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Title: Towards acoustic monitoring of bees: wingbeat sounds are related to species and

individual traits

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Abstract

 Global pollinator decline urgently requires effective methods to assess their trends, distribution and behaviour. Passive acoustics is a non-invasive and cost-efficient monitoring tool increasingly employed for monitoring animal communities. However, insect sounds remain highly unexplored, hindering the application of this technique for pollinators. To overcome this shortfall and support future developments, we recorded and characterized wingbeat sounds of a variety of Iberian domestic and wild bees and tested their relationship with taxonomic, morphological, behavioural and environmental traits at inter- and intra-specific levels. Using directional microphones and machine learning, we shed light on the acoustic signature of bee wingbeat sounds and their potential to be used for species identification and monitoring. Our results revealed that frequency of wingbeat sounds is negatively related with body size and environmental temperature (between-species analysis), while positively related with experimentally induced stress conditions (within-individual analysis). We also found a characteristic acoustic signature in the European honeybee that supported automated classification of this bee from a pool of wild bees, paving the way for passive acoustic monitoring of pollinators. Overall, these findings confirm that insect sounds during flight activity can provide insights on individual and species traits, and hence suggest novel and promising applications for this endangered animal group.

Keywords

- *pollinators; body size; fundamental frequency; acoustic signature; species classification;*
- *bioacoustics*
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Introduction

 Bees (Hymenoptera: Apoidea) are considered the most important group of pollinators (Pashte & Kulkarni, 2015; Hung et. al, 2018). With over 20,000 species worldwide, these flying insects play a crucial role in ecosystem services, food security and sustainable development (Patel et. al, 2021). However, surveys in North America and Europe have reported negative trends in bees and other relevant pollinators (e.g. syrphid flies) during the past decades (National Research Council, 2007; Potts *et al.,* 2016), associated to different anthropogenic drivers, such as habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change or agricultural intensification (Winfree, 2010; Goulson et al., 2015; Wagner et al., 2021). This global decline calls for developing scalable, inexpensive and efficient methods to monitor behaviour and trends of bee communities.

 Commonly studied in a variety of vertebrate and invertebrate species, animal sounds are a well-established source of ecological information (Bradbury & Vehrencamp, 1998) that can reveal species presence, abundance, position, body size or behavioural status (Obrist *et. al*, 2010). Thus, passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) has become an emerging technique that is used to record, store and analyse animal sounds in an automated, non-invasive way (Sugai et al., 2019a). In combination with computational tools, PAM has proven to efficiently record animal activity for a wide variety of subjects, e.g. population density (Marques *et al.,* 2013; Pérez-Granados & Traba, 2021) and distribution (Ribeiro *et al.,* 2022), conservation (Laiolo, 2010) or climate change research (Llusia et al., 2013; Desjonquères *et al.,* 2022). PAM is typically aimed to record well- known species-specific acoustic signals that are emitted by specialized sound-producing structures and play a role in mating, resource defence or navigation (Wilkins *et al.,* 2013).

 In comparison with birds, bats or anurans (animal groups extensively studied with PAM; Sugai et al., 2019a), bees do not possess specialized sound-producing structures and emit incidental sounds that arise as a by-product of activities such as moving or eating (Chesmore, 2008), e.g. a diverse a suit of pitches generated by rhythmic thoracic oscillations (see review by Hrncir et al., 2005). Some of the most well-known examples of bee sounds are emitted during different behaviours of social species, such as honeybees, bumblebees or some stingless bees (Hrncir et al., 2005; Hrncir et al., 2008; Rittschof & Seeley, 2008; De Luca et al., 2014), and they are usually exclusive to certain families, genus or species (e.g. buzz pollination, see Pritchard & Vallejo-Marín, 2020). There is, however, one sound type found across all bee species: the flight buzz.

