



The Clever Cockie Project

Cognitive Ecology of
Sydney's Cockatoos

Max Planck Institute
of Animal Behavior



Dr. Lucy Aplin

Research Group Leader
Cognitive & Cultural Ecology Lab.

Casual Field Assistant Position:

The *Cognitive and Cultural Ecology* research group at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour (P.I. Dr. Lucy Aplin), in collaboration with *Wing-tags* (P.I.s Dr John Martin, Dr Richard Major) has recently established the "Clever Cockie Project", investigating the interaction between cognition, sociality and urban ecology in Sydney's sulphur-crested cockatoos (SCC). We use a diverse set of methods to study cognitive ecology in SCC - from detailed observations and experiments in habituated groups (individually marked with non-toxic paint), to GPS-tracking and walked transects across the urban gradient.

We are seeking a casual/part-time field assistant to help us maintain the study population and collect baseline data. Duties include: 1) Monitoring several habituated flocks and re-applying individual ID paint marks (see lower picture); 2) Downloading GPS data from tracked birds; 3) Conducting focal follows of GPS-tagged birds and undertaking walked transects to observe foraging behaviour across the greater Sydney region; 4) Entering and managing data associated with the above activities.

The field assistant will be based in Sydney, NSW. Fieldwork will occur across several nearby regional field sites, but primarily in inner North Sydney and Sutherland Shire. The candidate must be comfortable travelling between sites. A car/driver's license is therefore desirable; however, all sites are also accessible by public transport.

Job Requirements:

- Self-motivated work ethic, and happy to work alone across the greater Sydney urban/peri-urban area; reliable and with capability to collect careful, detailed data.
- Good physical health, sufficient to undertake long day-hikes while carrying a backpack.
- Experience observing birds or other wild animals, experience handling animals is desirable but not required.
- Demonstrable understanding of scientific method and animal ecology/behaviour. For example, a partially or fully completed bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
- Willingness to occasionally work long days or early/late hours, for example if collecting dawn recordings at roost sites.

Payrate and Hours:

- Salary is set at AU\$30 per hour. Requirement to invoice through your own ABN.
- Tenure: casual research assistant
- Hours are variable depending on tasks but are envisioned to be 8-10 hours per week. There will be some flexibility in how these are distributed (e.g. 8 hours per week or 1 week per month).

To apply, please send a CV (with contact details of referees) and a brief email of interest to Dr. Lucy Aplin at laplin@ab.mpg.de. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have at the same email address.

