Dr Andrew Katsis

Behavioural ecologist

I am a behavioural ecologist with a chief interest in avian personality traits and how behaviour can differ at the species, population, and individual level. My recent study species have included Darwin's finches, Superb Fairy-wrens, Zebra Finches, and Greylag Geese.

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Research

2022–present **Postdoctoral researcher, Konrad Lorenz Research Center, University of Vienna**
- Studying the ontogeny of personality in a free-roaming study population of Greylag Geese (*Anser anser*) in Grünau im Almtal, Austria
- Studying individual- and species-level behavioural differences in Darwin's finches (subfamily Geospizinae) on Floreana Island in the Galápagos

2019–21 **Research Associate in Animal Behaviour (postdoc), Flinders University**
- Studied behavioural differences in wild Darwin's finches parasitised by the invasive Avian Vampire Fly (*Philornis downsi*), on Floreana Island in the Galápagos
- Studied the ontogeny and fitness consequences of personality traits in wild Superb Fairy-wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*), in South Australia
- Designed behavioural assays to quantify the nest defence behaviour of Little Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*), in South Australia

2016–20 **PhD researcher**, **Deakin University**
- Studied how prenatal exposure to parental 'heat calls' alters offspring phenotype (including vocal learning, begging behaviour, personality, and cognitive performance) in wild-derived Australian Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*)

2015 **Research assistant, University of Melbourne**
- Performed DNA extractions and PCR for paternity analysis and sexing, to assist a long-term study on Superb Fairy-wrens

2012–13 **MSc candidate, University of Melbourne**
- Studied the relationship between personality and vocal learning in a wild population of Superb Fairy-wrens at Serendip Sanctuary, Victoria

2010–11 **Research assistant, University of Melbourne**
- Scored behavioural trials for a mate choice study using Black Swans (*Cygnus atratus*)

Education

2016–20 **Doctor of Philosophy (Ecology)**, Deakin University
Thesis: "Effects of prenatal acoustic communication on songbird behaviour and cognition"
Supervisors: Prof Kate Buchanan, Dr Mylene Mariette, Prof Sonia Kleindorfer

2012–13 **Master of Science (Zoology)**, University of Melbourne
Thesis: "Finding their calling: Can personality explain differences in songbird vocal learning?" [final grade 96%; First Class Honours]

2007–11 **Bachelor of Science** & **Bachelor of Commerce**, University of Melbourne. Majored in Zoology

Research grants

€450,000: FWF (Austrian Science Fund; 2024), with Sonia Kleindorfer. Project: *"The ultimate causes of personality in Darwin's finches"*.
A$12,335: Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment (Ecological Society of Australia/Equity Trustees; 2016–2018)
A$2,285: Stuart Leslie Bird Research Award (Birdlife Australia; 2016–2018)
A$9,400: Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment (2012–2013)

Publications

2026 **A.C. Katsis**, M.A. Elgar & R.A. Mulder* (2026). Sexual and social functions of ornamental wing feathers in Black Swans (*Cygnus atratus*). *Ibis*, 168(1):353–360. doi: 10.1111/ibi.13437

J. Lesigang, L.K. Common, P. Fröschl, A.S. Liebisch, **A.C. Katsis** & S. Kleindorfer* (2026). Here am I, where are you? Contact calls carry identity signatures in greylag geese. *Animal Behaviour*, 234:123515. doi: 10.1016/j.anbehav.2026.123515

2025 **A.C. Katsis***, L.K. Common, Ç. Akçay & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Good guardian, bad parent: tradeoffs between territory defense and parental care in Darwin's finches. *Behavioral Ecology*, 36(5):araf109. doi: 10.1093/beheco/araf109

A.C. Katsis*, L.K. Common, J. Lesigang, A. Bold, M. Fröhlich, J.-M. Schmincke, D. Frigerio & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Flight initiation distance is repeatable and geographically flexible in greylag geese *Anser anser*. *Journal of Avian Biology*, 2025(3):e03288. doi: 10.1111/jav.03288