 Bees' flight and its associated sounds have been theoretically studied since the 60s (Esch & Wilson, 1967; Unwin & Corbet, 1984; Santoyo et al., 2016). More recently, applied studies have shown that wingbeat frequency and pattern during flight may be species-specific, and thus it could serve as a 'fingerprint' for automatic species classification (Potamitis & Rigakis, 2015; Kawakita & Ichikawa, 2019). However, most studies on this topic have been performed in laboratory settings, with a narrow number of species (e.g. only *Bombus sp.* or *Apis mellifera*), or without considering morphological (e.g. body size) and environmental (e.g. temperature) factors (Gradišek et al., 2017; Parmezan et al., 2021).

 For PAM to be a reliable tool to remotely monitor bee communities, it is paramount to detect which are the most relevant factors affecting the variability of wingbeat sounds between and within species. Here we recorded and characterized wingbeat sounds of a variety of Iberian bees under field conditions and tested their relationship with species and individual traits. Particularly, we investigate four sources of inter- and intra-specific variation in sound frequency (taxonomy, morphology, temperature and behaviour) and hypothesize that: (i) each taxa shows a specific wingbeat acoustic signature; (ii) frequency of wingbeat sounds is negatively correlated with body size; and positively correlated with (iii) air temperature and (iv) induced stress. Thereby, we examine the information that can be retrieved from wingbeat sounds of bees and assess the applicability of PAM to investigate bee diversity, morphology and behaviour through their sounds.

Material & Methods

Study area

 The study was conducted in three farmlands located in Central Spain (Torrelaguna and La Cabrera, Madrid), between 600 and 1200 meters a.s.l., at the southern side of the mountain range Sierra de Guadarrama (see Fig. S1 for farm pictures). These areas belong to the mesomediterranean bioclimatic layer, characterized by highly variable temperatures (mean annual temperatures between 12ºC and 17ºC) and moderate rainfall (annual precipitation of 500 mm; Rivas-Martínez, 1983; AEMET, 2020; Girón *et. al*, 2020).

Sound recording and insect sampling

 To record their sounds, we actively searched for bees in the three farmlands from May to July 2019, during a total of 8 sampling days. Fieldwork was conducted between 9:30 AM and 1:30 PM in warm days, with clear sky, little wind and no precipitation. To increase the diversity of sampled species, the active search was oriented to maximise the selection of specimens with different characteristics, by *in-situ* observation of the size, colour and shape of the flying insects. Additionally, we focused on individuals of the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*), the most abundant bee species in the study farmlands, to explore the intra-specific variability of their sounds. Each specimen was recorded under two treatments: (i) in natural conditions (NC) during free ranging flight manoeuvres between flowers before capture; and (ii) subjected to an experimentally-induced stress (IS) after capture, while being confined inside the entomological net.

 We recorded wingbeat sounds of the focal bees with a directional microphone (ME-66 and module K6; Sennheiser) connected to a portable digital audio recorder (PMD-660 Marantz Professional). During recordings, the tip of the microphone was placed at a distance of 2-5 cm above the thorax of the insect to correctly register the sound without disrupting its behaviour (De Luca *et. al*, 2019; see Fig S2 for a graphic visualization of the recording protocol). To increase the signal-to-noise ratio, the audio gain of the recorder was manually regulated while continuously tracking sound amplitude. We used a shock-mount to avoid stand-borne noise, a windshield to reduce excessive pressure from wind, and headphones to properly perceive the sound source. The recordings were stored as uncompressed .wav files and digitalised at a sampling rate of 48kHz and a depth of 16 bits.

 During sampling, air temperature were measured with a datalogger (HOBO U23 Pro V2, ONSET), located at 20-30 cm from the floor in a shaded area. Every specimen 137 were euthanised in small plastic vials (33 cm^3) with 70% alcohol to ensure their proper conservation. Individuals were then carefully dried and labelled for subsequent taxonomic identification and morphological measurement.

