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Research Topics

**Songs and Signs:  
Interdisciplinary  
Perspectives on  
Cultural Transmission  
and Inheritance  
in Human and  
Nonhuman Animals**

Frontiers in Psychology



Songs and signs are learned beginning in infancy, persist and change across generations in seemingly all human cultures, and may also characterize the lives of certain nonhuman animals, viz. the vocal traditions of songbirds and whales. Recent transmission chain experiments reveal that learning biases play an important role in shaping and stabilizing such diverse cultural behaviors as language and birdsong. Meanwhile, current debates on social learning in disparate taxa (e.g., in the spread of insect foraging techniques), and in critical animal studies, demonstrate that animal “culture” is more pervasive than exceptional, conceptual controversy notwithstanding. Yet much remains unclear as to how different socially-inherited ways of living are vulnerable or robust to anthropogenic changes transforming the planet. Aiming to initiate a comprehensive comparative-species discussion of cultural transmission and inheritance, this Research Topic invites original research and critical commentary from any discipline.

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