



Subject:
Date:

[Manston Airport: Richard Price](#)
FW: Manston
20 June 2019 09:54:21

Please disregard my previous e mail on this subject, I have now sent the complete article here.

Dear Sirs,

Please take note of the news item published in The Guardian newspaper today, 20.06.2019.

This rather contradicts the assertion of RSP that no or negligible damage will be done to wildlife at SSSI at Pegwell Bay and Sandwich and indeed elsewhere.

Barbara Warner

Twitter storm: noise pollution creates havoc for birds, study shows

Human activities could be affecting reproduction and even normal social behaviour

[Fiona Harvey](#) *Environment correspondent*

Thu 20 Jun 2019 00.01 BST

Shares

78



Singing with intent. A Belfast university study found human noise pollution directly influenced robins' ability to communicate with each other. Photograph: David Tipling/Getty Images

Birds are even more disrupted by their noisy neighbours than had been thought previously, **researchers have found. And human activities could be preventing birds from reproducing and even developing normal social behaviour and keeping the peace.**

A study by Queen's University Belfast found that when European robins were subjected to **human produced noises** their behaviour changed. Background noise appeared to mask the communication of crucial information between birds. While aggressive communication is common and birds respond to it, interference through noise can lead to the birds mistaking the signals.



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Gareth Arnott, senior lecturer and researcher from the Institute for Global Food Security at Queen's University Belfast, said: "We found that bird song structure can communicate aggressive intent, enabling birds to assess their opponent. But human-made noise can disrupt this crucial information passed between them, by masking the complexity of their songs used for acquiring resources, such as

territory and space for nesting.”

Birds can end up in situations all too familiar to humans. “The birds receive incomplete information on their opponent’s intent and do not appropriately adjust their response,” explained Arnott. “Where song is disguised by background noise, in some cases the male ends up fighting more vigorously than he should, but at other times gives in too easily.”

This is the first time it has been shown that aggressive communication is being disrupted by noise.

Arnott said the purpose of birdsong was twofold – to attract mates and defend territory.

Birds already face an array of human-made dangers, from pesticides and intensive farming to shooting and poisoning. But noise had often been overlooked, the paper in **Biology Letters** found.

A TV aerial acts as a perch for an urban blackbird.



A spokesperson for the RSPB said: “Everyone is becoming increasingly concerned that nature is in crisis in the UK, with one in 10 of our wildlife species at threat of extinction. Many of our birds’ populations are already facing a serious crisis as a result of habitat loss, climate change and other human activities.

“This report is a good reminder that the way we live and our lifestyle has an impact on our natural world, and that we need to protect our natural world if we want to let nature sing.”

The research does not have clear implications for **human health**, although excessive noise can damage **children’s ability to learn** and causes stress among adults.

For birds, the extra burden of noise pollution adds to extraordinary decline in species, including among once common birds, in recent decades due to such activities as agricultural practice and pesticide use.

In the experiment the team used playbacks of robin song to stimulate responses from birds who were territory holders. Simple or complex songs were used in either the presence or absence of noise.

The researchers found that song complexity was used as a signal of aggressive intent; birds demonstrated higher aggressive intent towards complex rather than simple song. This process was disrupted by the presence of added noise.

Arnott said: “The study is evidence that human-made noise pollution impacts animal habitats and directly influences their ability to communicate properly, which may have implications for survival and population numbers for birds.”