L.K. Common*, S. Kleindorfer, **A.C. Katsis**, K.A. Morales, D.M. Quirola & B. Fessl (2025). From dispenser to nest: collection of fumigated material repels parasites across behavioural traits in Darwin's finches. *BMC Zoology*, 10:27. doi: 10.1186/s40850-025-00250-2

L.K. Common*, J. García-Loor, **A.C. Katsis** & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Rapid ecological release of anti-predator behaviour after island-wide predator control. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 34(13):4659–4673. doi: 10.1007/s10531-025-03172-0

L.K. Common*, K.A. Morales, **A.C. Katsis** & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Personality in the parasitic avian vampire fly (*Philornis downsi*). Behaviour, 162(6–8):545–568. doi: 10.1163/1568539X-bja10317

J. García-Loor*, **A.C. Katsis**, L.K. Common & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Exploration behavior is consistent and associated with foraging behavior in island songbirds. *Biotropica*, 57(4):e70057. doi: 10.1111/btp.70057

J. García-Loor*, M. Gallego-Abenza, **A.C. Katsis**, V. Puehringer-Sturmayr, D. Colombelli-Négrel, Ç. Akçay & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Aggressive behavior as a predictor of home range size: findings from both range-restricted and widespread Darwin's finch species. *Journal of Ornithology*, 166(1):247–261. doi: 10.1007/s10336-024-02215-7

D. Colombelli-Négrel*, **A.C. Katsis**, L.K. Common & S. Kleindorfer (2025). Personality predicts song complexity in superb fairy-wrens. *Royal Society Open Science*, 12(4):241497. doi: 10.1098/rsos.241497

S. Kleindorfer*, **A.C. Katsis**, D. Frigerio, J. Lesigang, D. Mostafa & L.K. Common (2025). Personality predicts collective behavior in greylag geese: Influencers are bold and followers are exploratory. *iScience*, 28(8):113170. doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2025.113170

2024 **A.C. Katsis**, D. Colombelli-Négrel, Ç. Akçay, L.K. Common, J. García-Loor, & S. Kleindorfer (2024). Exploration behavior differs between Darwin's finch species and predicts territory defense and hatching success. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, **78**:26. doi: 10.1007/s00265-024-03438-7

J. García-Loor, M. Gallego-Abenza, **A.C. Katsis**, V. Puehringer-Sturmayr, D. Colombelli-Négrel, C. Akçay, S. Kleindorfer (2024). Aggressive behavior as a predictor of home range size: findings from both range-restricted and widespread Darwin's finch species. *Journal of Ornithology*. doi: 10.1007/s10336-024-02215-7

L.K. Common, **A.C. Katsis**, D. Frigerio, S. Kleindorfer (2024) Effects of assortative mating for personality on reproductive success in greylag geese, *Anser anser*. *Animal Behaviour*, **216**: 141–153. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2024.08.004

S. Kleindorfer, L. Brouwer, M.E. Hauber, N. Teunissen, A. Peters, M. Louter, M.S. Webster, **A.C. Katsis**, F.J. Sulloway, L.K. Common, V.I. Austin, & D. Colombelli-Négrel (2024). Nestling begging calls resemble maternal vocal signatures when mothers call slowly to embryos. *The American Naturalist*, **203**(2):267–283. doi: 10.1086/728105

S. Kleindorfer, M.A. Krupka, **A.C. Katsis**, D. Frigerio, & L.K. Common (2024). Aggressiveness predicts dominance rank in greylag geese: mirror tests and agonistic interactions. *Royal Society Open Science*, **11:**231686. doi: 10.1098/rsos.231686

D. Frigerio, D. Colombelli-Négrel, L.K. Common, **A.C. Katsis**, & S. Kleindorfer (2024). When parasites damage birds' beaks, the whole environment can change. *Frontiers for Young Minds*, **12**:1272047. doi: 10.3389/frym.2024.1272047

