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Song and the city : a comparison between urban and forest blackbirds

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STELLINGEN
behorende bij het proefschrift
“Song and the city: a comparison between urban and forest blackbirds”
van Erwin Ripmeester

1. Processes involved in speciation can be studied in currently diverging populations of species even if they never fully split into new species.
2. The urban habitat is an excellent laboratory to investigate evolution in action (*c.f. Warren et al. 2006*).
3. Studying the proximate mechanisms underlying habitat-dependent signal divergence helps to evaluate the possible ultimate consequences of signal divergence for population differentiation and speciation.
4. Studies on songbird vocalizations and human speech may benefit from each other considering the many mechanistic and functional similarities between vocal communication in songbirds and humans (*c.f. Doupe & Kuhl 1999, Fitch 2005*).
5. Habitat-dependent variation in song and corresponding reactions can emerge rapidly and may thus play a role at the initial stages of avian speciation (*This thesis: chapter 2*).
6. Although playback experiments are useful to test whether individuals discriminate between song traits, it is not always easy to infer the biological meaning and consequences of differences in relative response strength (*This thesis: chapter 3*).
7. Patterns of noise-dependent song variation between habitats can be the same among species despite the presence of species-specific differences in the underlying mechanisms (*This thesis: chapter 4*).
8. Habitat-dependent variation in social circumstances related to territory density and seasonality can translate into habitat-dependent song variation (*This thesis: chapter 4*).
9. Lifelong flexibility of song traits reduces the probability to affect gene flow (*This thesis: chapter 4*).
10. Ecological differences can lead to morphological and genetic differences among bird populations of the same species at a micro-geographic scale of only a few kilometres (*c.f. Badyaev et al. 2008, this thesis: chapter 5*).
11. Double-blind reviewing of submitted manuscript and project proposals should be the standard in science.
12. One realises how noisy our urban world is when listening to supposed silence in quiet natural areas.