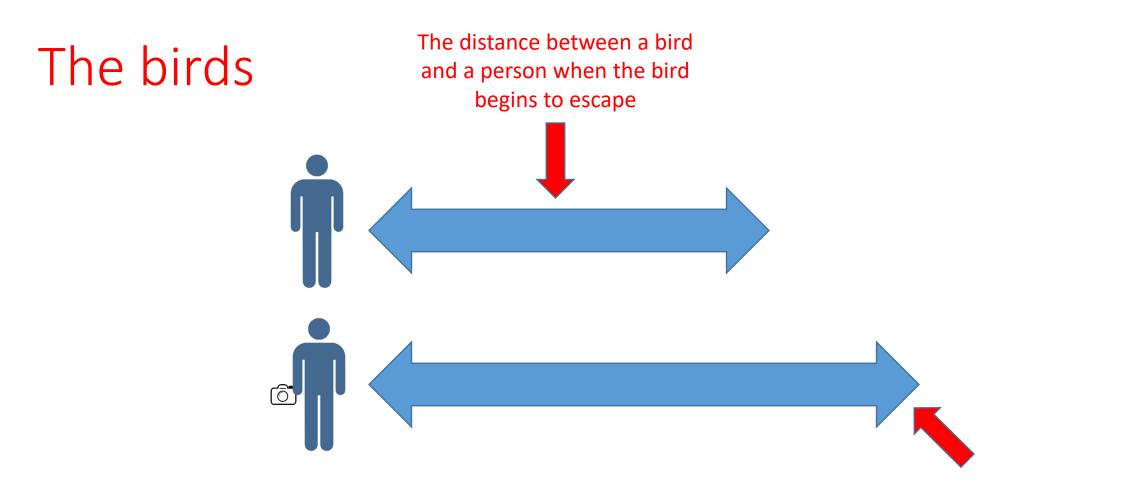
A graphical summary of the Survey of BirdLife Photography Membership and a study of bird responses to photographers

For the full report: Slater, C., Cam, G., Qi, Y., Liu, Y., Guay, P.J. and Weston, M.A., 2019. Camera shy? Motivations, attitudes and beliefs of bird photographers and species-specific avian responses to their activities. *Biological Conservation*, 237, pp.327-337.

If you would like a PDF version of the full paper, please email: mweston@deakin.edu.au

Key findings, at a glance.....

- Photographers are similar to hunters, in that they try to approach a bird closely and use a variety of tactics to achieve that. Of course, photographers don't try to kill birds, but birds may perceive them as acting like hunters and may respond to them as such.
- Photographers took and shared images partly to inspire others. The survey outlined a good deal of education, inspiration and awareness that flows from bird photography. Birds are lucky to benefit from this attention, and photographers cared about bird conservation. While bird photography may disturb birds, most photographers felt disturbance they caused was trivial in comparison to that which birds experience from other sources.
- We quantified avian escape responses evoked by photographers by measuring the distances at which they responded. We did this in relation to: 1) a walker, 2) a "walking" approach by a photographer, taking photographs regularly as she/he approached, 3) a photographer with a flash, and 4) a crouched photographer approach where the investigator crouched as they approached birds. Across species, we found differences between these approach types in terms of bird response, with exact patterns varying between species.
- For most species, photographers evoked escape at longer distances than walkers. This was interesting because birds could differentiate the behaviour of photographers from that of a walker, and responded in a manner which suggests they perceived photographers as more risky than walkers. It also seems some of the photographer tactics don't actually result in closer proximities to birds.