 We created and visualized spectrograms of the recorded sounds using the Raven Pro v. 1.5.0. software (Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Fig. 1; Fig. S3). An optimal spectrogram configuration was applied to all the recordings (Window size: 4098; Overlap: 90%; Window Type: Hann), providing a high resolution of wingbeat sound frequencies. For each individual and treatment, a single audio with the best signal-to-noise ratio was selected and three acoustic parameters measured for both the fundamental harmonic (i.e. the lowest frequency of a periodic wave; Arthur *et. al,* 2014) and the second harmonic. These parameters were: duration (s), dominant frequency (Hz) and maximum energy (dB). To best characterise between- and within-bee variation in sound frequency throughout the individual displacement, we also measured dominant frequency and maximum energy in a short segment at the onset, centre and end of the selected audio (Fig. S2). The duration of each segment corresponds to ca. 10% of the duration of the entire audio. Based on these measurements, we calculated how often sound energy was higher at the fundamental harmonic than at the second one. By pairwise comparisons of energy in harmonics of the same segment, we thus estimated a within-bee percentage of audio segments with dominant frequency in the fundamental harmonic.

Trait measurements

 We measured two morphological traits from the focal specimens: the intertegular distance (ITD), defined as the minimum linear distance between both tegulae, measured over the thoracic dorsum (Cane, 1987), and the average forewings length (WL; Fig. S4). Both morphological traits are considered good proxies for body size (Hagen & Dupont, 2013; van Roy *et. al,* 2014). For these measurements, photographs of every specimen were taken over paper measured in millimetres with a digital camera Canon EOS M10 (Canon, Tokyo, Japan) adjusted to an optical microscope Leica MZ6 (Leica, Wetzlar, Germany), ranging between 0,8 and 4 magnifications. The length in millimetres was measured with the software *Image J* (Abràmoff *et. al*, 2004). When one of the two wings was deteriorated or absent, the average between two measurements of the other wing was calculated.

 Figure 1. Spectrogram visualization of three collected individuals from different species: *Megachile (Megachile) octosignata, Xyllocopa cantabrita, Apis mellifera*. The spectral component observed at a frequency of 5 Hz in the third spectrogram corresponded to environmental noise. frequency of 5 Hz in the third spectrogram corresponded to environmental noise.

Regression models

 To examine factors that influence inter- and intra-specific variation in the dominant frequency of wingbeat sounds, we used general linear mixed-effect models (LMM), with Gaussian error structure, including dominant frequency as response variable, and morphological, environmental and behavioural factors as explanatory variables. Specifically, we fitted two models: (i) a LMM at inter-specific level, using all recorded individuals, and (ii) a LMM at intra-specific level, with only specimens from the most abundant species, the domestic bee (*A. mellifera*). In each model, we included seven fixed factors: WL (mm), ITD (mm), temperature (°C, linear and quadratic terms, to account for potential linear and curvilinear relationships), experimental treatment (NC vs. IS), audio segment (4 levels; entire, onset, centre and end), harmonic type (fundamental vs. second) and family (Andrenidae, Apidae, Halictidae, and Megachilidae). Additionally, we added individual identity as a random factor in both LMMs to account for repeated measures within individuals, and species and genus as random factors in the inter-specific model to evaluate the amount of variation explained by these factors. As ITD and WL were correlated at inter-specific level, we first fitted a linear regression with both variables at inter-specific level (log10 transformed to achieve linearity) and used WL and statistically controlled ITD (residuals of the regression) as explanatory variables in the LMM model to avoid collinearity. All continuous variables (WL, ITD and temperature) were centred and scaled (mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1) to facilitate model fitting.

 We checked the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of the residuals by visually inspecting a quantile-quantile plot and the residuals against the fitted values, both indicating no deviation from these assumptions. We inspected model stability by excluding data points one at a time from the data. We derived variance inflation factors (Field, 2009) using the function *vif* of the R-package *car* (version 2.1-4; Fox & Weisberg 2011) and they did not indicate collinearity between fixed effects to be an issue. We conducted all analyses in R using the *lmer* function of the R-package *lme4* (v. 3.1-139; Pinheiro et al. 2017).

Classification analysis

 To visualise and test for inter-specific differences in wingbeat sounds, we created density scatter plots with dominant frequency and flight time as axes, and taxonomic entities as grouped variables. Among all measurements of dominant frequency, we chose the fundamental frequency at the centre of the recorded audio to avoid the doppler effect (compared with onset and ending segments). Acoustic segregation between species, genus or families were then explored based on sound properties.

