

Supervision :

Surname: Béchet / Cézilly

First name: Arnaud / Frank

e-mail :

bechet@tourduvalat.org

Funding for student:

 yes to be discussed no**Title of the research project :**

Courtship, laterality and behavioral contagion in the greater flamingo

Key words :

Courtship, display sequences, laterality

Brief description :

Laterality refers to the phenomenon in which individuals preferentially employ one side of their body over the other when performing some behaviour or mental process (Vallortigara & Rogers, 2005). A previous study on Greater flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* suggests an absence of laterality during resting as no preference was found neither in the use of the right or left leg, nor for the neck position while birds were observed asleep. However, in this species, laterality has never been regarded during active periods. Here, we aim at examining if laterality could be expressed during courtships. Courtships are performed in groups by individuals displaying synchronized sequences of behaviors. Several of these behaviors can be performed asymmetrically, using either the left or the right leg to scratch the head for instance. The aim of this study would be to determine whether the use of the right or left side of the body is (i) random (ii) constant and suggests laterality (iii) result from imitation throughout behavioral contagion.

Literature (2 references):Johnson, A. R. & Cézilly, F. The Greater Flamingo. *T & AD Poyser*, 2007Vallortigara, G., & Rogers, L. J. (2005). Survival with an asymmetrical brain: Advantages and disadvantages of cerebral lateralisation. *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 28, 575-633.**Technical aspects of the research project:**

Filed observations, behavioural sequences analyses (jwatcher)

Essential skills and abilities desired:

Statistics, Enjoying field work.