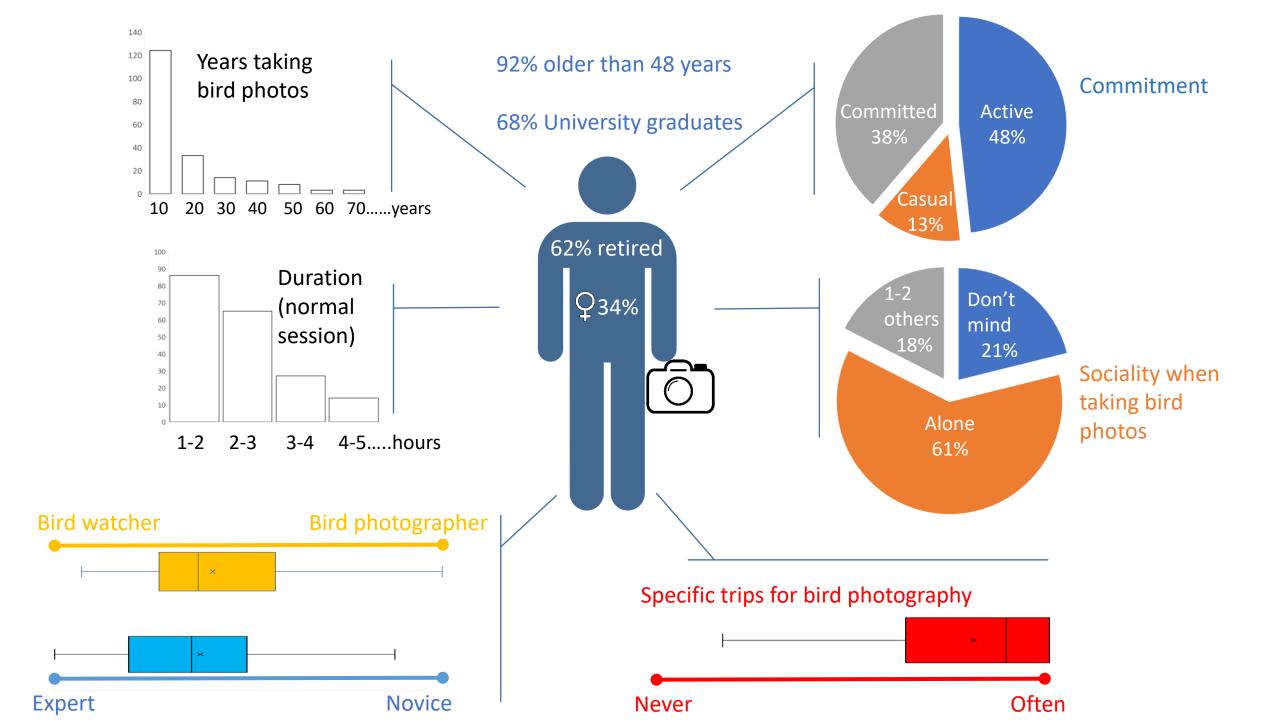
The study conducted standardised approaches to birds in Australia and China and measured their response to different experiments ("approaches") which mimicked some stereotyped photographer behaviour. For 7 of 11 species, distances were longer when photographers approached (taking pictures frequently, crouching, using a flash)

The survey.....

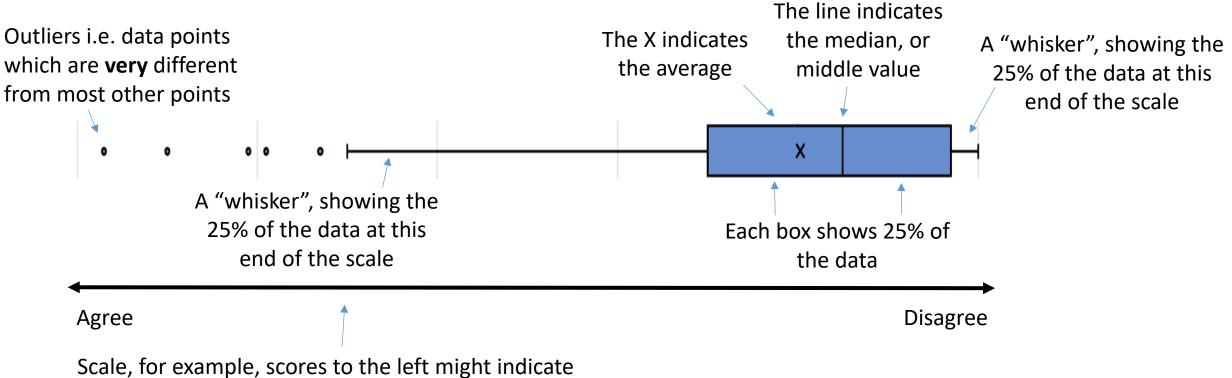
BirdLife Photography played a pivotal role in this study. The project was conducted by Deakin University honours student, Caitlin Slater. Birdlife Photography members responded positively and constructively to a survey of photographer behaviour, motivation and attitudes to bird photography, which enabled the first analysis which described these attributes among bird photographers.

