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Authors: Aggarwal, Geetika

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Abstract:

Vocal communication is one of the significant modes of information transfer practised by animals. This communication can get increasingly complex depending on the structural and functional diversity of the calls produced. Apart from humans and primates, birds possess well-developed acoustic communication. Avian vocalisations can possess different acoustic structures but be functionally similar (territorial songs) or have distinct acoustic parameters with varying functionalities (social species). 'Social complexity hypothesis' posits that social animals possess a complex repertoire with multiple calls produced in separate behavioural contexts and elicit different responses from the listeners. Here we present a study on the vocal repertoire of a cooperatively breeding passerine, Large Grey Babbler (Argya malcolmi), found throughout the Indian subcontinent. Using behavioural observations and aural-visual classification, we have found that the species produces 11 distinct vocalisations. We assign functions to these calls and broadly classify them as affiliative or agonistic. This study is the first study on the vocalisations of the Large Grey Babbler. It aims to lay a foundation for future research on vocal functions and comparative analyses of vocal complexity.

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