**Do stressful conditions in early-life affect song preferences in adult female European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*)?**

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In songbirds, developmental stress adversely affects the song-control system (i.e., the neural regions that support song learning and production). To date, this phenomenon is well studied in males by assessing the quality of the song phenotype in adulthood. However, effects of developmental stress on the female song-control system and song preferences are less well studied. Here we subjected female European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) to either an ad libitum or unpredictable food-supply from 35-115 days of age. In brief, we would remove access to food for 3-hours randomly between the hours of 0900-1800. Once birds were adults, we assessed song preferences using an operant conditioning task where birds actively chose to listen to a song by landing on a motion-activated perch in comparisons of (1) low- versus high-quality starling songs and (2) conspecific versus heterospecific (i.e., canary) songs. In addition, levels of neural activation in auditory forebrain regions (using expression of immediate early gene ZENK) were quantified following the presentation of either conspecific or heterospecific (i.e., canary) song. We found no significant effect of our developmental treatment on song preferences between low and high quality starling songs, but control females significantly preferred conspecific song to heterospecific song while the food-restricted females showed no preference. Currently, ZENK activation and volume measurements of the song-control system are being conducted and future results will be discussed. These studies aim to evaluate how developmental stress affects females’ evaluation of potential mates using a sexually selected signal.