2023 **A.C. Katsis**, L.K. Common, M.E. Hauber, D. Colombelli-Négrel, & S. Kleindorfer. From nestling to adult: personality traits are consistent within but not across life stages in a wild songbird. *Behaviour*, 160(8–9):701–734. doi: 10.1163/1568539X-bja10224

A.C. Katsis, A.T.D. Bennett, K.L. Buchanan, S. Kleindorfer & M.M. Mariette (2023). Prenatal sound experience affects song preferences in male zebra finches. *Animal Behaviour*, **199**:1–9. doi: 10.1016/j.anbehav.2023.02.008

A.C. Katsis, C. Evans, L.K. Common, D. Colombelli-Négrel & S. Kleindorfer (2023). Intraspecific fledgling adoption by a pair of Superb Fairy-wrens *Malurus cyaneus*. *Australian Field Ornithology*, **40**:49–55. doi: 10.20938/afo40049055

2022 D. Colombelli-Négrel, **A.C. Katsis** & S. Kleindorfer (2022). Superb fairy-wrens with extreme exploration phenotypes respond more strongly to simulated territory intrusions. *Animal Behaviour*, **193**:101–111. doi: 10.1016/j.anbehav.2022.08.015

J. Bilby, D. Colombelli-Négrel, **A.C. Katsis** & S. Kleindorfer, S. (2022). When aggressiveness could be too risky: linking personality traits and predator response in superb fairy-wrens. *PeerJ*, **10**:e14011. doi: 10.7717/peerj.14011

O.L. Crino, S. Falk, **A.C. Katsis**, F.-L.O.H. Kraft & K.L. Buchanan (2022) Mitochondria as the powerhouses of sexual selection: testing mechanistic links between development, cellular respiration, and bird song. *Hormones and Behavior*, **142**:105184. doi: 10.1016/j.yhbeh.2022.105184

S. Kleindorfer, D. Colombelli-Négrel, L.K. Common, J.A. O'Connor, K.J. Peters, **A.C. Katsis**, R.Y. Dudaniec, F.J. Sulloway & N.M. Adreani (2022) Functional traits and foraging behaviour: Avian vampire fly larvae change the beak and fitness of their Darwin's finch hosts. *Functional Ecology*, **36**(7):1806-1817. doi: 10.1111/1365-2435.14061

2021 **A.C. Katsis**, D. Colombelli-Négrel, L.K. Common, J.A. O'Connor, R.Y. Dudaniec, J. Garcia-Loor & S. Kleindorfer (2021) Nestling behaviour predicts naris deformation in Darwin's finches parasitised by the avian vampire fly. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, **134**(3):636–649. doi: 10.1093/biolinnean/blab092

A.C. Katsis, K.L. Buchanan, S. Kleindorfer, & M.M. Mariette (2021) Long-term effects of prenatal sound experience on songbird behavior and their relation to song learning. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, **75**(1):1–13. doi: 10.1007/s00265-020-02939-5

S. Kleindorfer, L.K. Common, J.A. O'Connor, J. Garcia-Loor, **A.C. Katsis**, R.Y. Dudaniec, D. Colombelli-Négrel & N.M. Adreani (2021) Female in-nest attendance predicts the number of ectoparasites in Darwin's finch species. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences,* **288**(1965):20211668

D. Colombelli-Négrel & **A.C. Katsis**. Little penguins are more aggressive on islands that experience greater unregulated human disturbance. *Animal Behaviour*, **182**:195-202. doi: 10.1016/j.anbehav.2021.10.012

D. Colombelli-Négrel, M.E. Hauber, C. Evans, **A.C. Katsis**, L. Brouwer, N.M. Adreani & S. Kleindorfer (2021). Prenatal auditory learning in avian vocal learners and non-learners. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, **376**:20200247. doi: 10.1098/rstb.2020-0247

2020 A. Gracanin, E. Roger, **A.C. Katsis**, L.S. O'Loughlin, N.J. Emery, J.F. Ocock & J.C. O'Hanlon (2020) An artificial bird nest experiment in urban environments: Lessons from a school-based citizen science programme. *Austral Ecology*, **45**(5):523–528

