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### ► To cite this version:

Avelyne S. Villain, Marie S. A. Fernandez, Colette Bouchut, Hédi Soula, Clémentine Vignal. Songbird mates change their call structure and intra-pair communication at the nest in response to environmental noise. *Animal Behaviour*, 2016, 116, pp.113-129. 10.1016/j.anbehav.2016.03.009 . hal-01404754

**HAL Id: hal-01404754**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01404754>**

Submitted on 27 Jun 2017

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Songbird mates change their call structure and intra-pair communication at the nest in response to environmental noise

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**Highlights:**

- Both zebra finch parents incubate and they use coordinated call duets when they meet at the nest.
- In their natural habitat, birds face variable wind noise that may constrain their communication at the nest.
- In response to an experimental noise, pairs adjusted their duets and increased their effort to communicate.
- Duets' flexibility in response to noise depended on the context of meeting at the nest.
- Males and females produced louder calls with an up-shifted frequency spectrum in response to experimental noise.

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14 spectrum in response to experimental noise.

15

#### 16 **Summary**

17 The coordination of behaviours between mates is a central aspect of the  
18 biology of the monogamous pair bonding in birds. This coordination may rely on  
19 intra-pair acoustic communication, which is surprisingly poorly understood. Here we  
20 examined the impact of an increased level of background noise on intra-pair acoustic  
21 communication at the nest in the zebra finch. We monitored how partners adapted  
22 their acoustic interactions in response to a playback of wind noise inside the nestbox  
23 during incubation. Both zebra finch parents incubate and use coordinated call duets  
24 when they meet at the nest. The incubating parent can vocalize to its partner either  
25 outside the nestbox (sentinel duets) or inside the nestbox (relief and visit duets),

26 depending on the context of the meeting. Pairs use these duets to communicate on  
27 predation threats (sentinel duets), incubation duties (relief), and other nesting  
28 activities (visit duets). Each of these duets likely represents a critical component of  
29 pair coordination. In response to the noise playback, partners called less and more  
30 rapidly during visit and relief duets. Male and female calls were more regularly and  
31 precisely alternated during relief duets. Mates increased the number of visit duets and  
32 their spatial proximity during sentinel duets. Furthermore, both males and females  
33 produced louder, higher-frequency, and less broadband calls. Taken together our  
34 results show that birds use several strategies to adjust to noise during incubation,  
35 underlining the importance of effective intra-pair communication for breeding pairs.

36

### 37 **Keywords**

38 *Monogamy,*

39 *Vocal duet,*

40 *Breeding,*

41 *Acoustic flexibility,*

42 *Zebra finch,*

43

### 44 **Introduction**

45 Monogamy in birds represents a partnership where the male and female adjust their  
46 behaviour to each other and synchronize many of their activities (Black, 1996). Many  
47 long-term monogamous species show an increase in reproductive success with pair  
48 bond duration, which may be due to the improvement in partners' coordination over  
49 time (mate familiarity effect, (Black, 2001; Coulson, 1966; Forslund & Pärt, 1995)).  
50 In some species, partners synchronize their foraging trips or their nest visits to feed

51 the chicks (Lee, Kim, & Hatchwell, 2010; van Rooij & Griffith, 2013), and their  
52 degree of synchrony can correlate with their reproductive success (Mariette &  
53 Griffith, 2012, 2015). In species in which both partners incubate, hatching success  
54 may be increased when parents better coordinate incubation bouts (Spoon, Millam, &  
55 Owings, 2006). Partners' coordination during parental care may reflect their  
56 coordination in other situations: mates may defend their resources as a team by  
57 alarming for danger (Krams, Krama, & Igaune, 2006), repelling predators or intruders  
58 on their territory (Black, 2001; Regelman & Curio, 1986), or alternating vigilance  
59 periods (McGowan & Woolfenden, 1989).

60         Communication and especially acoustic communication may play a key role in  
61 mate coordination. Whereas birdsong has been studied in the context of mate choice  
62 extensively in males (Catchpole & Slater, 2008) and more rarely in females (Cooney  
63 & Cockburn, 1995; Langmore, 1998; Odom, Hall, Riebel, Omland, & Langmore,  
64 2014; Riebel, 2003; Riebel, Hall, & Langmore, 2005), much less is known about  
65 vocal interactions after pair formation between the male and female of a breeding pair  
66 (Gorissen, Eens, & Nelson, 2004) with the exception of acoustic duets. Duets are joint  
67 acoustic displays of partners that alternate or partly overlap vocal or non-vocal sounds  
68 (Dahlin & Wright, 2009; Farabaugh, 1982; Hall, 2004, 2009). Although rare (ca. 4%  
69 of bird species), they have attracted much interest, and the highly coordinated and  
70 conspicuous song duets of tropical bird species have been particularly well studied  
71 (Hall, 2004, 2009). But intra-pair communication may be more widespread and  
72 involve simpler or low-amplitude vocalizations such as calls (Lamprecht, Kaiser,  
73 Peters, & Kirchgessner, 1985; Morton & Derrickson, 1996; Todt, Hultch, & Duvall,  
74 1981; Wright & Dahlin, 2007). Females can produce sounds at the nest (Beletsky &  
75 Orians, 1985; McDonald & Greenberg, 1991; Yasukawa, 1989) that may be used in

76 interactive communication with their mate (Gorissen et al., 2004). Such vocal  
77 interactions can facilitate a pair's coordination during breeding (Halkin, 1997;  
78 Ritchison, 1983). For instance, nest relief and greeting ceremonies have been  
79 described in several bird species but their functions remain unclear (Wachtmeister,  
80 2001).

81         If vocal interactions around the nest allow coordination of behaviours between  
82 mates, they must remain efficient despite environmental constraints on acoustic  
83 communication. Noise is a common constraint on acoustic communication. By  
84 decreasing signal to noise ratio, background noise makes the signal harder to extract  
85 for the receiver (Brenowitz, 1982; Wiley & Richards, 1982). Noise particularly  
86 constrains acoustic communication if spectral components of the noise and the signal  
87 partly overlap (Barber, Crooks, & Fristrup, 2010; Francis & Barber, 2013; Halfwerk  
88 & Slabbekoorn, 2015; Slabbekoorn, 2004). Birds have evolved many adaptive  
89 strategies to cope with background noise and to increase signal reception efficacy  
90 (Brumm & Slabbekoorn, 2005). Senders can use different frequencies to avoid  
91 spectral overlap between signal and noise (Slabbekoorn & Peet, 2003). They can  
92 increase signal amplitude (the "Lombard effect") (Brumm & Todt, 2002; Cynx,  
93 Lewis, Tavel, & Tse, 1998; Potash, 1972) or signal redundancy (Brumm & Slater,  
94 2006; Lengagne, Aubin, Lauga, & Jouventin, 1999), as well as change the timing of  
95 their vocalizations to avoid noise (Brumm, 2006b; Dreiss, Ruppli, Faller, & Roulin,  
96 2015; Gil, Honarmand, Pascual, Pérez-Mena, & Garcia, 2014). Senders and receivers  
97 can also adjust their location during communication, such as moving closer to each  
98 other (Halfwerk, Bot, & Slabbekoorn, 2012) or stay outside / inside the nest cavity  
99 (Blumenrath, Dabelsteen, & Pederson, 2004). The effects of background noise have  
100 been primarily studied on songs and other long-range vocalisations, and thus little is

101 understood about the effects of background noise on private, short range vocalisations  
102 (Leonard & Horn, 2005, 2008). Importantly, short range vocalisations are less  
103 affected by degradation during sound propagation and thus likely require very  
104 different adjustment strategies than long-range vocalisations. Noise likely hinders  
105 intra-pair communication around the nest during breeding, which could explain the  
106 observed impairment of reproductive success by noise (Barber et al., 2010;  
107 Slabbekoorn & Ripmeester, 2008).

108         The zebra finch (*Taeniopygia guttata*) provides an excellent study system to  
109 test whether partners adapt short-range intra-pair communication to noise constraints.  
110 Zebra finches form life-long pair bonds and are highly coordinated partners, starting  
111 incubation on the same day (Gilby, Mainwaring, & Griffith, 2013), sharing incubation  
112 time equally (Delesalle, 1986; Gilby et al., 2013; Gorman, Arnold, & Nager, 2005;  
113 Zann & Rossetto, 1991), and synchronizing visits to the nest and to foraging patches  
114 during the nestling period (Mariette & Griffith, 2012, 2015). Each time they meet  
115 around the nest during incubation or the nestling period, mates perform a call duet that  
116 likely participate in coordination (Boucaud, Mariette, Villain, & Vignal, 2015; Elie et  
117 al., 2010) Zebra finches live in semi-arid zones of Australia, an unpredictable  
118 environment where windy conditions are highly variable on an hourly basis. Because  
119 zebra finch calls, and particularly nest calls, have a spectrum in the low range (Elie et  
120 al., 2010; Elie & Theunissen, 2015; Zann, 1996), they are very likely to overlap in  
121 frequency with wind noise. To our knowledge no experiment testing this effect has  
122 been conducted in zebra finches.

123         In the present study, we exposed incubating zebra finch pairs to a natural wind  
124 noise playback inside their nestbox. Because the male and female take turns  
125 incubating, both partners were exposed to the noise. After 15 hours of noise, intra-pair

126 communication and partners' behaviour were monitored and compared to the control  
127 condition. Because call duets are supposed to participate in partners' coordination  
128 during incubation, we expect birds to show strategies to maintain signal efficacy in  
129 response to the noise playback. We monitored three duets types – incubation  
130 relief/nest visit/sentinel – and we studied four aspects of this intra-pair communication  
131 1) the temporal structure of duets 2) the male-female dynamic during the duet, 3) the  
132 number of vocal interactions between partners and the spatial proximity of partners  
133 during interactions, and finally 4) the acoustic structure of the calls used during  
134 interactions. In response to this experimental increase of noise, we expected the  
135 partners to either avoid communicating or to display strategies to cope with it e.g. via  
136 increasing signal redundancy (longer duets and/or duets composed of longer calls),  
137 increasing partners' proximity during vocal interactions, and/or changing signal  
138 structure (frequency range and/or amplitude).

139

## 140 **Materials and methods**

### 141 **Subjects and housing conditions**

142 Eighteen male-female pairs of zebra finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*) were used in this  
143 study, from October 2013 to December 2013. All birds came from our breeding  
144 colony (ENES laboratory, University of Saint-Etienne). They were all the same age  
145 (between 24 and 28 months at the start of the experiment) and the experiment was  
146 conducted on the third reproductive event of their lifetime for every pair. Before the  
147 experiment, pairs were housed separately in cages (40 x 40 x 40 cm) equipped with  
148 perches and a pool for environmental enrichment. All birds were kept under the same  
149 environmental conditions (temperature between 24 and 26 °C, light conditions 14:10  
150 h light-dark). Birds were fed with finch seed cocktail, egg paste, water and cuttlefish

151 bones *ad libitum* and supplemented with salad once a week. For the experiment, pairs  
152 were transferred to an indoor breeding aviary (6.5 x 5.5 x 3.5 m, temperature between  
153 19 and 24 °C, light conditions 14:10 h light-dark). Twenty-seven nestboxes were  
154 installed (dimensions 13 x 12 x 17 cm).  
155 During the experiment, all 18 pairs were allowed to breed freely in the aviary. Pairs  
156 were provided with dry grass and cotton *ad libitum*. Birds were identified with two  
157 plastic colour bands.  
158 As the experiment was performed during incubation, pairs were captured a few days  
159 after hatching (from day 1 to 5 post hatching) and put back in their initial home cage  
160 with their nestbox containing the chicks. Other pairs were released in the aviary to  
161 replace the outgoing ones, so that the aviary always contained 12 breeding pairs,  
162 keeping the conspecific background noise at a stable level.

