

**Prof Dr Jennifer Vonk**

*University of Southern Mississippi, USA*

**“Whose Perspective is Being Taken? A Critical Look at Experiments on Perspective- Taking in Non-Humans”**

If social complexity contributed to the evolution of social intelligence, we might expect species that live in complex social groups, such as canines, cetaceans, primates and corvids to show superior abilities to take the perspective of others, relative to non-socially living species. Recent research has suggested the corvids show abilities comparable to that of non-human primates in tests of these abilities. However, the existing paradigms for testing these abilities in most nonverbal populations suffer from the same sorts of methodological flaws that make it impossible to determine whether animals are reasoning about the behaviors of others, and making predictions about subsequent behaviors based on observable features, or are reasoning about underlying intentions or perspectives of others, and making predictions about subsequent behaviors based on these inferences. Because it is impossible to make this differentiation in most of the existing paradigms, the existing data reveals impressive abilities on the part of both corvids and non-human primates for predicting the behavior of their conspecifics (and often of human experimenters) but does not conclusively demonstrate their ability to take the perspective of other minds.