 Additionally, we applied a machine learning framework to test if wingbeat sounds encode species-specific acoustic signatures that can be used for automated acoustic species identification. As a first approach, we focused the identification test on discriminating the wingbeat sounds produced by a domestic bee (*A. mellifera*) from those of wild bees (17 species). For this purpose, we only selected recordings of the first treatment (under natural conditions, NC) and with moderate and high signal to noise ratio 218 (SNR $> = 15$ dB). This led to a filtered database, including 18 bee species and 42 audio recordings, with a balanced distribution of classes (22 and 20 recordings from domestic and wild bees, respectively).

 First, we characterized the audio samples in the spectral domain by computing the power spectrum. This spectral representation allowed us to compare visually the spectral differences between classes. To have tight representation of the spectral domain, we then computed mel-frequency cepstral coefficients (MFCC). MFCCs have been the dominant features used for audio classification since they have the ability to deliver a compact representation of sounds with high harmonic content, such as speech and music (Rabiner 227 & Schafer, 2010). In particular, we used 20 coefficients extracted between the frequency band where the wingbeat sounds and the harmonics were predominant (i.e., 0.1 and 5 kHz). The final predictor matrix included 20 MFCC coefficients and 42 observations. We measured binary classification performance using a Random Forest classifier (number of 231 trees $= 300$, maximum features $= 6$) and computing the balanced accuracy metric in a stratified 10-fold cross-validation scheme. To assess whether the accuracy of the machine learning model was significantly better than expected by chance, we computed baseline accuracies using two dummy classifier strategies: majority and random. The majority strategy simulates a classifier always returning the most frequent class, which, in our case, is *Apis mellifera*. The random strategy generates predictions uniformly at random. The automated classification analyses were performed in Python 3, using the package *librosa* (McFee *et al.,* 2015) for audio characterization, and the package *scikit-learn* (Pedregosa *et al.,* 2011) for fitting and evaluation of statistical classifiers.

Results

Taxonomic and morphological traits

 Overall, 73 bees were registered and captured, and 65 of them identified at species level (Table S1). The taxonomic identification revealed 27 species, belonging to 4 families: Apidae (42 individuals; 57%), Andrenidae (15; 21%) Halictidae (9; 12%) and Megachilidae (7; 10%). European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) was the most commonly collected species, with 26 registered individuals (36%). A set of 16 species, one subgenus, and one genus was represented by a single specimen. The average WL was 8.84 mm (± 2.39) and varied between the 2.73 and 17.73 mm, while the average ITD was 2.93 mm 250 (\pm 0.97) and varied between 0.76 and 6.52 mm (Table S1). Temperature was 24.04 °C 251 (\pm 10.63) and ranged between 16.25 and 41.39 °C.

Bee sounds

 Wingbeat sounds were analysed in 69 individuals under NC treatment and 71 individuals under IS treatment. These sounds were highly variable and characterized by a large number of harmonics (1-12), with sharp, moderate or restricted frequency modulation (Fig. 1). Sound energy of the harmonics typically decreases with frequency (i.e. lower harmonics having higher energy), although some individuals did not follow that pattern.

259 Duration of bee flying between flowers ranged from 1.9 s (± 1.3) in wild bees to 2.1 s (± 1.3) 260 0.8) in the European honeybee. The fundamental frequency of sounds produced by this 261 domestic bee (at the centre of the audio segment) was on average 222.4 Hz (± 21.4) and 262 251.3 Hz (± 15.9) under NC and IS treatments, respectively. In wild bees, the fundamental 263 frequency was on average 180.3 Hz (± 50.9) and 195.5 Hz (± 95.7) . The fundamental harmonic was higher in energy than the second harmonic in 80% of the time for all observations, and 90% of the time for the IS treatment (Table S2). In general, dominant frequency and the patterns of frequency modulation were distinct across specimens and might be good candidate parameters for acoustic species identification (see Figure S5). The greatest intensity of background noise occurred between 0 and 70 Hz.