### 163 **Ethical Note**

164 Experiments were performed under the authorization no. 42-218-0901-38 SV 09  
165 (ENES Lab, Direction Départementale des Services Vétérinaires de la Loire) and  
166 were in agreement with the French and European legislation regarding experiments on  
167 animals.

### 168 **Experimental manipulation of noise**

169 The experiment was performed during incubation. Each nest was recorded on two  
170 consecutive morning sessions, so the design was within-pair and all analyses were  
171 thus done using within-subject statistics. On one morning, the noise inside the nest  
172 had previously been artificially increased for 15 hours and the other morning was used  
173 as control treatment. The order of treatment days was defined at random. Because of  
174 the proximity between nestboxes in the aviary, we chose to experimentally modify the  
175 noise inside the nestbox, so that only pairs recorded during the session were subjected

176 to the noise treatment, without disturbing other pairs around. This treatment mimicked  
177 the noise underwent by incubating birds in artificial nestboxes (that are readily used  
178 by wild zebra finches (Simon C. Griffith, 2008)), inside which wind noise is  
179 reverberated, but also in natural nests which are woven bottle-shaped nests (Zann,  
180 1996) that very weakly attenuate wind noise.

181 Noise was played back using a modified headphone (Sennheiser, HD 25-1) serving as  
182 a speaker and specifically designed for short-range diffusion of sound. This speaker  
183 was installed the day before the first day of recording (control or noise).

184 To mimic noise naturally encountered by the species, we used wind noise recorded in  
185 the field from a breeding area of wild zebra finches (Arid Zone Research Station,  
186 Fowlers Gap, New South Wales, Australia) with an ultra-directional microphone  
187 (Sennheiser, MKH 70). We used a sequence of 15 seconds of wind noise (sound 0)  
188 repeated for a total duration of 15 hours of playback before the recording session  
189 (from 17:30 the day before to 10:00-12:00 the day of recording). The recordings took  
190 place within the last 20% of the total playback time (from 8:30 to 12:00). So if birds  
191 habituated to the particular noise snippet repeated during the playback, we assumed  
192 habituation was largely completed after 15 hours, and all the behaviours and  
193 vocalizations analysed in our results were equally affected.

194 The sound pressure level inside the next box was measured in the two treatments  
195 using a sound level meter (Rion NL-42, with additional NX-42WR package,  
196 frequency weighting 'Z', temporal weighting 'Fast'). Wind noise playback increased  
197 sound pressure level from 58.9 dB SPL to 63.7 dB SPL (~5 dB increase) compared to  
198 control, which is a relevant increase in sound pressure level for zebra finches in the  
199 wild (Fig. S2). This treatment represented an almost doubled acoustic pressure, which  
200 is a strong change in background noise conditions (see spectral comparison of

201 background noise during treatments, Fig. S1). Because the noise was played inside the  
202 nestbox, the background noise level outside remained the same in both treatments i.e  
203 58.1dB SPL in control and 58.7dB in noise (measured at 20cm from the box, with  
204 basal bird activity in the aviary). Note that the basal background noise in control  
205 treatment is created by the activity and vocalizations of the 12 pairs of birds breeding  
206 at the same time in the aviary.

### 207 **Recording of mates' acoustic communication at the nest**

208 Mates' communication at the nest was recorded with a tie-microphone (Audio  
209 Technica, AT 803) placed in the top of the nestbox, connected to a digital audio  
210 recorder (Zoom H4N, 44.1 kHz, 16 bit). An additional tie microphone was placed  
211 outside of the nestbox at 20 cm of the entrance to record vocal activity in the vicinity  
212 of the nest. Microphone calibrations were previously performed with a 10-seconds  
213 white noise and a sound level meter (Rion NL-42, with additional NX-42WR  
214 package). Duets between partners were assessed both around and inside the nest.

### 215 **Behavioural monitoring**

216 During all recording sessions, an observer sat in a hide inside the aviary and recorded  
217 partners' behaviour. The location of both partners relative to the nest was monitored  
218 during vocal interactions. One recording session consisted of two consecutive  
219 incubation reliefs so that the two categories of reliefs were monitored (male returns  
220 vs. female returns to the nest). As a consequence, the duration of one session  
221 depended on the observed pair and could last from one to three and a half hours. For  
222 each session, duets were counted, classified and extracted.

### 223 **Definition of duets between mates**

224 Two types of duets were analysed: 'meeting duets' and 'sentinel duets'. 'Meeting  
225 duets' are vocal greetings performed by the pair when one mate returns to the nest and

226 meets its partner, as described by (Elie et al., 2010). At the end of a meeting, the  
227 returning mate can relieve its partner in the nest or not, leading to two subtypes of  
228 ‘meeting duets’ defined by their outcome: the ‘relief duets’ (R) when the returning  
229 mate stays in the nest and takes its turn incubating the eggs, or the ‘visit duets’ (V)  
230 when the returning mate just visits its mate at the nest, for instance bringing nest  
231 material, but do not take its turn incubating and leaves the nest at the end of the  
232 interaction. During a ‘visit duet’ (V), the returning mate can either enter the nestbox  
233 or stay at the entrance but eventually departs.

234 A meeting duet was defined as a sequence of at least two calls, produced by both  
235 sexes and separated by less than 10 seconds (Elie et al., 2010). When the returning  
236 mate was far from the nestbox, its calls were not accurately detected among  
237 vocalizations of other birds of the aviary. As a consequence, we considered that a  
238 meeting duet started after the returning mate perched within 20 cm of the nestbox and  
239 when the partner inside the nest uttered a call less than 5 s before or after a call of its  
240 mate or if the returning mate entered the box. A meeting duet stopped either when at  
241 least one mate left the nest area, or when both birds stopped calling for a period of 10  
242 s. During a meeting duet, the calls of the partners could either perfectly alternate or  
243 partly overlap.

244 ‘Sentinel duets’ (S) are vocal interactions performed with one mate inside the nest and  
245 the other staying outside, located between 20 cm and 5 m from the nest (Elie et al.,  
246 2010). Again, calls from the outside mate could not be accurately detected among  
247 vocalizations of other birds, so we used the sequence of calls of the incubating partner  
248 as a proxy of the sentinel duet. The same 10 seconds rule as above was applied to  
249 decide the end of a sentinel duet. The incubating partner rarely produced isolated  
250 calls, i.e. calls not included in a sentinel duet.

251 **Analysis of duet structure**

252 Parameters

253 All duets (N= 323, from N= 18 pairs, table S1) were extracted and analysed using  
254 Praat software ([www.praat.org](http://www.praat.org)). The location of the birds in or outside the nestbox  
255 during the duet was scored and all calls were manually labelled using Praat ‘annotate’  
256 function as time intervals. Each call was labelled as male or female and assigned to  
257 one of the three following call types (see Fig. S3 for spectrograms of duets and call  
258 types and sounds 1 to 5):

- 259 - Short calls are primarily tet calls, i.e. soft and short harmonic stacks  
260 ( $57.7 \pm 19.2$  ms) with almost no frequency modulations (Elie et al., 2010; Zann,  
261 1996). Cackle and thuck calls were rarely produced and thus are pooled in this  
262 category (Zann, 1996).
- 263 - Whines are soft and high-pitched moans, with variable but usually long  
264 duration ( $182.3 \pm 109.3$  ms). This ‘pleading’ sound is a vocalization specifically  
265 uttered at the nest site (Elie et al., 2010; Zann, 1996). It can be flanked with  
266 beak-nibbling sounds.
- 267 - Arks are intermediate calls ( $89.4 \pm 23.0$  ms) with a downsweep component  
268 (Zann, 1996).

269 When duets were performed with both birds inside the nestbox, we reported the time  
270 partners spent together in the nest. The latency of the incubating mate to answer the  
271 calls of the returning partner was calculated as the delay between the start of the first  
272 call uttered by the returning partner and the start of the first call uttered in response by  
273 the incubating partner. Using annotations on duets, the following characteristics of the  
274 duets were automatically calculated: number of calls, call rate, number and proportion  
275 of each call category, duet duration (time from the start of the first call to the end of

276 the last one). Inter-Call Intervals (ICI) were calculated as the time between two call  
277 starts, and the overall ICI, calculated over the whole duet, described the tempo of the  
278 duet.

### 279 Statistics.

280 Distribution of parameters were checked and only parameters showing a symmetrical  
281 distribution (after transformation if necessary) were kept to build composite scores of  
282 the structure of each duet using Principal Components analyses (PCA) (McGregor,  
283 1992). PCs with eigenvalue above 1 were kept for the analysis.

284 Since R and V duets are defined by their outcome, no clear acoustic basis was found  
285 to analyse them separately, so they were pooled before running PCA. The PCA  
286 described global structure of the duets: numbers and proportions of the different call  
287 types, total number of calls, tempo (call rate and overall ICI) and duration (table 1).

288 Linear models ('lmer' function of 'lme4' R package) were then performed on PC  
289 values to assess the effect of the treatment. The following model was applied: model 1

290 <- lmer (PC values ~ Treatment + Returning partner + Duet type + Noise treatment:  
291 Returning partner + Noise Treatment: Duet type, random=~1|pair identity), where  
292 Treatment had two levels (Noise vs. Control), Returning partner had two levels (Male  
293 vs. Female) and Duet type had two levels (R vs. V). This model was built to test for  
294 specific fixed factors and their interaction with the treatment, although not all the

295 interactions between the factors were tested they were either considered irrelevant or  
296 biologically difficult to interpret (Forstmeier & Schielzeth, 2011). P-values were  
297 assessed using the 'Anova' function ('car' R package). S duets were analysed  
298 separately because parameters were measured on vocalizations of the incubating bird  
299 only (see above, definition of duets and variable loadings, table 2). The following

300 model was used to assess the effect of the treatment on PC values: model 2 <- lmer

301 (PC values  $\sim$  Treatment \* Returning partner, random= $\sim$ 1|pair identity), where  
302 Treatment had two levels (Noise vs. Control) and Returning partner had two levels  
303 (Male vs. Female). P-values were assessed using the ‘Anova’ function (‘car’ R  
304 package).

### 305 **Analysis of male-female dynamic during relief and visit duets**

306 Male-female dynamic during duets was assessed using two complementary methods:  
307 first using delays of response of each bird to the calls of its partner (ICI analysis),  
308 second using cross-correlation of male and female signals (Cross-correlation  
309 analysis).

#### 310 ICI analysis

311 For this analysis, we assessed male and female tempos using means and standard  
312 deviations of intra-sex ICIs (time between two call starts of the same individual) and  
313 mean inter-sex ICIs, i.e. transitions between sexes (M-F and F-M delays) representing  
314 the reaction time of one bird to the calls of its partner. A PCA was run to build  
315 composite scores of male-female dynamic during the duet (table 3).

