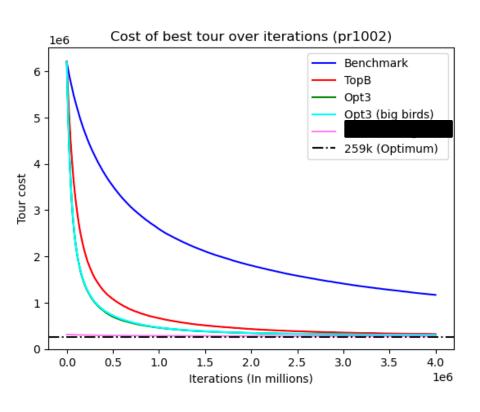


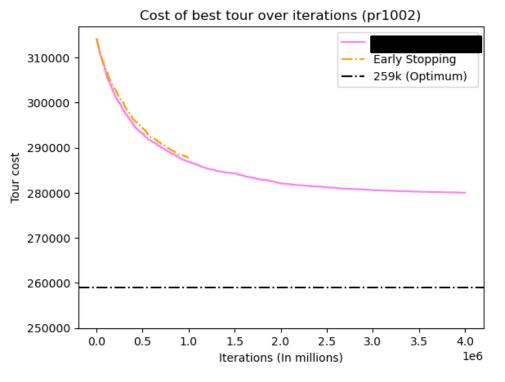
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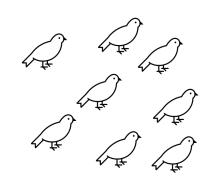
### **Optimization Behavior**

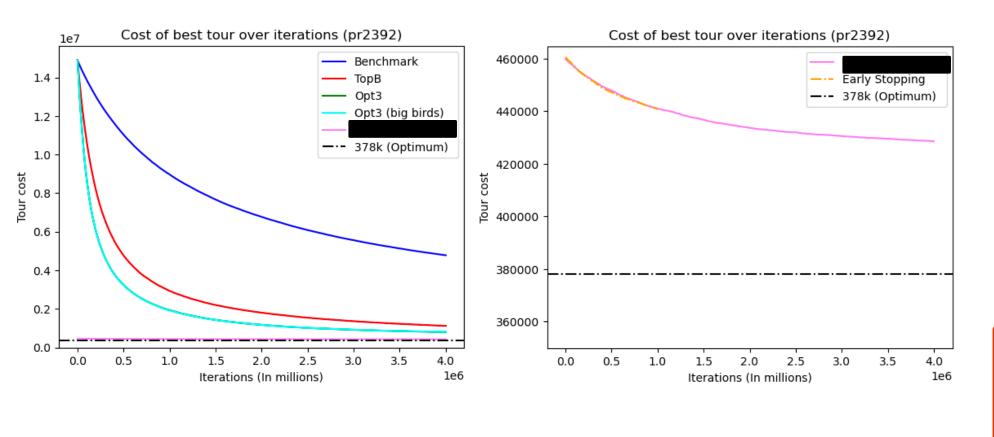






### **Optimization Behavior**







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#### **Metabirds**



- How do you choose hyperparameters like move probabilities or small bird ratio?
- Apply an optimization algorithm to find optimal values
- What optimization algorithm? Artificial Feeding Birds!
- A Metabird's position is a value for all probabilities, ratios, etc.
  - Flying generates a random position in the hyperparameter space
  - Walking adds or subtracts a random delta from each parameter
  - Calculating the fitness of a Metabird
    - A TSP solver is instantiated with the hyperparameters of the Metabird
    - Multiple runs solving a TSP are averaged to assess the performance with the current parameters.



### Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!



#### Literature

• Jean-Baptiste Lamy. Artificial Feeding Birds (AFB): a new metaheuristic inspired by the behavior of pigeons. Advances in nature-inspired computing and applications, 2019, 10.1007/978-3-319-96451- 5\_3 . hal-02264232

