

Permanent Research Scientist on cognition in domestic birds

INRAE presentation

The French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment (INRAE) is a public research establishment under the dual authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Research.

INRAE is recruiting researchers by open competition and offering permanent position.

It is a major player in research and innovation created on 1st of January 2020. INRAE is a research institute resulting from the merger of INRA and IRSTEA. It is a community of 12,000 people with more than 200 research units and 42 experimental units located throughout France.

The institute is among the world leaders in agricultural and food sciences, in plant and animal sciences, and is 11th in the world in ecology and environment. INRAE's main goal is to be a key player in the transitions necessary to address major global challenges. In the face of the increase in population, climate change, scarcity of resources and decline in biodiversity, the institute develops solutions for multiperformance agriculture, high quality food and sustainable management of resources and ecosystems.

Work environment, missions and activities

The joint research unit Physiology of Reproduction and Behaviour (PRC) located in Nouzilly, near Tours, conducts fundamental and applied research on reproductive function and on sexual, emotional and social behaviors in farm animals and model animals.

Within this unit, you will join the [Cognition, Ethology, Animal Welfare team](#), composed of 9 permanent staff, whose main objective is to better understand the mental universe of farm animals by studying the processes involved in emotions, the human-animal relationship and the learning of domestic animals (birds, horses). Your research project will aim to study the mental processes and the specific neurobiological bases of the components of cognition in farmed birds. Initially, you will study the reasoning skills of animals. The short-term goal will be to demonstrate simple reasoning in the hen, before studying its ability to solve more complex problems. You will then broaden your field of research to other components, such as the ability to categorize or perceive time, in order to establish the list of cognitive abilities in the domestic bird. In the medium term, you will study the influence of factors inherent to the individual (ie personality) and determine the importance of environmental factors (ie enrichment) on the expression of cognitive capacities and behavior of birds in different breeding conditions. . By relying on the technical skills (in particular cerebral cell imaging) that can be mobilized within the unit, you will be able to study the neurobiological mechanisms, still largely unknown, of these mental processes.

Your work will contribute to the development of new breeding practices based on cognitive stimulation in order to improve the welfare of domestic birds and the societal acceptability of husbandry systems.

Training and skills

Candidates must have a PhD or equivalent.

Demonstrated skills in cognitive ethology, cognition or experimental psychology are required.

Experience in exploring animal cognition with the use of behavioral tests will be appreciated.

Knowledge of neurobiology would be a plus.

Fluency in English is desirable as well as long-term international experience: successful candidates who have not yet had one will have to spend time abroad at the end of the internship year.

Link to the complete description of the position and application details:

<https://jobs.inrae.fr/en/open-competitions/open-competitions-research-scientists-job-profiles-crcn/cr-2021-phase-5>

Location: Physiologie de la reproduction et des comportements, Centre Val de Loire, 37380 Nouzilly (France)

Contact :

Ludovic Calandreau : 02 47 42 75 71 ; ludovic.calandreau@inrae.fr