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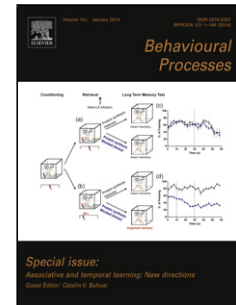
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Highlights

- Individual traits affects many aspects of animal behaviour
- Little is known about their effect on the threat assessment and predator categorization
- Slow and fast great tits did not differ in their responses to dummy predators
- Hawk-pigeon chimaeras were considered as non-threatening only by slow birds
- Fast birds are generally less attentive

Abstract

Despite the encountering of a predator always being extremely threatening, there is a significant plasticity among individuals in how they cope with such a situation. In laboratory experiments with wild-caught great tits (*Parus major*), we tested the effect of exploratory behaviour (performance in novel food, object and environment test, startle test) on the ability of individual birds to assess the threat represented by a predator. We presented a wooden dummy of the European sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), an extremely dangerous predator,

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