316 The effect of the treatment was assessed with a linear model run on PC values (see  
317 model 1).

#### 318 Cross-correlation analysis

319 In this analysis we focused on the temporal synchrony (or lack of it) in calling activity  
320 between mates by computing the cross-correlation between male and female calling  
321 signals. A calling signal is a temporal description of the calling emission and is  
322 defined as a function of time  $t$  that is 1 if the bird was producing a sound at  $t$  and 0  
323 otherwise. The sampling frequency was set to 200Hz (5 ms bins). For example if, for  
324 one part of a calling signal of 75 ms, we obtained 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 0 0, it  
325 means that during the first 15 ms (3\*5 ms) the bird was silent, then this bird produced

326 a call of 50 ms (10\*5 ms) length, before it went back to silence for 10 ms.  $S_{\text{male}}$  stands  
327 for the male signal and  $S_{\text{female}}$  for the female signal. We computed the cross-  
328 correlation (cc) of these two signals ( $S_{\text{male}}$  and  $S_{\text{female}}$ ) with the following formula:  
329  $cc(T) = \text{mean} ( (S_{\text{male}}(t) - \text{mean}(S_{\text{male}}(t))) * (S_{\text{female}}(t+T) - \text{mean}(S_{\text{female}}(t+T))) )$ .  
330 With the normalization step, we have:  $CC(T) = cc(T) / sd(S_{\text{female}}) * sd(S_{\text{male}})$ , where CC  
331 is the normalized cross-correlation, T the time delay, and  $S_{\text{male}}$  and  $S_{\text{female}}$  the male and  
332 female signals as functions of t (time). On a cross-correlation curve, a peak on the  
333 right of the x-axis (positive time values) gives information about the time between a  
334 male call and the previous female call (F->M), and a peak on the left of the x-axis  
335 (negative time values) gives information about the time between a female call and the  
336 previous male call (M->F) (Perez, Fernandez, Griffith, Vignal, & Soula, 2015).  
337 To compare cross-correlation between treatments, we measured the curve's maximum  
338 peak height, which signs the strength of the cross-correlation, as well as the height of  
339 each peak (positive peak: F->M, negative peak: M->F). Because cross-correlation  
340 used the calculation of two means, we used only duets having more than 8 calls per  
341 individual. We first tested duets with the best correlation scores, *i.e* greater than 0.1,  
342 according to Perez et al. (2015). In this case, cross-correlation was thus compared  
343 between 33 relief duets (16 in control and 17 in noise) from 14 pairs, and for 18 visit  
344 duets (12 in control and 6 in noise) from 10 pairs. We then used all the duets to  
345 confirm the results; cross-correlation was thus computed for 43 relief duets (24 in  
346 control and 19 in noise) from 16 pairs, and for 24 visit duets (18 in control and 6 in  
347 noise) from 10 pairs. The same model as above was used to assess the effect of the  
348 treatment (see model 1).

349 **Analysis of the numbers of visit duets and sentinel duets, and the spatial**  
350 **proximity between partners during sentinel duets**

351 Parameters

352 Occurrences of V duets and S duets were counted during a reference period (see  
353 below). In addition, the distance between partners during sentinel duets was analysed  
354 as a proxy of the spatial proximity between partners. Three distance categories were  
355 considered (from 0 to 1 meter, from 1 to 2 meters and more than 2 meters) and the  
356 number of sentinel duets in each distance category was counted.

357 One recording session consisted of two consecutive incubation reliefs (male return *vs.*  
358 female return to the nest). The duration of a recording session thus depended on pair  
359 identity, as some birds have shorter incubation shifts than others. As the observer  
360 started the recording session in the middle of an incubation shift, the first incubation  
361 shift could be more or less completed after the session's start. To obtain comparable  
362 data for all pairs and for both sexes (as male return or female return could happen first  
363 depending on recording session), we quantified behaviours during a defined reference  
364 period. The duration of this reference period was defined as the last 40% of the time  
365 between two reliefs, an interval concentrating most of the birds' vocal and  
366 behavioural activity. For one given pair recorded in one given treatment, two  
367 reference periods were defined (the first one being just before the first relief, the  
368 second being just before the second relief). In total, 72 reference periods were defined  
369 (four reference periods from 18 pairs). But for 15 recordings out of the total data set,  
370 the time between the start of the recording session and the first relief was shorter than  
371 this reference period (seven in noise treatment, eight in control treatment). Thus, all  
372 18 pairs remained in the final dataset but for some of them, the first reference period  
373 was missing. The data set was then composed of 28 reference periods in control (12  
374 with the female incubating and 16 with the male incubating) and 29 reference periods  
375 in noise (14 with the female incubating, 15 with the male incubating).

376 Statistics.

377 The effect of the treatment on total counts was tested separately on the number of V  
378 duets, the number of S duets and the number of S duets performed in each distance  
379 category, using generalized linear models for Poisson distribution ('glmer' function of  
380 'lme4' R package). The following model was applied: model 3 <- glmer (total  
381 behavioural count ~ Treatment \* Returning partner + (1| Pair), family='poisson').

## 382 **Analysis of the acoustic features of the calls used during duets**

### 383 Parameters

384 Calls uttered by the incubating partner with no additional noise overlapping the calls  
385 (from the partner, from birds movements inside the nest or other birds in the aviary)  
386 were manually selected using the 'annotate' function of Praat software. A spectral  
387 analysis was performed using custom-written codes using the Seewave R package  
388 (Sueur, Aubin, & Simonis, 2008) implemented in R (R Core Team, 2014). After  
389 bandpass filtering (0.5kHz-20kHz corresponding to the zebra finch vocalizations  
390 spectrum, Seewave 'fir' function), the following parameters of the call frequency  
391 spectrum were calculated (Seewave 'specprop' function, FFT using a Hamming  
392 window, window length=512, overlap=50%): mean, median, first (Q25) and third  
393 (Q75) quartiles, inter-quartile range (IQR), standard deviation (Sd) and mode (all in  
394 Hertz). One additional frequency parameter was calculated from 50% overlapping  
395 FFTs (window length=512): the call dominant frequency (in kHz), which is the mean  
396 over the call duration of the frequencies of highest level of energy (Seewave 'dfreq'  
397 function). Last, the call amplitude was measured using the root-mean-square (RMS)  
398 of the call envelope.

399 To compare the structure of calls used by birds in control and noise treatments, we  
400 mixed recorded calls in control with exemplars of noise. All measures were averaged

401 with 10 mixes obtained using 10 different exemplars of noise. A detailed explanation  
402 of the procedure is available as supplementary material (see Fig.S4).

### 403 Statistics.

404 Calls from all duet types (relief duets, visit duets or sentinel duet) were analysed  
405 together (1320 calls from 36 individuals). Acoustic parameters were log-transformed  
406 to fit a Gaussian distribution and used in a PCA. Principal components (PCs) with  
407 eigenvalue above 1 were selected (table 4).

408 To assess the effect of the treatment on calls' structure, a linear model ('lmer'  
409 function of 'lme4' R package) was then performed on PC values. The following  
410 model was applied: `model 4 <- lmer (PC values~ Treatment + Sex of the caller + Call  
411 type + Duet type + Treatment: Sex of the caller + Treatment: Duet type + Treatment:  
412 Call type +(1|subject identity))`, where Treatment had two levels (Noise vs. Control),  
413 Sex of the caller had two levels (Male vs. Female), Call type had three levels (Ark,  
414 Whine and Short calls) and Duet type had two levels ('V or R' vs. 'S'). Again, only  
415 relevant and interpretable interactions were kept in the full model. P-values were  
416 assessed using the 'Anova' function ('car' R package). When interaction between  
417 factors were significant, post hoc test were performed using 'lsmeans' function  
418 ('lsmeans' R package).

### 419 **Statistical validation**

420 To reduce the incidence of multiple testing on type I error, we computed PC scores  
421 using PCA on raw parameters as much as possible. We did not use the Bonferroni  
422 correction because its assumption of a universal null hypothesis (all null hypothesis  
423 being true simultaneously) was not verified in our case (Perneger, 1998). But Tukey  
424 correction was used in posthoc tests. For all linear models, residuals equi-variance and  
425 distribution were checked using 'plotresid' function ('RVAideMemoire' R package).

426 The influential data points were tested using ‘influence’ function of ‘Influence.ME’ R  
427 package (Nieuwenhuis, Grotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2012). Validity of binomial models was  
428 checked using custom-written codes based on Atkinson (1981) and Collett (2002) (see  
429 Fig. S5 for detailed description). For linear models using Poisson distribution,  
430 residuals over-dispersion was tested using ‘overdisp.glmer’ function  
431 (‘RVAideMemoire’ R package). All models were validated and presented after  
432 removing influential random factors that changed the results. To quantify the variance  
433 of the data explained by the models, a conditional coefficient of determination of each  
434 model was calculated with ‘r.squaredGLMM’ function (‘MuMIn’ R package).

435

## 436 **RESULTS**

### 437 **Structure of relief (R) and visit (V) duets**

438 During noise, partners meeting inside the nest (54% of the meetings) tended to spend  
439 less time together in the nest ( $X_1=3.5$ ,  $p=0.06$ , Fig.1a), but the number of meetings  
440 performed inside or outside the nest did not differ between treatments (binomial  
441 model,  $X_1=0.64$ ,  $p=0.42$ ). The latency of response of the incubating partner to the  
442 calls of its outside mate increased in relief duets (post hoc test,  $X_1=4.1$ ,  $p=0.04$ , Fig.  
443 1b).

444 During noise, both R and V duets were shorter and composed of fewer calls, since the  
445 first composite score PC1 of the PCA was significantly lower in noise than in control  
446 ( $X_1=10.1$ ,  $p=0.001$ , Fig. 1c). Both R and V duets were also performed at a higher  
447 tempo and composed of a higher proportion of short calls, since PC2 was also  
448 significantly lower in noise than in control ( $X_1=11.2$ ,  $p=0.001$ , Fig. 1d).

449

450 **Table 1: Principal component analysis of the global structure of R and V duets.**

451 Percentage of each parameter composing the PC,<sup>a</sup> percentage of explained variance  
452 and eigenvalues of each PC are indicated. Transformations are indicated in  
453 parentheses.

	<b>PC1</b>	<b>PC2</b>	<b>PC3</b>	<b>PC4</b>
Variance (% cumulative)	39%	59%	74%	87%
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	4.7	2.3	1.7	1.6
<i>Duet duration (ln)</i>	13.6	4.4	-8.28	2.41
<i>Total number of calls (ln)</i>	20.04	-0.95	-0.08	-0.08
<i>Call rate (box-cox)</i>	0.18	-7.63	25.73	-12.29
<i>Overall ICI<sup>1</sup> (box-cox)</i>	-0.69	13.67	-28.17	0.43
<i>Number of short calls (ln)</i>	11.02	-12.83	-3.48	-0.25
<i>Number of whine calls (ln)</i>	12.73	1.09	2.31	12.57
<i>Number of ark calls (ln)</i>	11.42	6.83	1.3	-8.44
<i>Number of female calls (ln)</i>	14.56	-1.82	0.05	0.34
<i>Number of male calls (ln)</i>	14.98	-0.11	-0.49	-1.15
<i>Proportion of short calls</i>	-0.37	-27.82	-13.13	-0.06
<i>Proportion of whine calls (square root)</i>	0.08	1.8	16.33	37.76
<i>Proportion of ark calls (square root)</i>	0.49	21.05	0.64	-24.22

454 <sup>1</sup>: ICI= Inter-Call Interval

455 <sup>a</sup>: Absolute contributions of the decomposition of inertia for each PC ('inertia.dudi' function from  
456 'ade4' R package), divided by 100 to get the percentage. Signs are the signs of the coordinate.

457

458 **Male-female dynamic during relief (R) and visit (V) duets**

459 During noise, R duets were performed with shorter intra-sex ICIs and inter-sex  
460 transitions, since PC1 was significantly higher, whereas intervals did not change in V  
461 duets (interaction treatment:duet type:  $X_1=4.1$ ,  $p=0.04$ ; relief duets:  $X_1=8.5$ ,  $p=0.003$ ;  
462 visit duets:  $X_1<0.001$ ,  $p=0.99$ , Fig. 2a). As a consequence, partners changed their  
463 calling dynamic in noise only during relief duets.