Determinants of wingbeat sounds at inter- and intra-specific level

 Using the full dataset (n=138 individuals, 27 species), the first LMM model revealed that frequency of bee sounds was related to wing length bound to harmonic, as well as experimental treatment (NC vs. IS) and air temperature (Table S3; Figure 2). Lower frequencies were emitted by larger-sized bees and individuals subjected to higher temperatures, while stress was associated with high-pitched sounds. We also found significant differences in dominant frequency among the bee families and the audio segments within the recording (Table S3). Using the subset for the European honeybee (n=26 individuals), the second LMM model pointed out that the frequency of wingbeat sounds of this species was also associated to its behavioural status, with higher-pitched sounds under stress conditions (Table S4). We also found significant differences in dominant frequency among the harmonics and the audio segments within the recording (Table S4, Figure 2).

 Fig. 2. The effects of wing length, environmental temperature and treatment (NC *vs*. IS) on the wingbeat frequency of all bees.

 Fig. 3. The dominant frequency of wingbeat sounds of the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) under two experimental treatments: flight between flowers under natural conditions (NC) and flight inside a net under experimentally-induced stress (IS).

Inter- and intra-specific acoustic signatures

 The power spectrum of wingbeat sounds of the European honeybee showed multiple consistent peaks at low frequencies (Fig. 4) that were only masked by the background noise at higher frequencies. On the contrary, the mixed set of wingbeat sounds of wild bee species were highly variable and did not show a clear signal. Our statistical analyses on the discrimination between these sounds showed that the Random Forest classifier had 301 an average balanced accuracy of 0.77 ± 0.12 , over 10 cross-validation runs. The baseline 302 accuracies obtained were 0.5 (± 0) for the majority strategy and 0.47 (± 0.21) for the random strategy, showing that our model's accuracy is significantly better than chance. The main classification errors (false positives and false negatives) were observed on the noisier samples. This suggests that the wingbeat sound of the European honeybee has a specific acoustic signature and machine learning could be used to automatically discriminate between domestic and wild bee species.

 Fig. 4. Spectral characteristics of wingbeat sounds of the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*; top) and a mixed set of 17 wild bee species (bottom). The sounds of the domestic bee show consistent regularities at low frequencies, while the sounds of wild bee species are often noisy with no clear signal.

 The recorded sounds were distinct in frequency and duration across genus and families, with some level of overlap between groups (Figure 5). We found no significant differences in dominant frequency at the centre of the audio segment (F=0.11; df=2; p=0.89) amongst the three taxonomic levels, calculated by the mean differences in 317 frequency between pairs of species (mean \pm standard deviation: 57.6 Hz \pm 43.6), genus 318 (59.9 Hz \pm 44.3) and families (58.3 \pm 43.8 Hz).

 Fig. 5. Dominant frequency of the wingbeat sounds (Hz) and flight time between flowers (s) of domestic and wild bees under NC treatment. Each dot indicates an individual (n=67), grouped by family.

Discussion

 Animal sounds have the potential to provide a large amount of inter- and intra-specific information and assist researchers to monitor species activity and diversity (Bradbury & Vehrencamp, 1998; Obrist *et al.,* 2010; Sugai *et. al*, 2019a). Bee sounds have received still little attention compared to other groups, despite their diversity and potential for species automatic classification (Hrncir et al., 2005; Truong et al., 2023). At the inter- specific level, we found that variations in frequency of wingbeat sounds emerged from taxonomic, morphological, environmental and behavioural differences of a pool of 27 domestic and wild bee species. First, we confirmed a negative relationship between dominant frequency of these sounds and wing length of the recorded specimens, in

 agreement with the general allometric pattern that predicts lower sound frequencies in larger-sized animals. Second, we found a negative relationship between dominant frequency and environmental temperature. Finally, we unveiled that bee behaviour also influenced wingbeat sounds, with bees under induced experimentally-induced stress conditions (in a net trap) emitting higher-pitched sounds than bees under natural conditions (in free ranging movements). At the intra-specific level, wingbeat sounds of the European honeybee exhibited a consistent acoustic signature and limited variations, being only behaviour a significant determinant of sound frequency.

