



# A graphical summary of the Survey of BirdLife Photography Membership and a study of bird responses to photographers

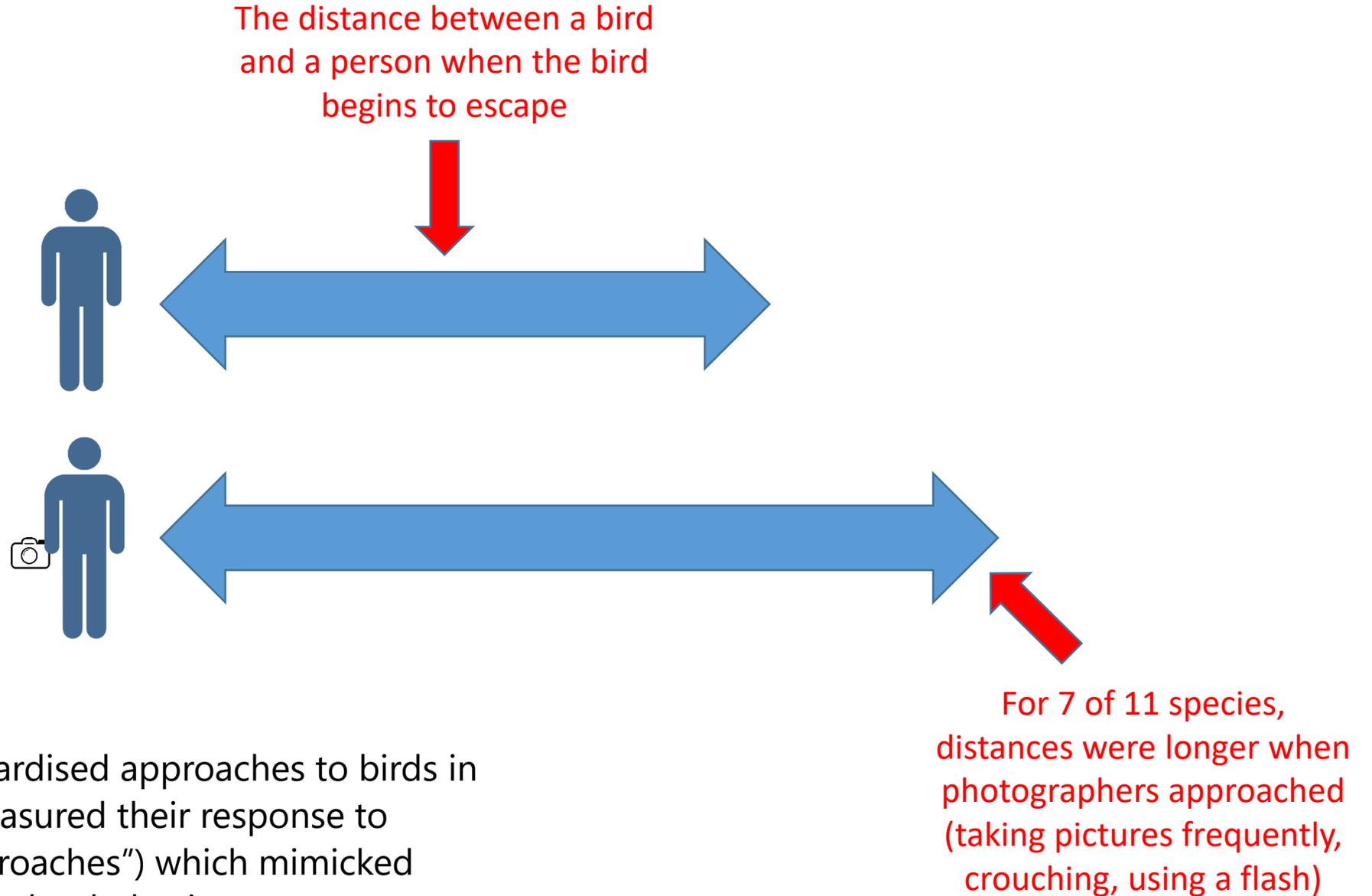
For the full report: Slater, C., Cam, G., Qi, Y., Liu, Y., Guay, P.J. and Weston, M.A., 2019. Camera shy? Motivations, attitudes and beliefs of bird photographers and species-specific avian responses to their activities. *Biological Conservation*, 237, pp.327-337.