464

465 **Table 2: Principal component analysis of R and V duets – male-female dynamic.**

466 Percentage of each parameter composing the PC, percentage of explained variance

467 and eigenvalues of each PC are indicated. Transformations are indicated in  
 468 parentheses.

	<b>PC1</b>
Variance (% cumulative)	65%
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.9
<i>M to F transition (box-cox<sup>l</sup>)</i>	-14.02
<i>F to M transition (box-cox<sup>l</sup>)</i>	-16.08
<i>F to F ICI (box-cox<sup>l</sup>)</i>	-17.47
<i>M to M ICI (box-cox<sup>l</sup>)</i>	-17.38
<i>M to M ICI standard deviation (box-cox<sup>l</sup>)</i>	-18.42
<i>F to F ICI standard deviation (box-cox<sup>l</sup>)</i>	-16.63

469 <sup>l</sup>: The box cox transformation computes one parameter transformation using the following formula:  
 470 parameter <sup>(λ)</sup>=parameter <sup>(λ)</sup> - 1 /λ, if λ ≠ 0 and ln(parameter <sup>(λ)</sup>) if λ=0. The ‘boxcox’ function of the  
 471 ‘Mass’ R package automatically finds the appropriate λ value to reach a distribution as close as  
 472 possible to the Gaussian distribution.  
 473

474 Furthermore, the cross-correlation between male and female calling signals showed  
 475 that the regularity of the duet increased in response to the treatment. Noise affected  
 476 differently the most regular R and V duets (i.e. duets with cross-correlation curves  
 477 that showed peaks above 0.1), with significant interactions between treatment and  
 478 duet types (Fig. 2b and 2c). The strength of the cross correlation (maximum peak  
 479 height) and the precision of male delays to answer female calls (positive peak height)  
 480 both increased in R duets (Fig. 2b and 2c, X<sub>1</sub>=2.7, p=0.09 and X<sub>1</sub>=5.9, p=0.02  
 481 respectively) whereas they decreased in V duets (X<sub>1</sub>=4.8, p=0.03 and X<sub>1</sub>=2.9, p=0.09  
 482 respectively). When considering all the duets, the strength of the cross-correlation and  
 483 the precision of male delays were still higher in noise than in control (X<sub>1</sub>=5.8, p=0.02  
 484 and X<sub>1</sub>=4.9, p=0.03 respectively), but did not differentiate duet types anymore (no  
 485 significant interaction treatment:duet type; X<sub>1</sub>=1.8, p=0.17 and X<sub>1</sub>=0.03, p=0.85,  
 486 respectively). Overall, this analysis revealed higher regularity in male-female calling  
 487 in noise compared to control (Fig. 2d), especially during R duets. In particular, male  
 488 delays to answer female calls were more precise during noise.

489 **Structure of sentinel duets (S).**

490 S duets showed fewer calls and lower tempo (higher overall ICI) in noise than control,  
491 since PC2 was significantly lower in noise than control ( $X_1=7.6$ ,  $p=0.007$ , Fig. 3b).

492 The total duration of the duet was not affected (PC1,  $X_1=0.94$ ,  $p=0.33$ , Fig. 3a).

493

494 **Table 1: Principal component analysis of the global structure of S duets.**

495 Percentage of each parameter composing the PC, percentage of explained variance  
496 and eigenvalues of each PC are indicated. Transformations are indicated in  
497 parentheses.

	<b>PC1</b>	<b>PC2</b>
Variance (% cumulative)	64%	95%
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	2.6	1.2
<i>Total number of calls (box-cox)</i>	-10.08	58.99
<i>Sequence duration (ln)</i>	-34.83	6.52
<i>Call rate (ln)</i>	32.17	6.03
<i>Overall ICI (square root)</i>	-22.91	-28.46

498

499 **Occurrence of visit (V) and sentinel (S) duets and spatial proximity between**  
500 **partners.**

501 In noise, the total number of V duets increased by  $2.6 \pm 1.9$  ( $X_1=6.9$ ,  $p=0.008$ , Fig.  
502 4a). The number of S duets did not differ between treatments ( $X_1=0.8$ ,  $p=0.34$ , Fig.  
503 4a).

504 During S duets, the returning partner perched significantly closer to the nest in noise  
505 than in control, increasing the spatial proximity between partners (Fig. 4b). In noise, S  
506 duets took place slightly more often with the outside mate at 0 to 1 meter from the  
507 nest (Fig. 4b,  $X_1=2.4$ ,  $p=0.12$ ) and significantly less at 1 to 2 meters ( $X_1=9.0$ ,  
508  $p=0.003$ ).

509 **Acoustic features of calls produced inside the nest**

510 During noise, calls produced inside the nest were louder with an up-shifted and less  
511 broadband frequency spectrum (lower PC1, table 4), and this was true for both sexes  
512 (Fig. 5a) and all call types (Fig. 5b). Furthermore, female calls tended to be more  
513 affected by noise than male calls (interaction treatment:sex:  $X_1=28.2$ ,  $p<0.001$ ;  
514 posthoc female vs male calls in noise:  $T_{27,6}=-2.6$ ,  $p=0.06$ , Fig.5a) and short calls  
515 tended to be more affected by noise than whine calls (interaction treatment:call type:  
516  $X_1=18.4$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; post hoc short vs whine calls in noise:  $T_{105,8}=2.8$ ,  $p=0.06$ , Fig.5b),  
517 see examples of call spectra Fig. 5c.

518

519 **Table 4: Principal component analysis of call structure.** Percentage of each  
520 parameter composing the PC, percentage of explained variance and eigenvalues of  
521 each PC are indicated. Transformations are indicated in parentheses.

	<b>PC1</b>	<b>PC2</b>
Explained variance (%cumulative)	43%	77%
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.9	3.1
<i>Call duration</i>	0	-1.08
<i>Mean frequency</i>	3.23	-26.78
<i>Sd</i>	20.29	-1.62
<i>Median frequency</i>	-9.18	-16.05
<i>Q25</i>	-15.34	-10.74
<i>Q75</i>	4.66	-24.42
<i>IQR</i>	13.37	-12.67
<i>Dominant frequency</i>	-16.31	-5.65
<i>Amplitude</i>	-17.62	-0.99

522

## 523 **Discussion**

524 We examined how zebra finch partners cope with a strong acoustic constraint on their  
525 intra-pair communication using a playback of wind noise inside the nestbox. All duets  
526 recorded in noise were shorter and quicker, and relief duets showed changes in male-  
527 female dynamic of calling (inter-call intervals and increased precision in response

528 timing to each other). Partners increased their effort in vocal interactions in noise  
529 (more visit duets and increased proximity during sentinel duets). Last, calls produced  
530 in the nest in noise were louder, with an up-shifted and less broadband frequency  
531 spectrum.

### 532 **Response to noise reveals potential functions of call duets**

533 Recent reviews on avian duetting underlined the lack of experimental evidence testing  
534 the relationship between duet structure and function (Dahlin & Benedict, 2013; Hall,  
535 2009). Our results bring new insights on this perspective.

536 An increase in background noise partly impaired mate communication at the nest.  
537 First, the latency to initiate the duet tended to increase and duets were shorter (in time  
538 and in number of calls) and quicker in noise than in control. These results show that  
539 the noise treatment significantly constrained intra-pair communication. But even  
540 under this strong acoustic constraint, zebra finch mates continued to perform vocal  
541 duets each time they met at the nest, either during visit or during incubation relief.  
542 Although altered, continued duets under difficult acoustic conditions may confirm  
543 their biological significance.

544 The treatment did not affect visit duets and relief duets the same way. Specifically  
545 male-female dynamic was more significantly affected during relief duets, as duets  
546 performed in noise were more regular and precise, particularly when the male  
547 answered the female. This may reflect the different roles of visit and relief duets in the  
548 zebra finch intra-pair communication system. Nest relief in species with bi-parental  
549 incubation is a crucial step. A failure of relief would leave the nest unattended and  
550 could have irremediable impact on the clutch. Coordination between mates is thus  
551 essential, and could rely at least partly on call duets associated with nest relief, as

552 suggested by Boucaud et al. (2015). Therefore, it may be important to maintain  
553 sufficient information in relief duets.

554 The number of visit duets increased in noise. This could represent a strategy of signal  
555 redundancy, as many species dealing with masking background noise use redundancy  
556 to maintain signal efficacy (Brumm, Schmidt, & Schrader, 2009; Brumm & Slater,  
557 2006). Short duets in response to noise might be compensated by increased  
558 redundancy. Visit duets might be involved either in contact maintenance and/or pair  
559 bond maintenance (Malacarne, Cucco, & Camanni, 1991; Wickler, 1980). Because  
560 incubation implies long periods of separation between mates, it may be important to  
561 keep contact. In particular, sentinel duets are hypothesized to be reassuring vocal  
562 interactions between the incubating bird, unable to detect the approach of a potential  
563 threat, and its partner showing anti-predator vigilance outside the nest, as suggested  
564 by Elie et al. (2010) and Mainwaring & Griffith (2013). Under this hypothesis, even  
565 with an acoustic constraint on their duetting activity, partners would keep duetting and  
566 may change their behaviour to facilitate vocal exchanges. Birds did not significantly  
567 modify the number of sentinel duets in response to the noise treatment, but the  
568 returning bird perched closer to the nest during these sequences. This strategy was  
569 previously observed during intra-pair communication in response to noise in the great  
570 tit (Halfwerk et al., 2012): when an increased level of background noise was broadcast  
571 inside the nest to the incubating female, the male perched closer to the nest to sing,  
572 showing that the male can use the feedback from the female to adjust his behaviour  
573 and maintain signal efficacy. We found similar results here but because both partners  
574 were subjected to the noise alternatively, we cannot conclude about the mechanism:  
575 either feedback from the partner inside the nest or previous experience with the noise

576 could explain the behavioural changes of the partner outside the nestbox (male or  
577 female).

578 Last, the fact that partners increased the number of visit duets may be a sign of an  
579 extreme increase of proximity between partners during vocal interactions. In this case  
580 we would expect a switch in duet interaction type in noise: an increase in the number  
581 of visit duets would be associated with a decrease in the number of sentinel duets. We  
582 did not find such a switch in our data; the number of visit duets increased but the  
583 occurrence of sentinel duets was not changed in noise, which emphasizes the fact that  
584 partners may reinforce vocal interactions in noise.

### 585 **Noise impacts quiet vocalizations**

586 Many studies have already demonstrated that birds modify the pitch and the amplitude  
587 of their vocalizations in response to noise, but they largely focused on loud and/or  
588 long-range vocalizations - display calls in king penguins, *Aptenodytes patagonicus*,  
589 (Aubin & Jouventin, 2002), separation calls in fowls, *Gallus gallus domesticus*,  
590 (Brumm et al. 2009), distance calls in common marmosets *Callithrix jacchus*  
591 (Brumm, Voss, Köllmer, & Todt, 2004), or territorial songs in several bird species (  
592 e.g. blackbirds, (*Turdus merula*) (Nemeth & Brumm, 2009), great tits (*Parus major*)  
593 (Brumm, 2006a; Slabbekoorn & den Boer-Visser, 2006). Studies focusing on the  
594 impact of noise on vocalizations used in more private contexts are rare and concern  
595 the quite conspicuous begging calls used in parent-offspring communication (Leonard  
596 & Horn, 2001, 2005, 2008). Our results confirm that birds modify the structure of  
597 their acoustic signals in response to background noise even if the signal is not aimed  
598 at a transmission over a long distance. The changes in acoustic features (frequency  
599 range, amplitude, or call type) that may facilitate reception efficacy under noisy

600 conditions seem to be the same for quiet signals used at short-range as for long-range  
601 communication signals.