Wingbeat frequency

 The interest of the scientific community to study wingbeat sounds produced by flying insects is increasingly growing due to its potential to support species identification, with applications in pest control or biodiversity monitoring (van Roy *et. al*, 2014; Zhang *et. al*, 2017). In this study, we characterized wingbeat sounds of domestic and wild bees with acoustic methods under field conditions. Fundamental frequency of the sounds produced by the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) was on average (± standard deviation) 222.4 ± 21.4 Hz (n=26 specimens), a similar frequency to the one observed in previous studies 350 with smaller samples (e.g. 235.2 ± 7.5 Hz, n = 10, Goyal & Atwal, 1977; 238.2 ± 4.57 Hz, $n = 10$, Spangler, 1986), while wingbeat sounds of wild bees were on average lower-352 pitched sounds $(180.3 \text{ Hz} \pm 50.9)$.

 It is worth mentioning that frequencies of wingbeat sounds could significantly vary depending if the insect flight is sustained (hovering flight) or describes a specific direction (Bae & Moon, 2008). Apart from these flying patterns, other factors such as temperature or the load imposed on the motor system could be influencing the vibrational system (Esch & Wilson, 1967; Spangler & Buchmann, 1991). The sound produced is even more delicate to study in certain taxa such as flies, where wings do not only move from top to bottom, but also undergo deformations, rotations and speed variations (Sueur *et. al*, 2005; Geng et. al, 2017). Thus, further analysis based on larger databases would be helpful to keep increasing the resolution of insect's wingbeats frequencies values.

Morphology and bee sounds

 As in other animal groups, there is a certain consensus that frequency of sounds emitted by insects (also wingbeat sounds) is negatively correlated with their body size (Moore *et. al*, 1986; Bennet-Clark, 1998; Darveau *et. al*, 2005; De Luca et al., 2019). A larger-sized individual typically has larger wings and hence produces higher forces, which end up reducing the number of wingbeats they need to fly (van Roy *et. al*, 2014). This is also consistent with previous studies in individuals of the Euglossini tribe, bumblebees and orchid bees (Casey *et al.,* 1985; Joos *et. al*, 1991; Darveau *et. al*, 2005), whereas opposite to some studies in mosquitos (e.g. Villareal *et al.,* 2017). Our results, which include several solitary species as well as social bees, are still in line with this allometric pattern, supporting that bees with longer wing length emit lower sound frequencies. In contrast with wing length, ITD did not show a clear relationship with wingbeat sounds, suggesting that the former morphological trait could be a better predictor of body size, and thus wingbeat sounds, than the latter one.

 At the intra-specific level, neither of the two functional traits were related to the sound frequency emitted by the European honeybee, contrary to what was expected according to our hypothesis. This, however, aligns with Kendall *et. al,* (2019), as they found no significant correlations between ITD and dry weight (an alternative indicator of body size) in this species.

Environmental temperature

 Temperature is a pervasive factor influencing physiology and behaviour of ectotherms, such as flying insects (Belton, 1986). Previous studies often found that increases in wingbeat fundamental frequency were correlated with increases in environmental temperature, e.g. in various bees and flies (Sotavalta, 1947; Unwin & Corbet, 1984;) or in mosquitos (Villarreal *et al.,* 2017). However, this is not always the case. In larger bees, air temperature can be negatively correlated with wingbeat frequency. As bees significantly differ in body size, ranging from a few mm to more than 20 mm, body temperature in larger-sized insects could substantially deviate from environmental temperature, hence attenuating such a relationship (Unwin & Corbet, 1984; Parmezan et al., 2021). Actually, we found a negative correlation between wingbeat frequency and temperature at both the inter- and intra-specific levels, opposite to the most commonly

 effect. Other studies have also shown that social bees such as *Apis mellifera* can be able to control their wingbeat frequency regardless of external temperature (Parmezan et al., 2021). Even, Sotavalta (1947) did not find differences in *Bombus pascuorum* wingbeat frequency over a wide temperature range, while Spangler & Buchmann (1991) did not consider temperature as an important factor affecting wingbeat frequency in social and non-social bees. Other factors, such as sex of the individuals, can also be playing a role in wingbeat frequency (Coelho, 1991). Our results are aligned with this diversity of relationships reported in the literature between temperature and wingbeat frequency, and suggest that the effect of temperature on wingbeat frequency may be taxa-specific and that generalizations on this link are still elusive due to the scarce amount of documentation available so far.

