

Peer Review

Review of: "Feathered Icons: Drivers of Global Attention on Bird Species"

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Summary of the Study

This study investigates the drivers of public and scientific attention toward bird species, integrating phenotypic, ecological, and cultural factors into a comprehensive analysis. The authors utilize data from the Web of Science and Wikipedia pageviews to quantify interest, modeling the relationships between species characteristics and human engagement. The findings highlight biases in species visibility, particularly the outsized influence of species charisma and human familiarity, while conservation status alone appears insufficient to sustain attention.

Strengths of the Manuscript

Comprehensive Dataset: The study benefits from an extensive dataset, encompassing a large number of bird species and incorporating diverse factors influencing public and scientific attention.

Robust Methodological Approach: The use of generalized additive models (GAM) and variance partitioning analyses enhances the rigor of the statistical assessment.

Interdisciplinary Relevance: The research effectively bridges ecological, conservation, and social dimensions, contributing to biodiversity conservation and science communication.

Clear and Well-Structured Writing: The manuscript is well-organized, with a logical progression from introduction to results and discussion, making it accessible to a broad audience.

Actionable Conservation Insights: The discussion section offers valuable recommendations on improving public engagement with underrepresented species, including media campaigns and education strategies.

Areas for Improvement

Clarification of Public vs. Scientific Interest Metrics

The use of Wikipedia pageviews as a proxy for public interest is reasonable, but potential biases (e.g., differences in regional internet access) should be more explicitly acknowledged in the limitations.

Similarly, Web of Science data may overrepresent research interests from English-speaking and well-resourced institutions. A brief discussion on these limitations and their implications for the findings would strengthen the analysis.

Refinement of Ecological Drivers Analysis

While the study identifies ecological factors such as range size and latitude as influencing scientific and public attention, the discussion could better contextualize these results. For instance, how do these patterns compare to other taxa, and what are their conservation implications?

The finding that pelagic birds attract more scientific attention but less public interest is intriguing but underexplored. A deeper discussion of potential drivers (e.g., research funding patterns, media coverage) would be beneficial.

Interpretation of Conservation Status Effects

The manuscript suggests that IUCN status has a limited impact on public interest. However, it is unclear whether this effect varies by taxonomic group or geographic region.

Including a more detailed breakdown (e.g., do highly charismatic endangered species receive more attention than non-charismatic ones?) could clarify these dynamics.

Typographical and Grammatical Errors

There are several typographical errors throughout the manuscript, such as “sufficient” (should be “sufficient”) and “scientific knowledges” (should be “scientific knowledge”). A thorough proofreading would enhance readability.

Inconsistent phrasing in some sections (e.g., “as so as migratory and urban birds” in the results section) should be revised for clarity.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.