### 602 **Maintaining duet efficacy in response to noise may have predation costs**

603 During an experimental increase of background noise, zebra finch pairs adjusted their  
604 behaviour and some of these adjustments (louder call duets, increased number of  
605 visit duets or change of posts of the returning partner) may have costs for their  
606 reproductive success. Increasing the number of visit duets may increase predation risk  
607 by facilitating nest site localisation. Furthermore, the adjustment made to calls  
608 (increasing amplitude and frequency), may also make the nest more vulnerable to  
609 predators, as low amplitude vocalizations are considered to represent an anti-predator  
610 strategy (Dalbelsteen, McGregor, Lampe, Langmore, & Holland, 1998). This could  
611 explain why duets recorded in noise were shorter and why partners spent less time  
612 together inside the nestbox: shorter duets and rapid relief might represent a trade-off  
613 with louder vocalizations to maintain low vulnerability to predation.

### 614 **Noise impacts unlearned vocalizations in both females and males.**

615 Male zebra finches learn their song and one of their calls (the distance call) during a  
616 juvenile phase, whereas females do not (Simpson & Vicario, 1990; Zann, 1996). This  
617 dimorphism in vocal learning has been linked to a dimorphism in brain song nuclei  
618 (the so-called song system), which atrophy in females and increase in males during  
619 development under steroid control (Bottjer, Glaessner, & Arnold, 1985). For this  
620 reason, vocal flexibility has been thought to be limited in females, and this could lead  
621 to the prediction of greater changes in males than in females during our experiment.  
622 We actually observed greater changes in females' call structure than in males'.  
623 Moreover, most of the call types used during the vocal interactions monitored in the  
624 present study and whose structure changed in response to noise are unlearned

625 vocalizations in both sexes. Taken together, these results suggest that vocal flexibility  
626 does not depend on the capacity of vocal learning and do not need a developed song  
627 system. Indeed, vocal flexibility in response to noise has already been described in  
628 vocal non-learners (Aubin & Jouventin, 2002; Brumm et al., 2009).

### 629 **Female and male response to noise differ**

630 Whereas major changes in duet structure, interaction dynamic and call structure in  
631 response to noise were observed for both sexes, some changes were sex specific,  
632 especially changes in male-female dynamic during the duet and in call structure.  
633 These sex-specific changes may result from our protocol because both sexes were not  
634 exposed to the noise playback for the same duration. The noise playback started the  
635 day before the recording session. Because partners share incubation equally and take  
636 turn on average once per hour, both partners experienced the noise playback and had  
637 the time to habituate. However, zebra finch females generally spend the night in the  
638 nest and thus incubate the eggs overnight (Zann & Rossetto, 1991). In our population,  
639 females incubated alone in 89.5 % ( $\pm 0.2$ ) of the nights (15 pairs monitored for 136  
640 nights, unpublished data). As a consequence, females were more subjected to the  
641 playback than males and had perhaps more time to habituate. This may explain why  
642 female call structure was more changed in noise than male call structure. Last, during  
643 duets, male responses to female calls showed less variable delays in noise than in  
644 control. Because duets are joint vocal interactions, it seems difficult to explain  
645 separately female and male responses during the duet. The effects observed on male  
646 or female responses to mate calls during the duet may not be sex-specific but a result  
647 of a complex interactive communication.

648 To conclude, we experimentally tested the impact of elevated background  
649 noise on intra-pair call duets at the nest in zebra finches. Even under difficult acoustic

650 conditions, partners maintained the three types of call duets (visit, relief and sentinel  
651 duets). This was achieved through several changes in partners' behaviour: changes in  
652 acoustic features of the calls, in the structure of the duets, in the number of duets and  
653 in the spatial proximity between partners. Regularity and precision of partners'  
654 interaction were enhanced only during relief duets, which may sign the importance of  
655 these duets in coordinating partners during the crucial moments of incubation shifts.

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## 909 **Figure legends**

910 **Figure 1: Effect of treatment on the time together in nest (a), the latency to**  
 911 **answer and the global structure of duets during relief (blue) and visit (grey).**  
 912 Median, Inter-Quartile-Range and extreme values are displayed in noise and control  
 913 for: (a) time partners meeting inside the nest spent together in it, (b) latency of the  
 914 incubating partner to answer to its outside mate (c) PC1 and (d) PC2 of the duet  
 915 global structure during visit and relief. Model estimates are available in tables S2 and  
 916 S3. \*\*\* :  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* :  $p < 0.01$ , \* :  $p < 0.05$ , ` :  $p < 0.1$ .

917 **Figure 2: Effect of treatment on the male-female temporal dynamic in duets.** (a)  
 918 Median, Inter-Quartile-Range and extreme values of PC1 are displayed in visit (grey)  
 919 and relief (blue) duets. (b) Maximum cross-correlation peak height (mean  $\pm$ se) in  
 920 relief (blue circles) and visit (grey triangle) duets (significant treatment: duet type  
 921 interaction  $X_1=5.5$ ,  $p=0.02$ ). (c) Cross-correlation curves between male and female  
 922 signals in relief (blue circles) and visit (grey triangles) duets, showing the height of  
 923 the negative and positive peaks in control (dashed lines) and noise (solid lines).  
 924 Curves correspond to the mean ( $\pm$ se) of each peak over all duets. (d) Mean ( $\pm$ se)

925 cross-correlation over all duets in control (dashed line) and noise (solid line) for visit  
926 (grey) and relief (blue) duets. Since all data are averaged, no clear right and left peaks  
927 can be observed, because different peaks can represent different pairs. Model  
928 estimates are available in table S4. \*\*\* :  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* :  $p < 0.01$ , \* :  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\cdot$  :  $p < 0.1$ .

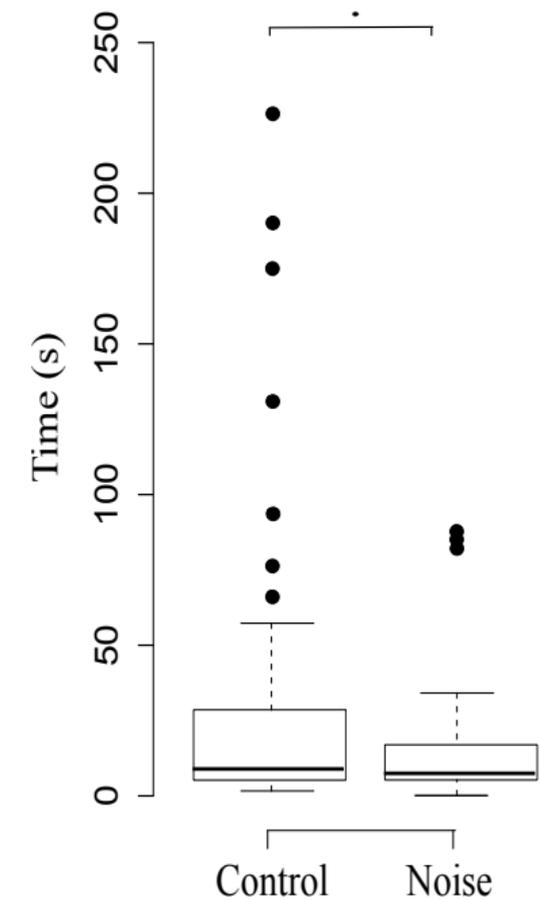
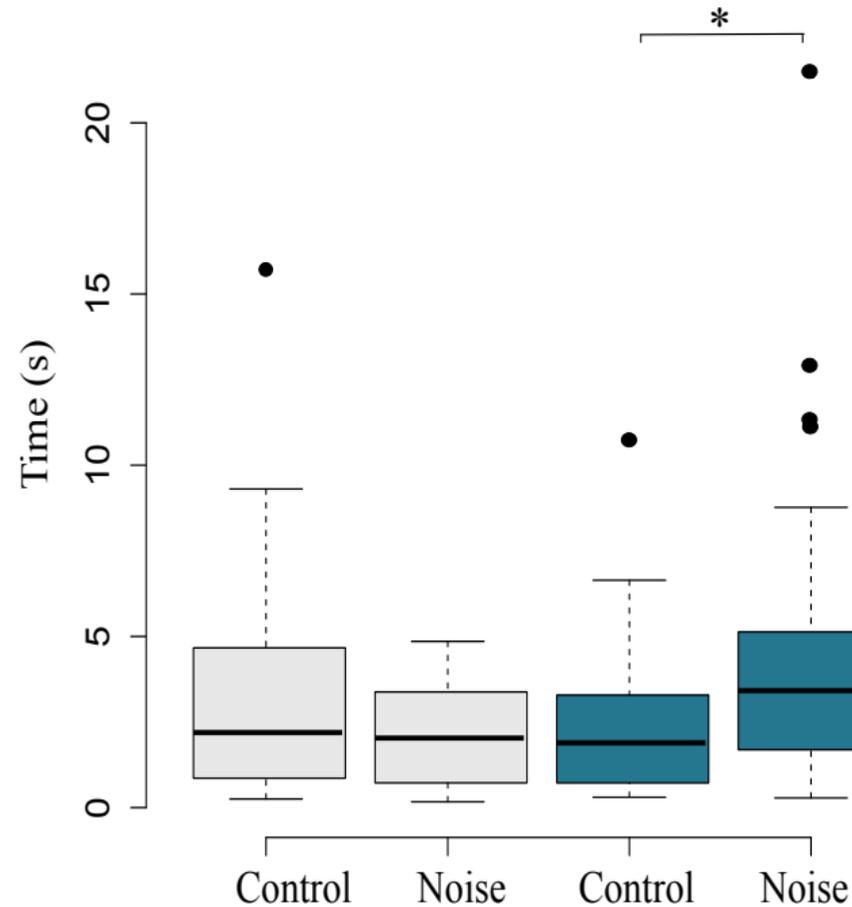
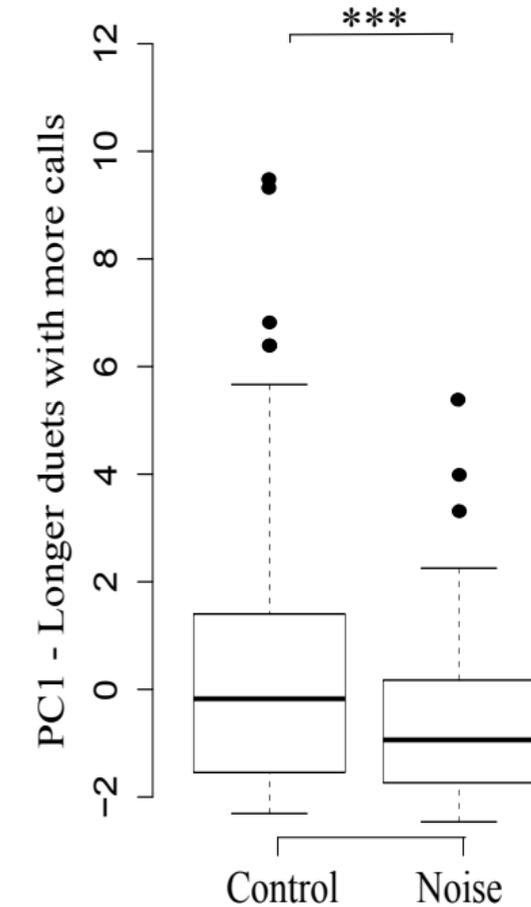
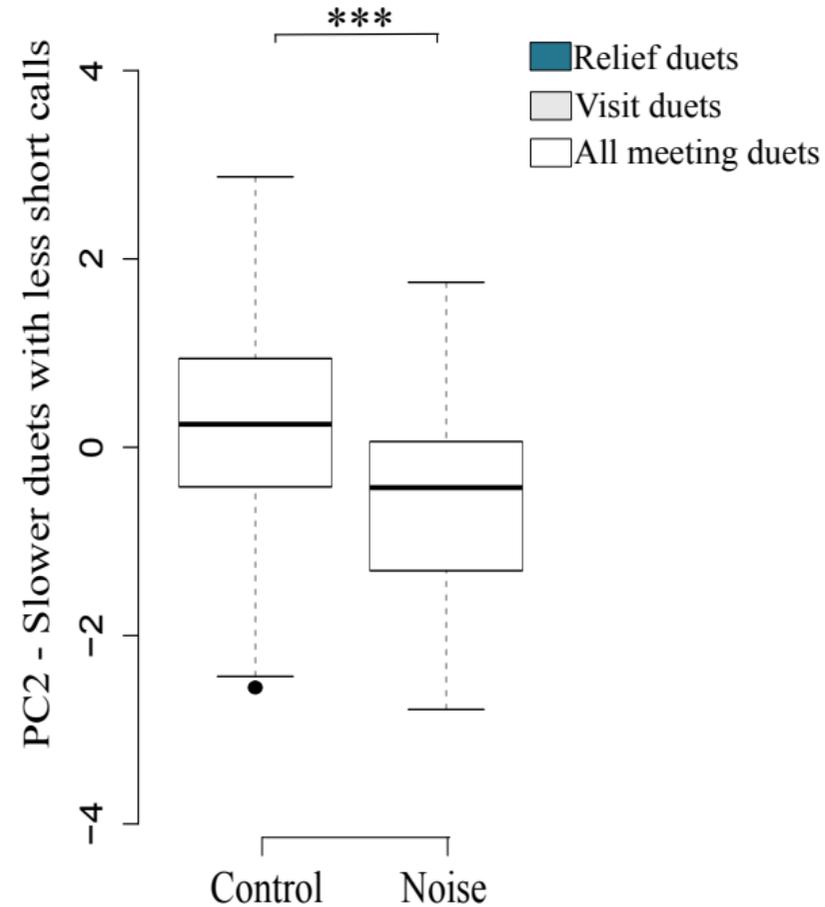
929 **Figure 3: Effect of treatment on sentinel duets structure.** Median, Inter-Quartile-  
930 Range and extreme values of PCs are displayed in noise and control for: (a) PC1 and  
931 (b) PC2 of the PCA on sentinel duets. Model estimates are available in table S5. \*\*\* :  
932  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* :  $p < 0.01$ , \* :  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\cdot$  :  $p < 0.1$ .