Clearly, this is the first small step in what could be a much broader and deeper program of research into bird photography and the ethics associated with the pastime. We want to thank members for their enthusiastic support of this project.

Graeme Cam (Former President), Caitlin Slater (Deakin University) and Mike Weston (Deakin University). This work was conducted under Deakin University ethics animal approval (B11-2015 and B10-2018), DEWLP permit (10008731), and human ethics approval (STEC-13-2018-SLATER).

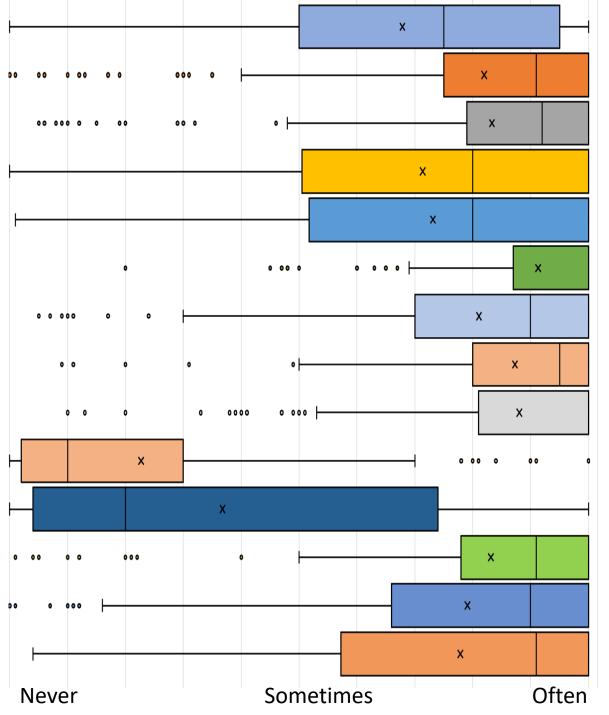


Interpreting box plots – a 'picture' of responses



agreement with an item (e.g. 'photography is fun'), scores to the right indicate disagreement with that.

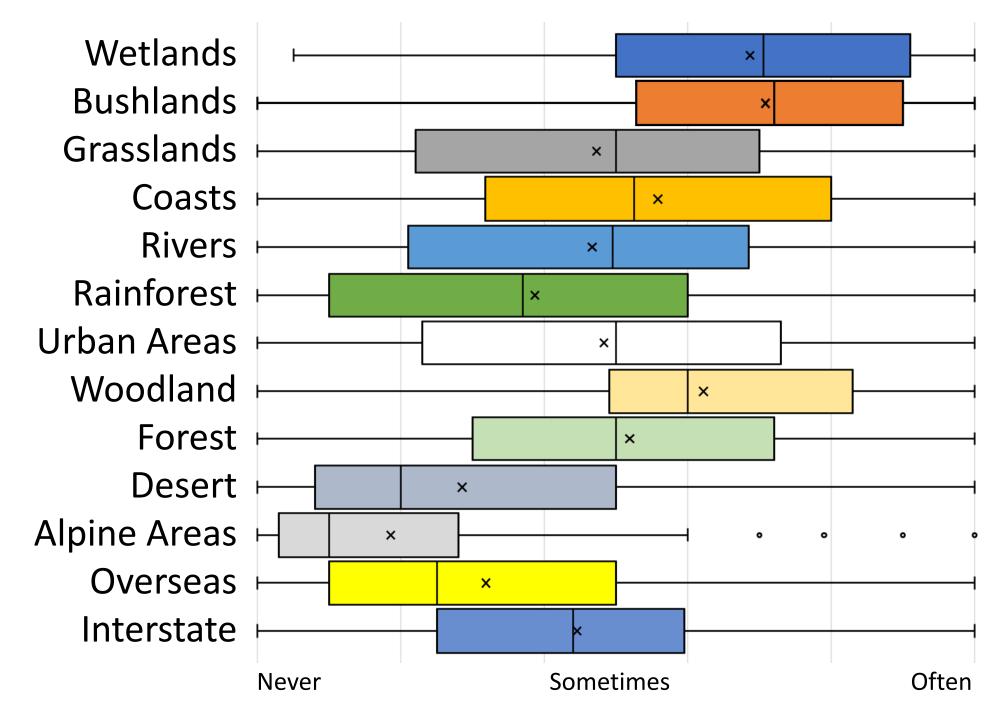
Hint = forget the detail and look at the pattern: here most of the responses are bunched up towards the "disagree" end of the scale, indicating most people disagreed when responding to this item