If you would like a PDF version of the full paper, please email: [mweston@deakin.edu.au](mailto:mweston@deakin.edu.au)

# Key findings, at a glance.....

- Photographers are similar to hunters, in that they try to approach a bird closely and use a variety of tactics to achieve that. Of course, photographers don't try to kill birds, but birds may perceive them as acting like hunters and may respond to them as such.
- Photographers took and shared images partly to inspire others. The survey outlined a good deal of education, inspiration and awareness that flows from bird photography. Birds are lucky to benefit from this attention, and photographers cared about bird conservation. While bird photography may disturb birds, most photographers felt disturbance they caused was trivial in comparison to that which birds experience from other sources.
- We quantified avian escape responses evoked by photographers by measuring the distances at which they responded. We did this in relation to: 1) a walker, 2) a "walking" approach by a photographer, taking photographs regularly as she/he approached, 3) a photographer with a flash, and 4) a crouched photographer approach where the investigator crouched as they approached birds. Across species, we found differences between these approach types in terms of bird response, with exact patterns varying between species.
- For most species, photographers evoked escape at longer distances than walkers. This was interesting because birds could differentiate the behaviour of photographers from that of a walker, and responded in a manner which suggests they perceived photographers as more risky than walkers. It also seems some of the photographer tactics don't actually result in closer proximities to birds.

# The birds



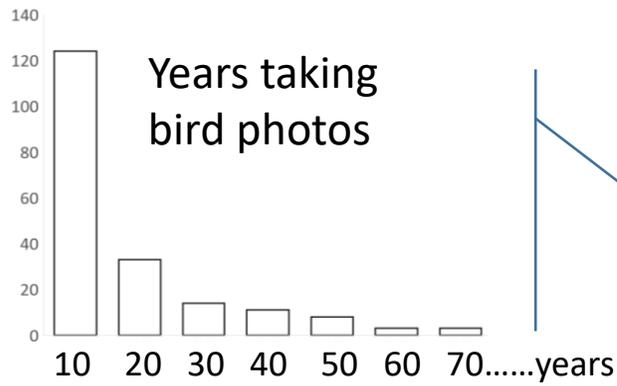
The study conducted standardised approaches to birds in Australia and China and measured their response to different experiments (“approaches”) which mimicked some stereotyped photographer behaviour.

# The survey.....

BirdLife Photography played a pivotal role in this study. The project was conducted by Deakin University honours student, Caitlin Slater. Birdlife Photography members responded positively and constructively to a survey of photographer behaviour, motivation and attitudes to bird photography, which enabled the first analysis which described these attributes among bird photographers.

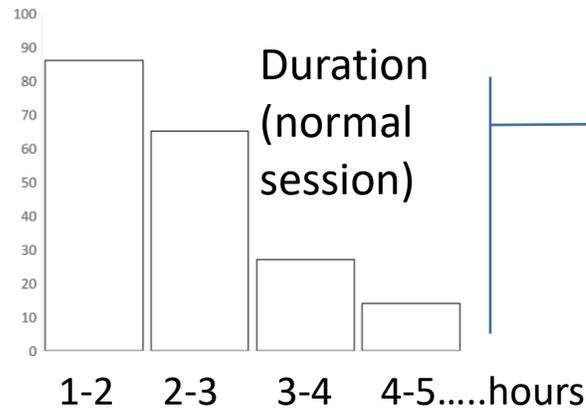
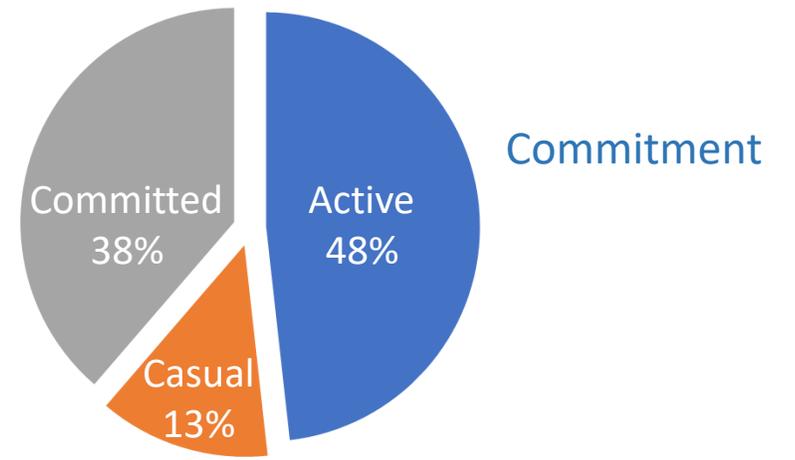
Clearly, this is the first small step in what could be a much broader and deeper program of research into bird photography and the ethics associated with the pastime. **We want to thank members for their enthusiastic support of this project.**

Graeme Cam (Former President), Caitlin Slater (Deakin University) and Mike Weston (Deakin University). This work was conducted under Deakin University ethics animal approval (B11-2015 and B10-2018), DEWLP permit (10008731), and human ethics approval (STEC-13-2018-SLATER).