2018 **A.C. Katsis**, M.H. Davies, K.L. Buchanan, S. Kleindorfer, M.E. Hauber & M.M. Mariette (2018) Prenatal exposure to incubation calls affects song learning in the zebra finch. *Scientific Reports*, **8**:15232. doi: 10.1038/s41598-018-33301-5

2015 M.L. Hall, T. van Asten, **A.C. Katsis**, N.J. Dingemanse, M.J. Magrath & R.A. Mulder (2015) Animal personality and pace-of-life syndromes: do fast-exploring fairy-wrens die young? *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, **3**:28. doi: 10.3389/fevo.2015.00028

Teaching & education

2022 **Teaching assistant**, Deakin University
Marked assignments for the subject "Sensory Neurobiology and Behaviour"

2020–21 **Lecturer/teaching assistant**, Flinders University
Presented two lectures in 2021, on the life history of the Superb Fairy-wren and techniques for studying them (subject "Research in Animal Behaviour"). Supervised and assisted students during mist-netting fieldtrips to Cleland Wildlife Park (subject "Ecology")

2018–19 **CSIRO STEM Professionals in Schools program**
Regularly visited students at Linton Primary School and Cape Clear Primary School (Victoria, Australia) to discuss native birds and supervise a nest predation experiment. Data published in Gracanin et al. (2020)

2013–15 **Teaching assistant**, University of Melbourne
Marked written assignments for the postgraduate subject "Communication for Research Scientists". Supervised students during a field trip to the Strathbogie Ranges, Victoria, for the subject "Field Biology of Australian Wildlife". Developed assessments for "Animal Behaviour", a Coursera MOOC (massive open online course) coordinated by Prof Raoul Mulder and Prof Mark Elgar

Awards and honours

2020	Alfred Deakin Medal for Doctoral Theses (short-list), Deakin University
2019	Best Oral Presentation (runner-up), Australasian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour
2017	Outstanding Outreach Award, NSW Office of Environment & Heritage/Ecological Society of Australia
	Outstanding Oral Presentation, Australasian Ornithological Conference
	University finalist, Three Minute Thesis competition, Deakin University
2013	Valedictorian, Faculty of Science, University of Melbourne
	Deans Honours List, University of Melbourne
	F.H. Drummond Prize, University of Melbourne
2011	Howitt Natural History Scholarship in Natural Science, University of Melbourne

Scientific conferences

Presenter

July 2026	20th International Society for Behavioural Ecology (Turin, Italy)
Feb 2026	Ethological Society/EthoGes (Grünau im Almtal, Austria)
Sep 2024	19th International Society for Behavioural Ecology (Melbourne, Australia)
Aug 2023	Behaviour 2023 (Bielefeld, Germany)
Feb 2023	Ethological Society/EthoGes (Berlin, Germany)
Aug 2022	Australasian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASSAB, virtual)
Feb 2022	11th Australasian Ornithological Conference (virtual)
Sept 2020	ASSAB (virtual)
Jul 2019	ASSAB (Waiheke Island, New Zealand)
Oct 2018	Australian Society for Fish Biology (Melbourne, Australia). Co-panellist in career workshop for early-career scientists
Aug 2018	27th International Ornithological Congress (Vancouver, Canada)
Aug 2018	17th International Society for Behavioural Ecology (Minneapolis, USA)
Nov 2017	9th Australasian Ornithological Conference (Geelong, Australia)
Jul 2017	ASSAB (Melbourne, Australia)
Jul 2016	ASSAB (Katoomba, Australia)
Mar 2014	University of Melbourne Holsworth symposium (Melbourne, Australia)
Sep 2013	Australasian Evolution Society (Geelong, Australia)

Communications manager

Oct 2018	Australian Society for Fish Biology (Melbourne, Australia)
Jul 2017	Australian Society for Fish Biology (Albany, Australia)
Sep 2016	Australian Society for Fish Biology (Hobart, Australia)

