

**BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS**

**CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESPONSE OF FLORIDA SCRUB-JAY PAIRS TO  
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD VOCAL MIMICRY**

NOAH T. OWEN-ASHLEY,<sup>1</sup> STEPHAN J. SCHOECH<sup>2</sup> AND RONALD L. MUMME<sup>3</sup>  
*Archbold Biological Station, 123 Main Drive, Venus, FL 33960*

Manuscript received 1 October 2001; accepted 17 May 2002.

<sup>1</sup>Present address: Department of Zoology, Box 351800, University of Washington,  
Seattle, WA 98195-1800. E-mail: [nowenash@u.washington.edu](mailto:nowenash@u.washington.edu)

<sup>2</sup>Present address: Department of Biology, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152.

<sup>3</sup>Present address: Department of Biology, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA 16355.

*Abstract.* It is well established that vocal mimicry serves an intraspecific function in birds by increasing repertoire size. On an interspecific level, territorial exclusion of other species by deceptive mimicry may occur if the model (i.e., mimicked) species song is effectively reproduced by the mimicking species. Few studies have effectively demonstrated deceptive mimicry because they did not use the context of the mimic's song as a control stimulus. We addressed this shortcoming by using isolated and context-dependent playback stimuli to assess the response of Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) pairs to Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) imitation. Scrub-jay pairs responded more aggressively to isolated scrub-jay *weep* calls than to playbacks consisting of either isolated imitation calls, imitated calls embedded in mockingbird song, or control mockingbird song. These results fail to support the hypothesis that mimicry deceives the model species. Whether mockingbird imitation of scrub-jays deceives other species requires further investigation.

*Key words:* Florida Scrub-Jay, mimicry, Northern Mockingbird, playbacks, territoriality, vocalizations.