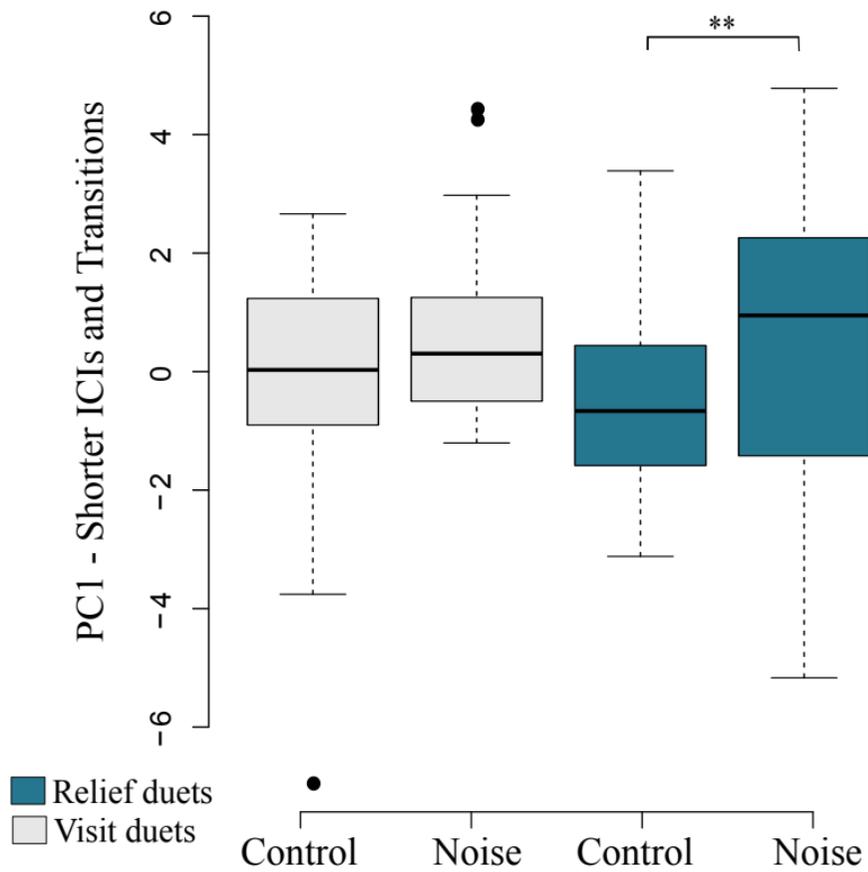
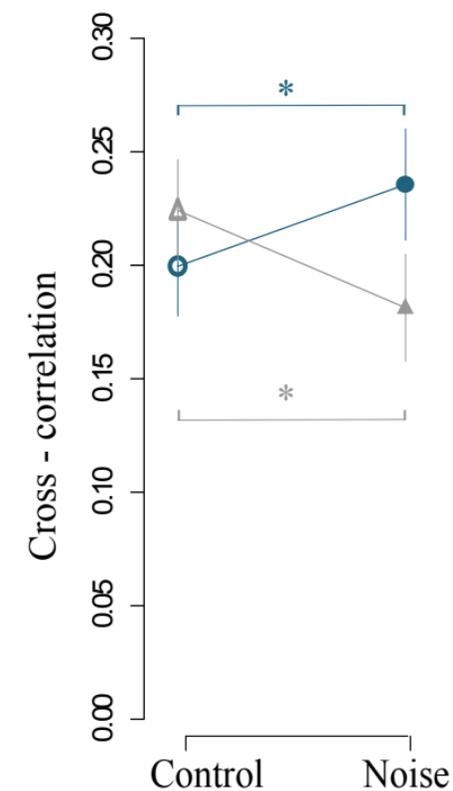
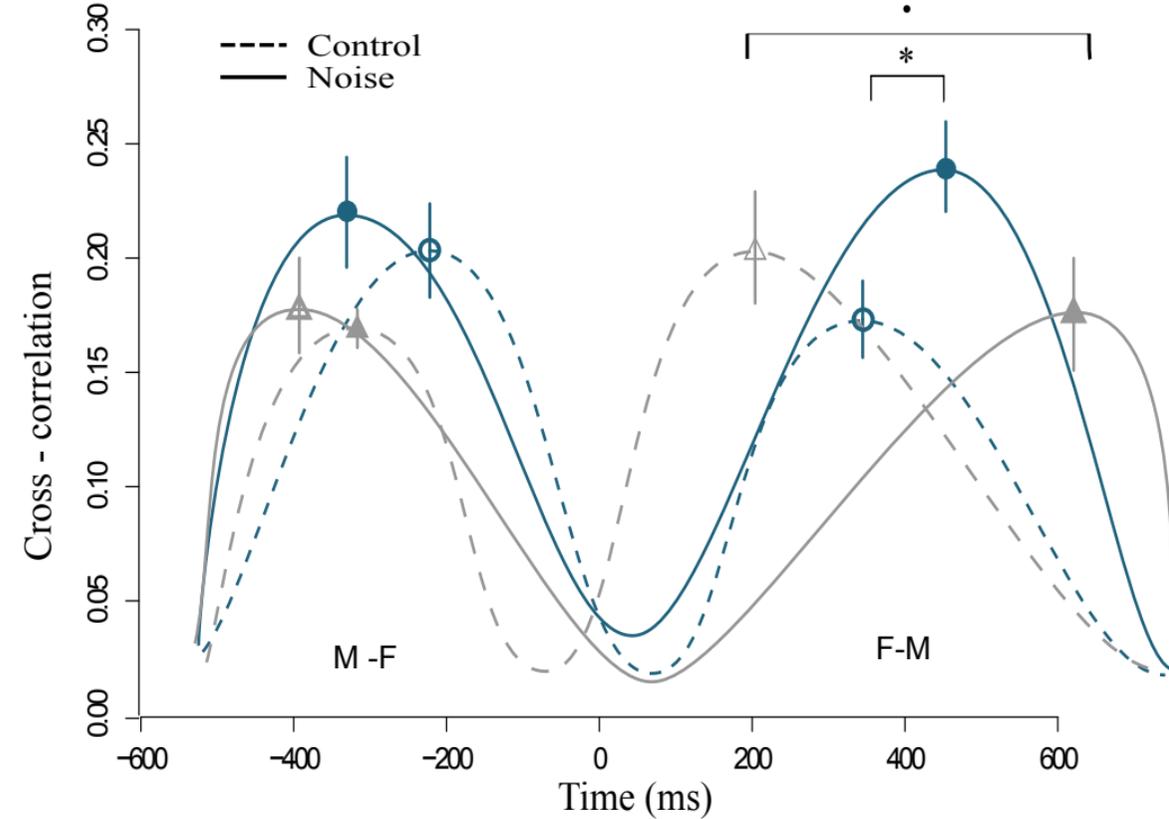
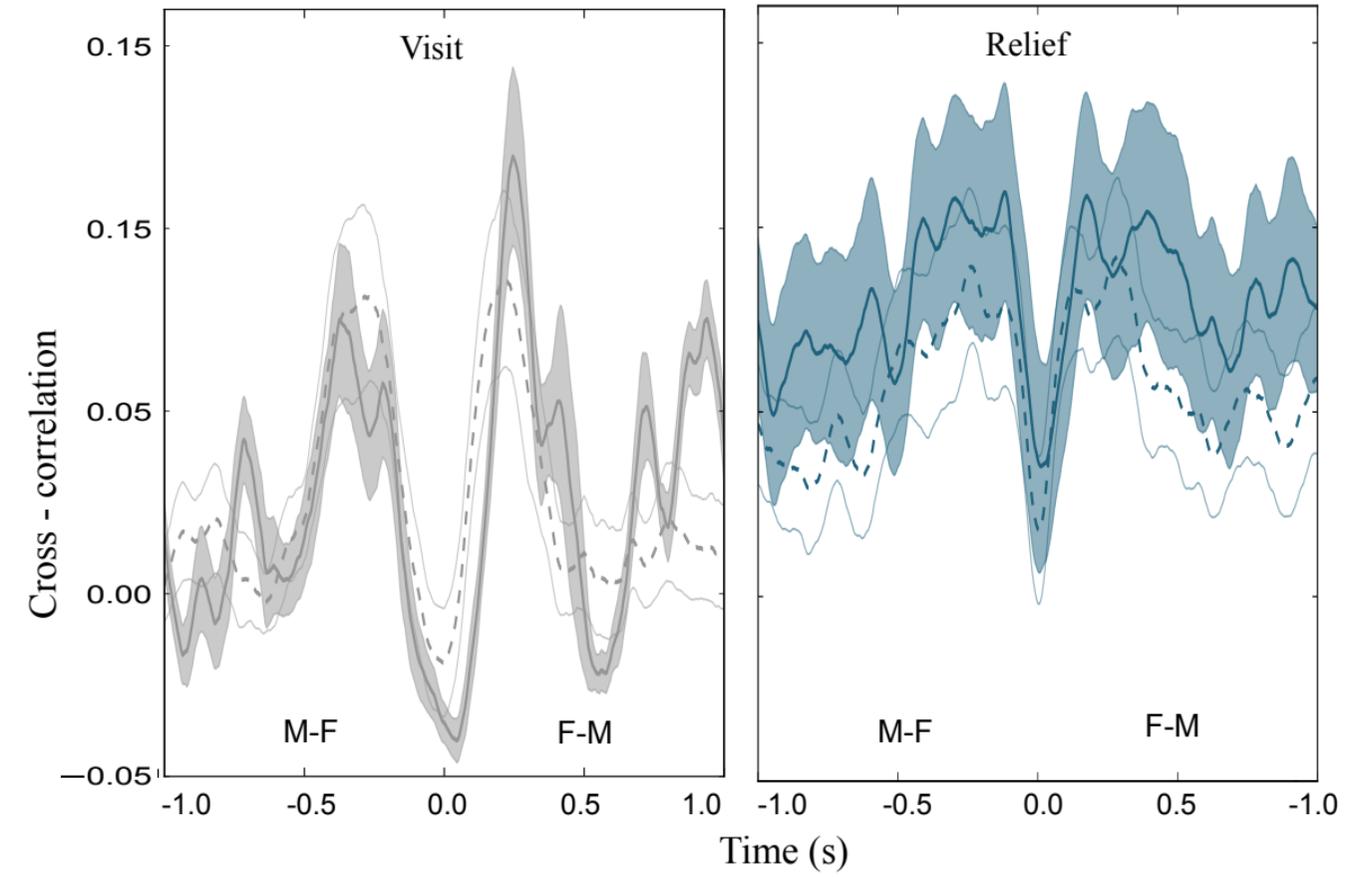
933 **Figure 4: Effect of treatment on the total number of visit duets and sentinel duets**  
934 **(a) and location of the returning partner during sentinel duets (b) in control and**  
935 **noise.** Numbers above each bar indicate the number of pairs involved in the total  
936 count. Model estimates are available in table S6 and S7. \*\*\* :  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* :  $p < 0.01$ , \*  
937 :  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\cdot$  :  $p < 0.1$ .