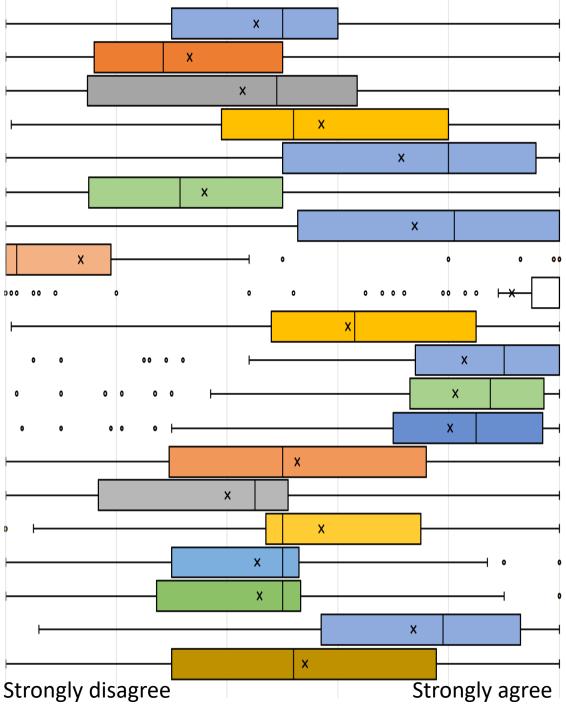


I often make specific trips to take images of birds

I obtain photographic equipment specifically to take images of birds $\frac{1}{2}$ I carry photographic equipment specifically to take images of birds I take images to help identify birds The main subject of my photography is birds I enjoy the challenge of taking a nice image of a bird I share nice bird images with family, friends or others Images of birds help people appreciate birds I enjoy photographing species I have not photographed previously I often video birds as well as take images 📙 I enjoy taking videos of bird behaviour I enjoy photographing interesting bird behaviour I like taking images/videos of birds in flight I like taking images of rare birds

Where do you take bird images?



