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Goffin's cockatoos learn to discriminate objects based on weight alone in an object choice task

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Abstract

Paying attention to weight is important when deciding upon an object's efficacy or value in various contexts (e.g. tool use, foraging). Proprioceptive discrimination learning, with objects that differ only in weight, has so far been investigated in a handful of primate species. Here we show that while Goffin's cockatoos learn faster when additional colour cues are used, they can also quickly learn to discriminate between objects on the basis of their weight alone. Ultimately, the birds learned to discriminate between visually identical objects on the basis of weight much faster than primates, although methodological differences between tasks should be considered.