Under stress conditions

 When the flight of European honeybees were recorded under induced stress conditions (within an entomological net), dominant frequency of their wingbeat sounds significantly increased (above 25 Hz) in comparison with those under natural conditions. This shift may indicate an effect of stress in the frequency of these flight sounds, as a behavioural response to the context. Sounds emitted from bees' defensive behaviours, alarming signals or other intra-specific communication mechanisms have been previously reported in literature (Hrncir et al., 2005; Hrncir *et al.,* 2008; Wehmann et al., 2015; Pritchard & Vallejo-Marín, 2020). For instance, the African stingless bee *Axestotrigona ferruginea* produces frequent guarding signals to alarm nestmates (Krausa et al., 2021). However, during these behaviours, insects are typically laying on a surface and their wings are folded over the thorax, uncoupled from the indirect flight muscles. Thus, the vibrational response of these non-flying individuals is different (e. g. higher pitched) from the flying individuals recorded in this study (King & Buchmann, 2003; Hrncir et al., 2008). To the best of our knowledge, no other study has shown stress-related sounds in flying individuals. Our findings suggest that there is plenty of room to explore the diversity of bee sounds under different flying and non-flying behaviors.

Acoustic species-level identification

 Our Random Forest-based models showed a good classification performance of wingbeat sounds between domestic (*Apis mellifera*) and wild bee species, evidencing the potential of bee flight sounds to support automated acoustic identification. Our results are in line with previous studies using machine learning approaches in other insect groups. For instance, Kawakita & Ichikawa (2019) successfully identified three species of bees (*Apis mellifera*, *Bombus ardens* and *Tetralonia nipponensis*), and a hornet (*Vespa simillima xanthoptera*) using the fundamental frequency of their flight as a variable (Kawakita & Ichikawa, 2019). Li *et. al* (2005) managed to classify five species of mosquitoes based on their sounds, with a success rate of 73%. Similarly, Yin *et al.,* (2023) successfully detected and classified several mosquito species with wingbeat sounds using computational techniques. Folliot et al. (2022) also monitored pollination by insects and tree use by woodpecker with acoustics methods and artificial intelligence. Other studies which did not rely on wingbeat sounds but on measuring wingbeat frequency with laser sensors have also demonstrated a good potential of this related parameter for taxonomic identification of insect pests (Moore & Miller, 2002; Potamitis & Rigakis, 2015).

 According to our results, acoustic classification of bees based on their wingbeat sounds entities seem to be possible in some cases, but might be hindered by species overlap. The wingbeat sounds are weak and hence their recording is challenging. Our findings showed that improving signal-to-noise ratio of audio samples may further increase the accuracy of the automated classification. The design of techniques to better capture such sounds in the field and increasing the sample size of training dataset for statistical classifiers will likely contribute to the efforts of developing new methods for monitor pollinating species in a non-intrusively and efficient way (Høye *et al.,* 2021). It is also important to highlight that our study, which aimed to distinguish *Apis mellifera* from other wild bee species, employed handcrafted features due to the availability of samples. While our Random Forest-based models demonstrated commendable classification performance, we acknowledge the existence of more advanced methods, particularly the use of deep learning models for classifying bee species based on wingbeat sounds (Truong et al., 2023; Ferreira et al., 2023). These advanced methods have demonstrated highly accurate classification results, especially when provided with a larger dataset.

 Next steps should also be oriented towards: (i) the documentation of acoustic diversity of these sounds, including a fine analysis of their determinants, which overcomes the current lack of knowledge, (ii) the creation of sound libraries that support the future development of species classification algorithms, and (iii) the test of alternative machine learning techniques for the automated analysis of wingbeat sounds of flying insects.

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