

Differences in dog-human communication between two types of Labrador Retriever

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Background and aim

Dogs and humans have a long history together and, during this time, dogs have developed special human-directed communicative skills. The aim of this study was to investigate whether these skills have been affected by recent selection by studying a breed that have been bred in two different directions over the past decades, the Labrador retriever.

Conclusion

This study show differences between the two lineages of Labrador retrievers concerning contact-seeking behaviours. No difference in understanding human communicative cues was found.

Method

101 dogs performed two tests; a problem solving task to study contact-seeking behaviours displayed by the dog (Fig. 1), and a pointing test to study the understanding of human communicative cues (i.e pointing at buckets) (Fig. 2).

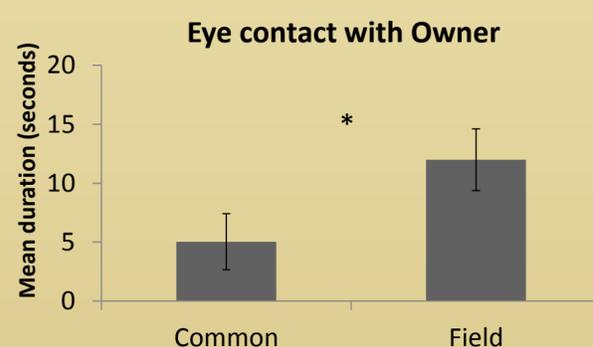
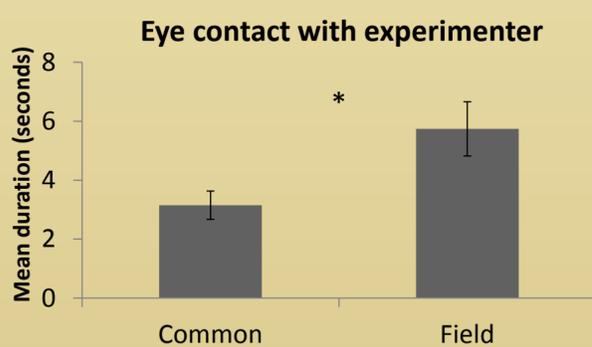


Figure 1: A dog during problem solving

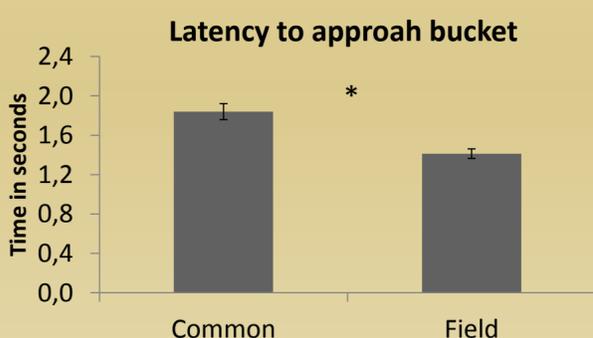
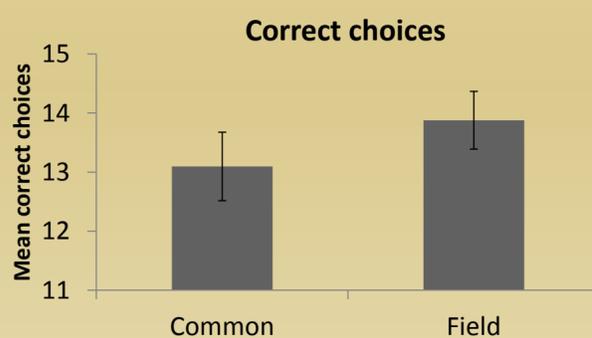


Figure 2: A dog during pointing test

Results



Field type Labradors held eye contact significantly longer with both the experimenter (left) and the owner (right) than common type Labradors during the problem solving task.



No significant difference was found for the frequency of correct choices in the pointing test (left). However, field type Labradors approached the appointed bucket significantly faster than common type Labradors (right).