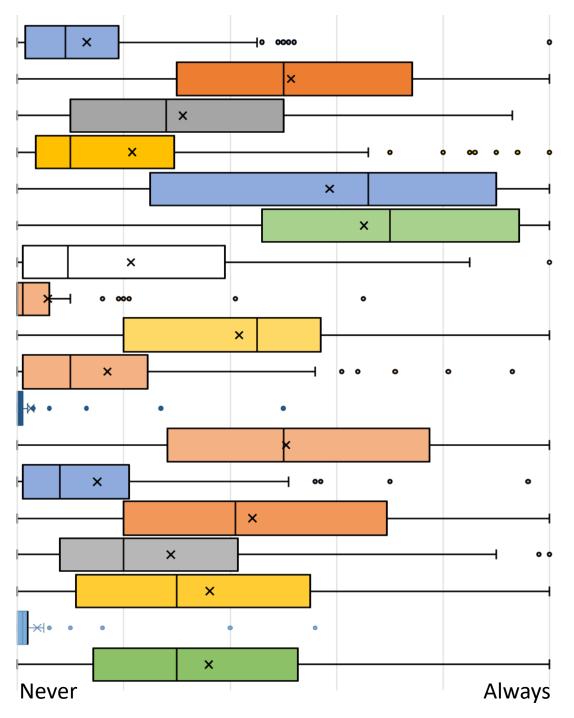


Bird photographers are expert at avoiding scaring birds

- The act of photographing birds inevitably causes most birds to fly, run, or swim away Birds are more likely to modify their behaviour when they encounter walkers rather than photographers
 - Birds quickly resume normal activities after any reaction/response to photographers
 - Breeding birds are particularly sensitive to the presence of photographers
 - Bird photographers are a significant source of disturbance to birds
 - Birds with young/chicks are particularly sensitive to the presence of photographers

It is okay to flush birds to photograph them

- Bird photographers should minimise their disturbance of birds Any negative impacts of bird photography are minimal in comparison with other problems that
 - birds face Bird photographers provide images which help foster the appreciation of birds
 - Most bird photographers are interested in bird conservation
 - Most bird photographers are interested in bird welfare
 - The benefits of bird photography outweigh any disturbance it causes to birds
 - The impact of disturbance to birds in general is over-rated as a conservation threat
- Birds in open (eg grasslands) areas are particularly sensitive to the presence of photographers
 - Birds in heavily vegetated areas are particularly sensitive to the presence of photographers
 - Birds are particularly sensitive to photographers during migration periods
 - Birds are particularly sensitive to photographers when breeding
 - Photographers sometimes damage vegetation to obtain images of birds



Walk quickly, directly towards birds Walk slowly, directly towards birds

Walk in a crouched fashion

Crawl Watch birds through binoculars Watch birds through your camera

Watch birds through a spotting scope Photograph birds through a spotting scope

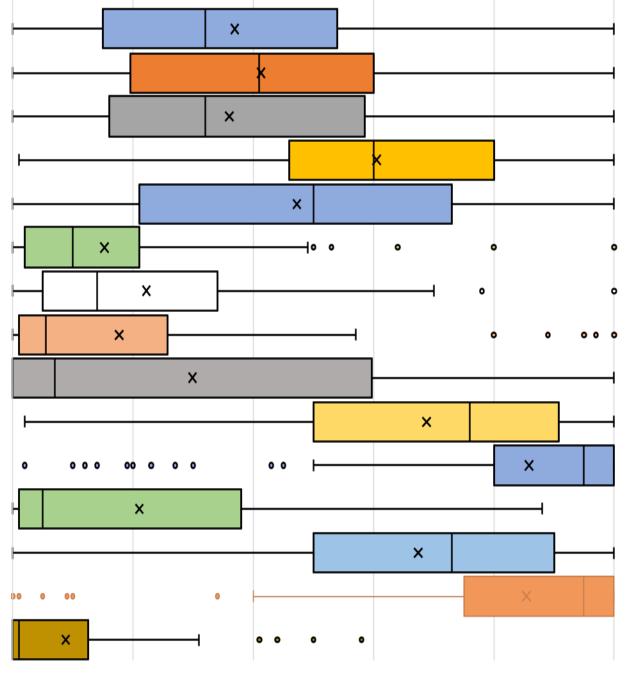
Walk towards birds with your camera by your side Wade through water Swim

Camera in front of you, pointed towards the bird Drift in a boat, kayak, raft or canoe Hide in a covered position, and wait for birds

Lie down

Take pictures from a hide Cut or remove vegetation

Take pictures from a car



Walk off marked tracks or paths

Walk through vegetation

Hide in vegetation

Approach birds from an angle/tangentially, so that you do not walk directly at them Avoid looking at birds directly Use playback

Make noises

Use food, water or feathers

Wear camouflage

Wear dull clothing

Stay quiet

Set up a perch to attract a bird

Take photographs as you approach

Stop your approach when a bird becomes alarmed

Flush birds to get images of them in flight