938 **Figure 5: Effect of treatment on calls' structure.** (a,b) Results are medians, Inter-  
939 Quartile-Range and extreme values of PC1, presented for males and females (a) and  
940 in each call type (b) separately following significant interactions. Post hoc multiple  
941 comparisons (with Tukey correction) showed that both sexes were affected by noise  
942 (control vs noise: in females,  $T_{704.0} = 11.1$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and in males  $T_{701.9} = 4.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )  
943 and all call types were affected by noise (control vs noise: in short calls,  $T_{700.7} = 4.7$ ,  
944  $p < 0.001$ , in ark calls  $T_{694.3} = 6.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , in whine calls  $T_{700.9} = 9.6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). (c)  
945 Example of changes that can occur on a call spectrum (example with a short call from  
946 the same individual recorded in control and noise). Call spectrum of the control call  
947 has been corrected (see detailed procedure Fig. S4). Model estimates are available in  
948 table S8. \*\*\* :  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* :  $p < 0.01$ , \* :  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\cdot$  :  $p < 0.1$ .

**Acknowledgments**

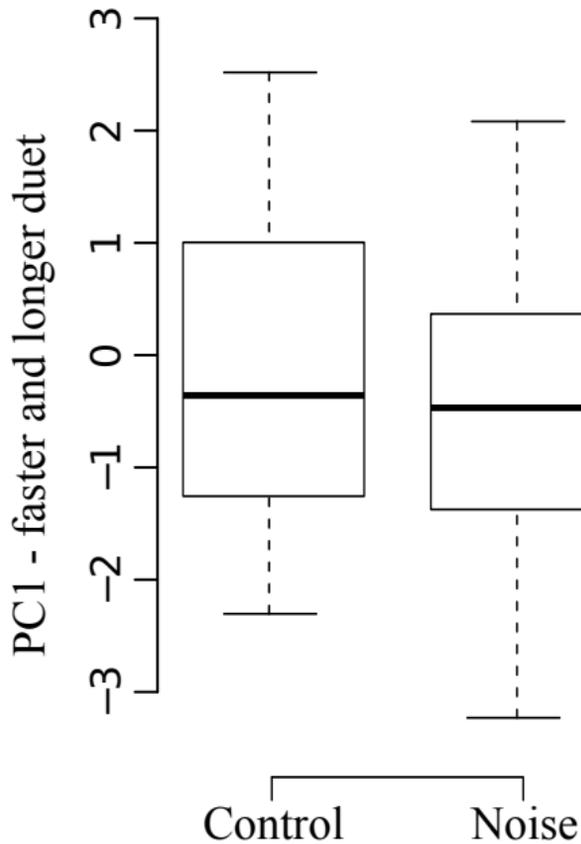
The authors thank Ingrid Boucaud for her feedbacks throughout the study and Nora H. Prior for reading over the manuscript. The authors are grateful to Nicolas Boyer for his technical help throughout the project and to Mélissa Aguirre- Smith for taking care of the birds. The authors thank the University of New South Wales for access to the Arid Zone Research Station at Fowlers Gap, as well as to Pr. Simon Griffith (Macquarie University) for access to the zebra finch colony. This work was supported by an ANR grant (French Agence Nationale de la Recherche, project 'Acoustic Partnership') and an IUF grant (Institut Universitaire de France) to C. Vignal. A. Villain was supported by a PhD fellowship from the French 'Ministère de la Recherche'. M. Fernandez is supported by a joint NSF/ANR grant (project CNCNS 'AuComSi').

**Figure 1****(a) Time together in nest****(b) Latency to answer****(c) Duet global structure - PC1****(d) Duet global structure - PC2**

**Figure 2****(a) ICI Analysis****(b) Maximum peak height (scores > 0.1)****(c) Positive and negative peak heights (scores > 0.1)****(d) Male-female mean cross-correlation curve (all scores)**

**Figure 3**  
Sentinel duet global structure

(a)



(b)

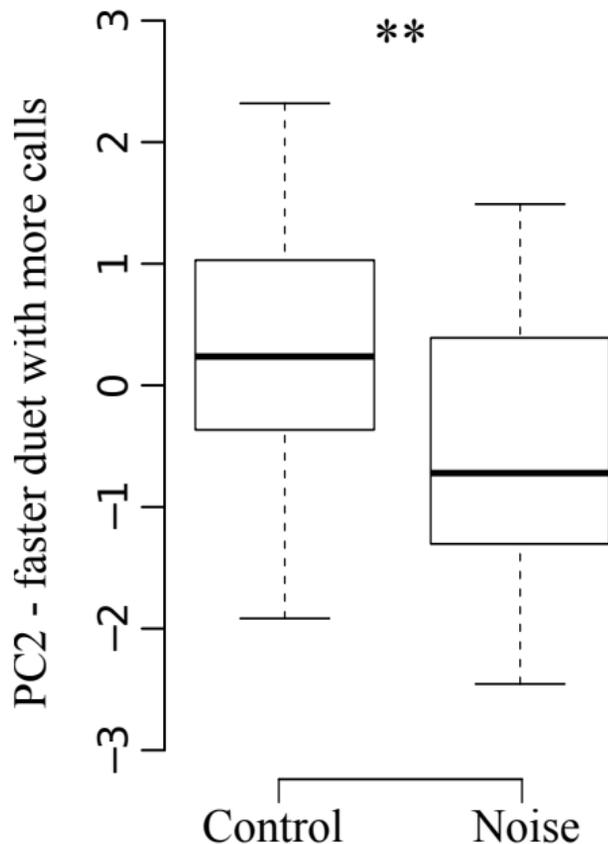
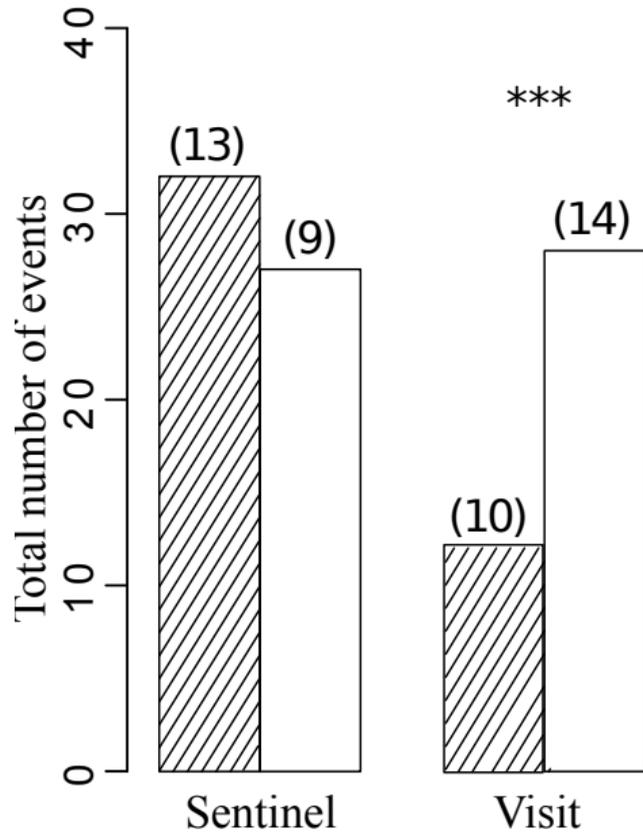
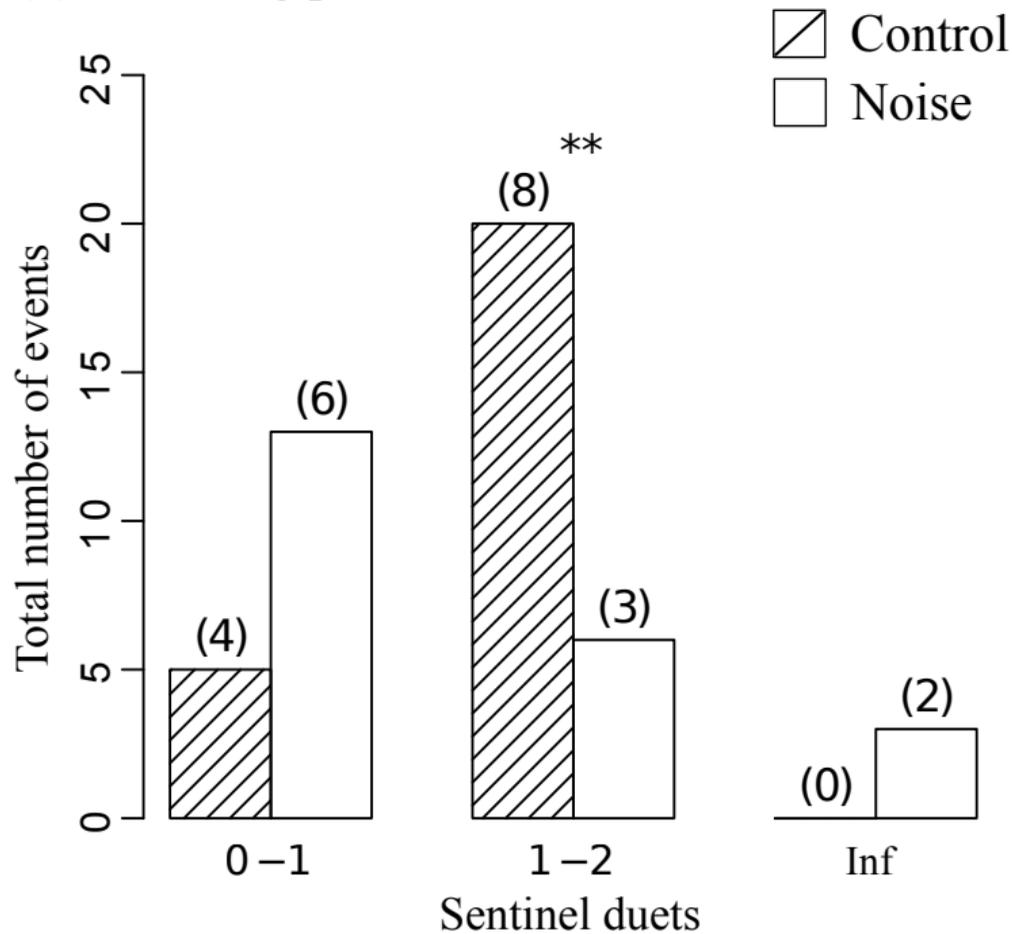


