

Grackle Project Postdoctoral Scholar

Comparative Behavioral Ecology Research Group, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology
Institute for Social, Behavioral and Economic Research, University of California Santa Barbara

Location: Tempe, Arizona (year 1), northern California (year 2)

Contract duration: 1 year with the possibility for a 1 year extension depending on performance

Salary: starts at \$50,000 (depending on experience; 100% time)

Start date: July-August 2019



The Grackle Project is recruiting a Postdoctoral Scholar to support long-term research on how behavioral flexibility relates to invasion success. Under the direction of the PI, Dr. Corina Logan, and the field site manager, Dr. Kelsey McCune, the postdoc will help manage a great-tailed grackle behavior field site. The successful candidate will conduct comparative cognition tests in aviaries and in the wild, trap grackles to color-band as much of the population as possible, conduct focal follows in the wild to document foraging innovations, track nestling success to measure the fitness of tested birds, co-supervise a research technician and student assistants, coordinate with project collaborators, and contribute to publications that will be published in 100% open access journals at ethical publishers. As biologists, we know the importance of diversity and we encourage applications from individuals belonging to groups that are traditionally under-represented in the sciences. See the grackle website for more information: www.CorinaLogan.com.

Duties

- Contribute to the design, implementation, analysis, and reporting of behavioral experiments in accordance with the project's research goals while making the best use of open research practices.
- During the non-breeding season, conduct behavioral experiments on grackles in aviaries and in the wild, follow detailed data collection protocols, and back up data daily. Supervise, train, and communicate effectively with a research technician and students who will assist the research. Carry out animal husbandry activities including feeding, cleaning, and health checks to ensure the birds have unlimited and constant access to water and are fed the appropriate food during testing and non-testing times. Identify aviary issues as they arise and work with the Animal Care Team to resolve them.
- During the breeding season, fewer experiments will be conducted and more time will be spent collecting behavioral data on wild grackles using focal follow protocols to understand whether they have a dominance hierarchy, obtain their social network, and document which foraging innovations are used by which birds.
- Trap grackles in the wild and process them (i.e., band, collect blood and feathers, and biometric measurements) to individually mark birds for study in the wild and in aviaries and to gather data that we will relate with their behavioral performance. Release most grackles and bring some temporarily into aviaries for behavioral tests. Must be able to conduct this work at irregular hours (e.g., at dawn) to maximize trapping success.
- Communicate research progress effectively with project collaborators for review purposes.
- Disseminate research findings internationally via publications, conferences, and seminars.
- Promote awareness of research activities in comparative cognition and evolutionary biology among groups that are traditionally underrepresented in science.

Essential Qualifications

- PhD in animal behavior, comparative cognition, or related field.
- Demonstrate the potential to be a strong role model for groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the sciences.
- Expertise in conducting comparative cognition experiments in aviaries on wild-caught birds.
- Experience trapping, banding, and collecting blood from birds. Must have extracted at least 100 birds from mist nets to be able to immediately become a subpermittee on the bird banding license.

- Excellent written communication skills as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications in animal behavior.
- Knowledge of, and experience applying, open research practices (e.g., publishing datasets and code, posting preprints, preregistering experiments, conducting peer reviews that are published, advocacy).
- Demonstrated ability to work outside for long hours in extreme weather (e.g., >105F summer, cold winter) and walk sometimes extensively to follow the birds.
- Effective communicator, including proven ability to work cooperatively in a team while also being able to take initiative and work independently, and communicate with the public.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail, including proven ability to carry out detailed field protocols.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience conducting puzzle box experiments on wild birds.
- Experience conducting touch screen comparative cognition tests on wild-caught birds.
- Experience trapping birds with bownets and walk-in traps.

To apply: email your cover letter, CV, and contact information for at least three references by 31 May 2019 to Dr. Corina Logan (corina_logan@eva.mpg.de). In your cover letter, please provide evidence for how you meet the essential and preferred qualifications.

This post is funded by the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and hired through the University of California, Santa Barbara. Field accommodation is not provided. Corina is a signatory of the *San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment* (<http://www.ascb.org/dora/>) and will assess research quality directly rather than using metrics.