



Summer research program seminar series

Semantics and syntax in bird vocalizations: towards understanding the evolution of language

Day: July 3, 2024

Venue: LH5, Lecture Hall Complex

Time: 4pm

Human language is considered as the hallmark of vocal complexity and it possesses both semantics and syntax. While evidence for semantics has been found in the vocalizations of several animals, evidence for syntax is less common. In the last few decades, researchers in the field of animal communication began investigating evolutionary precursors to our syntactic ability. Evidence for this has been found in non-human primates but the same was lacking in birds. Remarkably, recent studies have found evidence for syntax in a few bird species. Towards this pursuit of understanding linguistic continuity and the evolution of language, we have been studying bird songs and calls. Using bioacoustics and behaviour as our research tools we examined, and have found evidence for semantics, syntax and even linguistic laws in avian vocalizations. In this talk I will give glimpses of our findings and also touch upon the need to recognize and celebrate diversity in our approach to making and evaluating scientific discoveries.



Dr. Manjari Jain

**Associate Professor
Dept. of Biological Sciences
IISER Mohali**