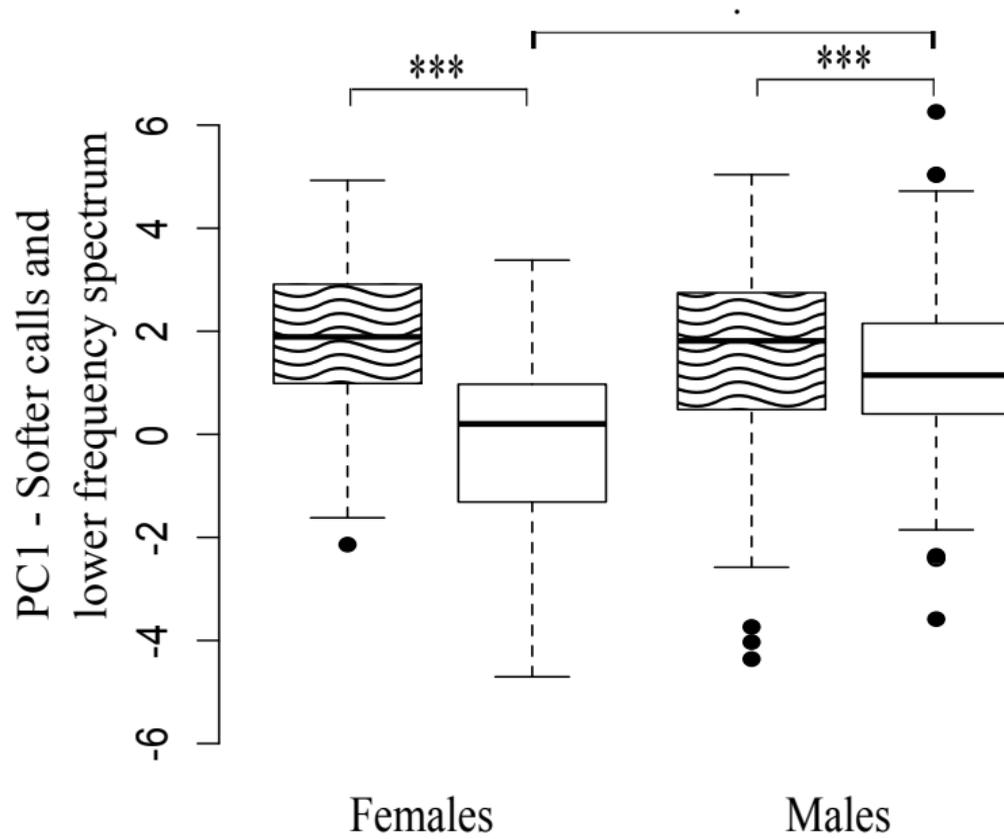
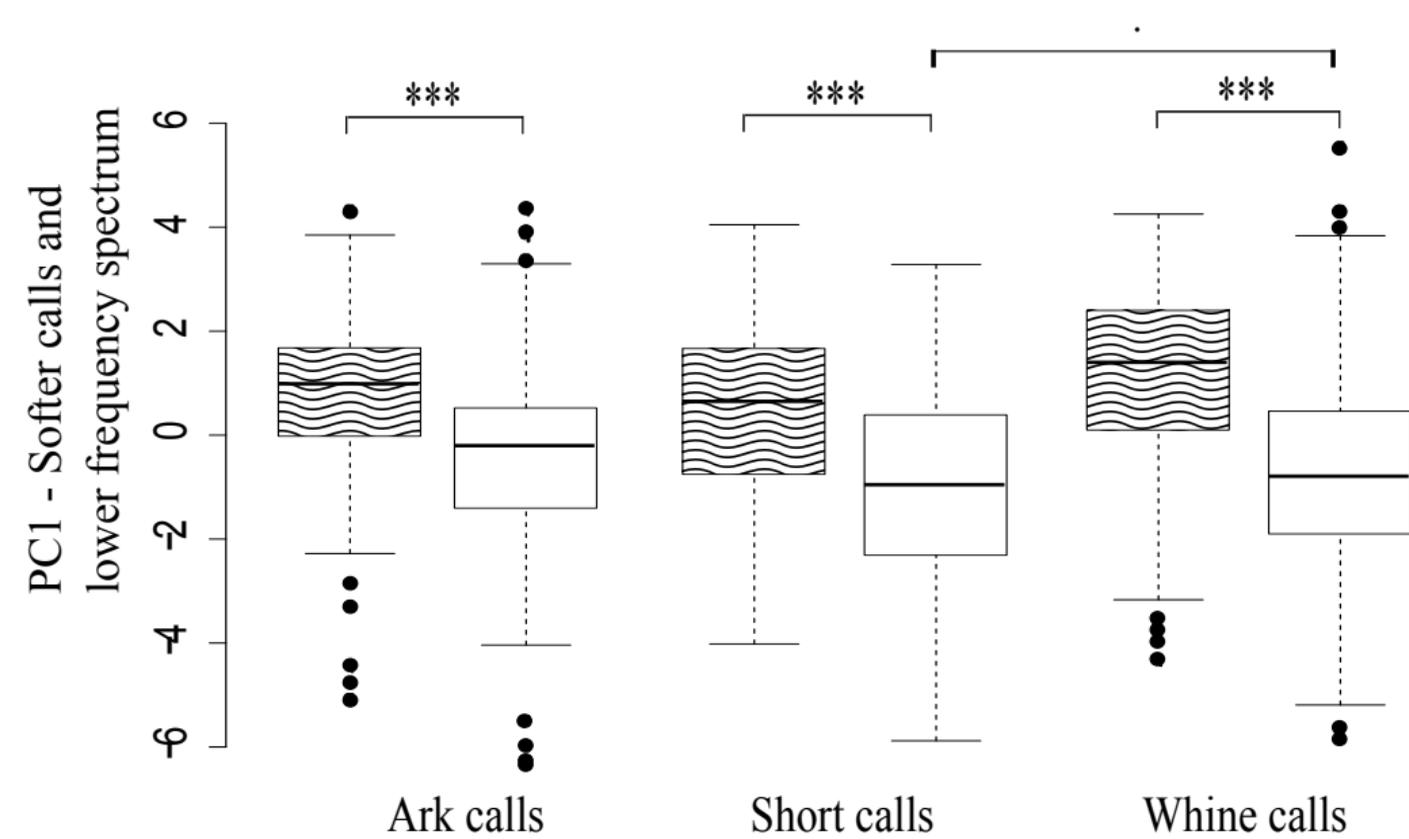
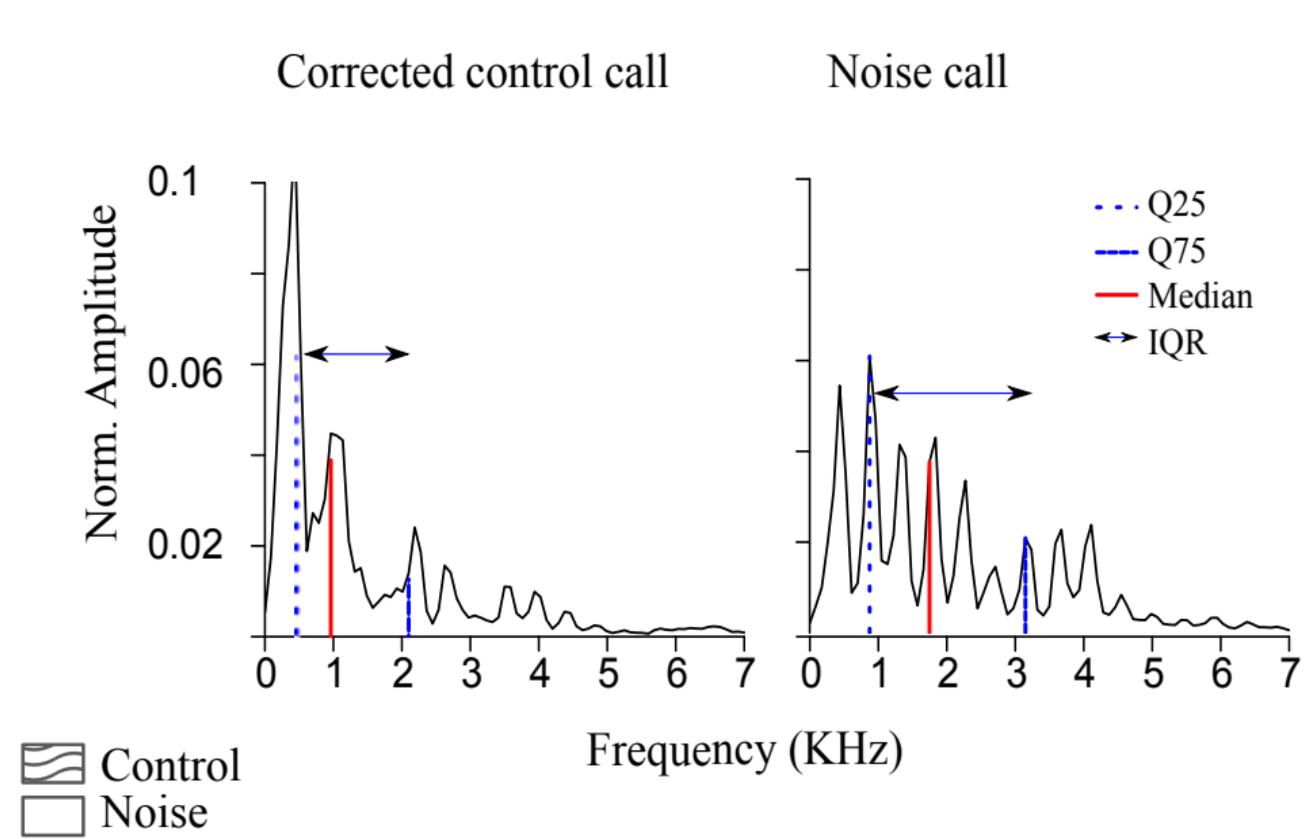
Figure 4

(a) Occurrence of duets



(b) Returning partner location



**Figure 5****(a) Call structure in males and females****(b) Call structure of each call type****(c) Call spectrum - one example**

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