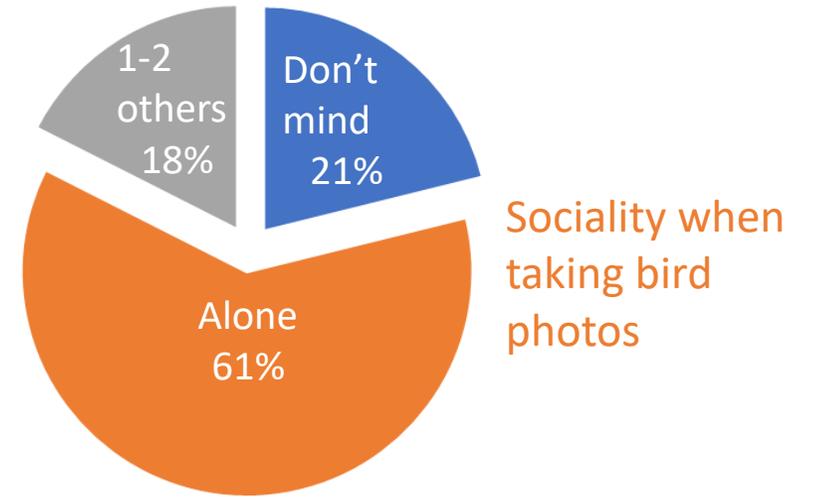
92% older than 48 years

68% University graduates

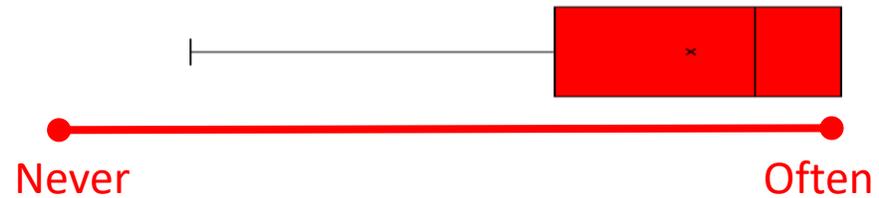


62% retired

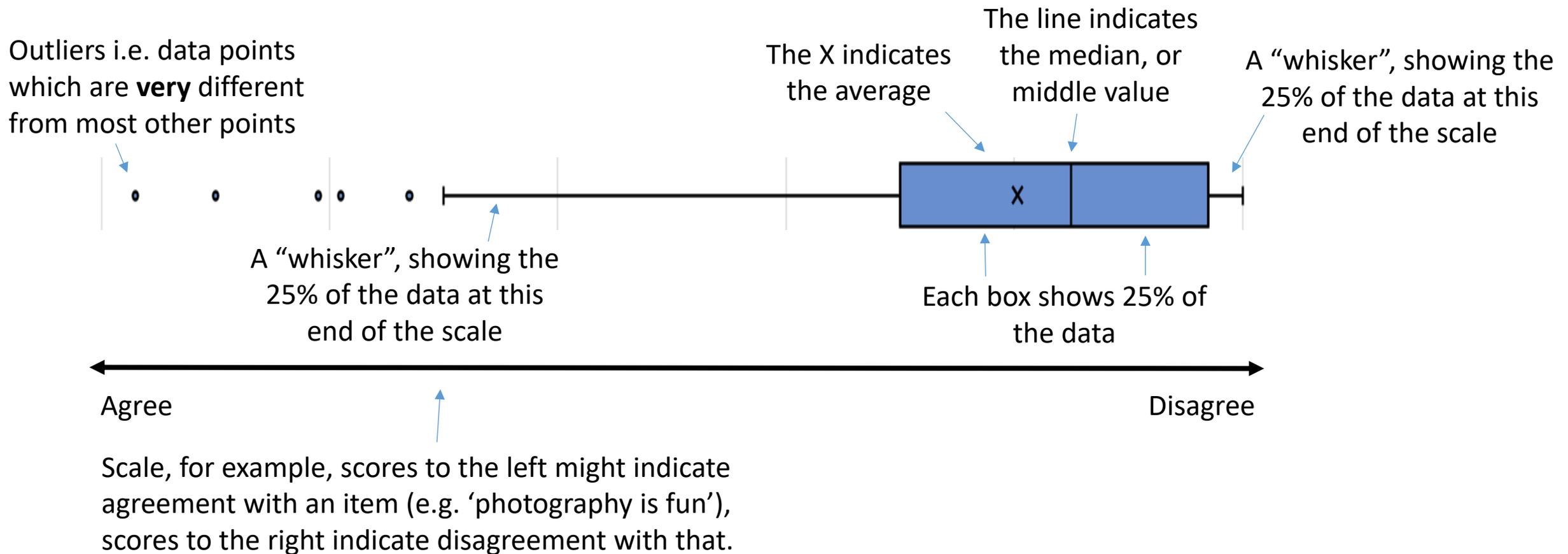
♀ 34%



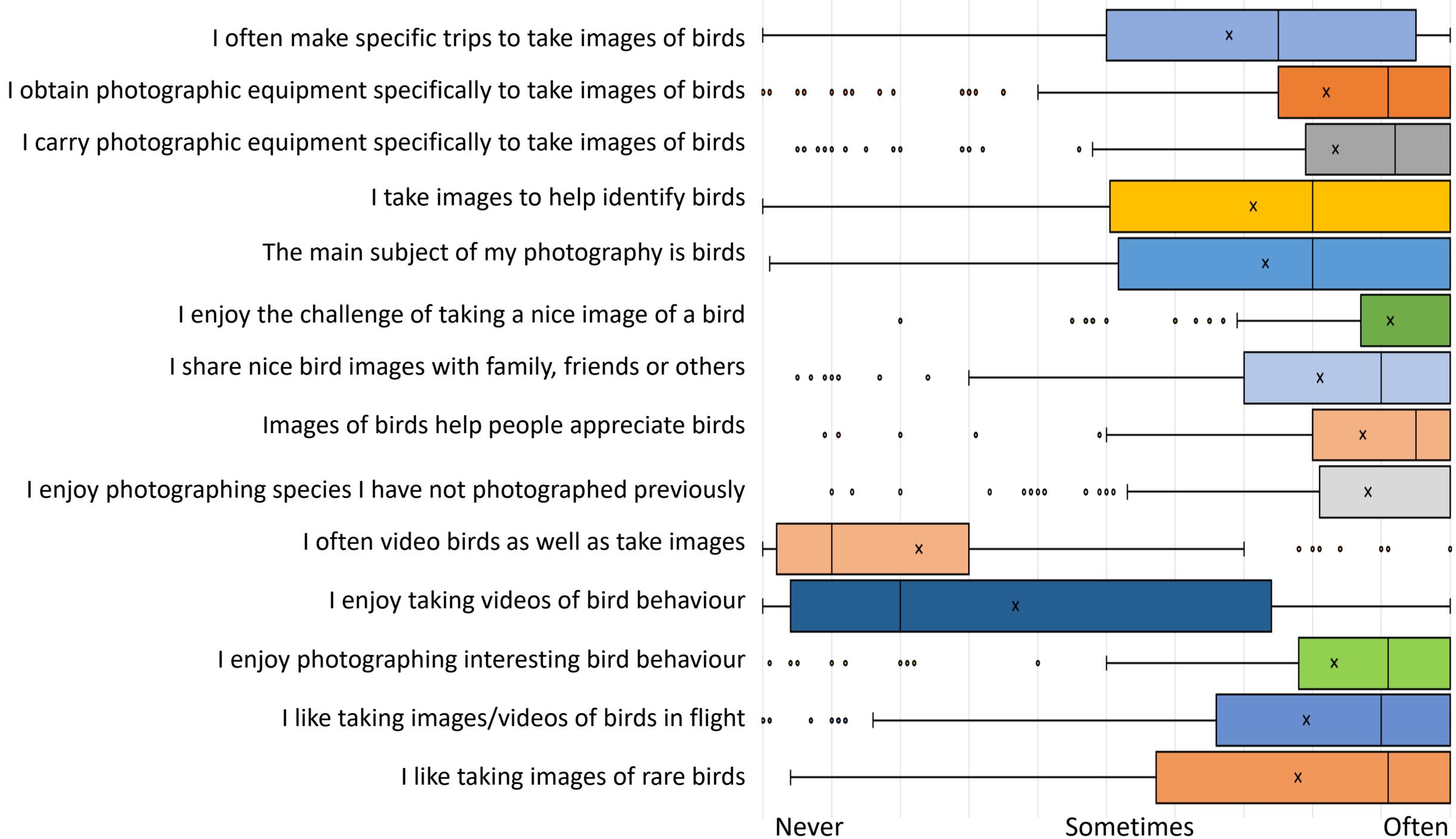
Specific trips for bird photography



# Interpreting box plots – a ‘picture’ of responses



**Hint = forget the detail and look at the pattern:** here most of the responses are bunched up towards the “disagree” end of the scale, indicating most people disagreed when responding to this item



# Where do you take bird images?