Organising committee member

- Behaviour 2027 (Vienna, Austria)
- Ethological Society/EthoGes (Grünau im Almtal, Austria)
- 8th World Fisheries Congress [communications subcommittee], 2021 (Adelaide, Australia)
- Australian Society for Fish Biology, 2019 (Canberra, Australia)
- 9th Australasian Ornithological Conference, 2017 (Geelong Australia)

Professional memberships

- Australasian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour
    - Equity & Diversity Committee member (2021)
    - Councillor (2019–2021)
    - Outreach officer (2016–2019)
- Australian Society for Fish Biology (Communications Manager, 2015–2023)

Science communication & outreach

Television and radio

- ***Unter Graugänsen*** (dir. Daniela Pulverer), ARTE [2026]
- ***CrowdScience***, BBC International (episode: "Do birds understand us?") [19 September 2025]
- ***The Science Show with Robyn Williams*** (segment "Bird brains more complex than ever imagined"), ABC Radio National [21 August 2021]
- ***Bill Nye Saves the World*** (episode "Evolution: The Fact of Life"), Bunim/Murray Productions, Los Angeles, USA [11 May 2018, Netflix]
- ***Einstein A Go-Go*** (radio interview), RRR 102.7 FM in Melbourne [25 February 2018]
- ***The Science Show with Robyn Williams*** (segment "Message to a developing embryo"), ABC Radio National [27 May 2017]

Online news

- Saugat Bolakhe (2023) "Zebra finches pick singing coaches based on songs they hear as embryos". *New Scientist* [15 April 2023]
- Ellen Phiddian (2021) "More to learn about evolution from Galápagos finches". *Cosmos* [11 August 2021]
- Gary Nunn (2020) "Is it just me, or are urban birds becoming increasingly aggressive?". *The Guardian Australia* [6 October 2020]

Public and academic seminars

- "Making sense of behavioural differences in fairy-wrens, finches and penguins", University of Vienna Department of Behavioral & Cognitive Biology seminar series [5 December 2022]
- "Making sense of behavioural differences in fairy-wrens, finches and penguins: a postdoc in three acts", Deakin University CIE seminar series [5 November 2021]
- "The private life of superb fairy-wrens", public webinar for Knox City Council [19 October 2021]
- "Getting to know the Cleland fairy-wrens", for Cleland Wildlife Park [1 June 2021]

Other communication and outreach roles

2015–2023	**Communications Manager, Australian Society for Fish Biology** Develop online communication policy, manage social media, and participate in society's executive council and conference planning
2015–2022	**Student engagement** Visited students at the Geelong College and Darraweit Guim Primary School (Victoria, Australia) to educate them about native birds. Participated in a student pen-pal programme (mediated by Monash University, Australia) to nurture students' interest in science.
2015–2019	**Life Science editor, *Lateral* magazine** Co-founded and edited an online science publication (lateralmag.com), which provided a platform for early-career researchers to write about science.
2016–2019	**Outreach officer, Australasian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour** Managed the society's social media and public outreach, including a regular magazine column, *Ethograms*, highlighting the work of early-career researchers
2017	**Podcast producer, Science Gallery Melbourne** Produced interview with Dr Cameron Webb (NSW Health Pathology/University of Sydney) for the gallery's *Blood: Attract and Repel* exhibition (Melbourne, Australia)

May 2017	**National runner-up, FameLab Australia (British Council Australia)** FameLab is an international competition in which early-career researchers communicate their science to a general audience
May–Jul 2014	**Editorial intern (Science & Technology), The Conversation** Commissioned and edited articles from academics, wrote news stories, and contributed social media content
May–Jun 2014	**Victorian Department of Environment & Primary Industries (DEPI)** Prepared communication materials for NaturePrint, a Victorian biodiversity database used in state-wide land management
Jan–Apr 2014	**Radio producer (*A Science Story*), SYN media** Produced and edited a weekly science radio program for SYN 90.7 FM in Melbourne. Winner of the 2015 SYN Award for "Best Seasonal Program".