

In a recent article entitled "The increased risk of predation enhances cooperation" published in [Proceedings of the Royal Society B](#), Volume 277, Pages 513 - 518 and available [here](#), Indrikis Krams and colleagues experimentally demonstrate an interaction between predation risk and cooperation in breeding songbirds. It is worth reading in the light of current discussions about the co-evolution of warfare and cooperation (for example: [Bowles, 2008](#)).

**Abstract:** Theory predicts that animals in adverse conditions can decrease individual risks and increase long-term benefits by cooperating with neighbours. However, some empirical studies suggest that animals often focus on short-term benefits, which can reduce the likelihood that they will cooperate with others. In this experimental study, we tested between these two alternatives by evaluating whether increased predation risk (as a correlate of environmental adversity) enhances or diminishes the occurrence of cooperation in mobbing, a common anti-predator behaviour, among breeding pied flycatchers *Ficedula hypoleuca*. We tested whether birds would join their mobbing neighbours more often and harass a stuffed predator placed near their neighbours' nests more intensely in areas with a higher perceived risk of predation. Our results show that birds attended mobs initiated by their neighbours more often, approached the stuffed predator significantly more closely, and mobbed it at a higher intensity in areas where the perceived risk of predation was experimentally increased. In such high-risk areas, birds also were more often involved in between-pair cooperation. This study demonstrates the positive impact of predation risk on cooperation in breeding songbirds, which might help in explaining the emergence and evolution of cooperation.