MAËLAN TOMASEK

Researcher, Veterinarian & Author

www.maelantomasek.com

MY BACKGROUND

I am a researcher (PhD), vet (DVM) and science communicator interested in animal behaviour and cognition

INTERESTS

Animal cognition
Science communication
Statistical analyses
Veterinary medicine

SKILLS

Experimental designer with aquatic animals (CNRS degree)
Scientific diver
R, Python, The Observer®
English (C2, CAE), French (C2), Spanish (B2), German (B1), Czech (A2), Italian (A2)

PERSONAL HOBBIES

Athletics, piano, reading with a good earl grey tea and my cat

CONTACT INFORMATION

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3141 South Yarra, VIC, Australia

CURRENT POSITION

Post-doctoral researcher 2026 - Current
Supervision
Bob Wong
Behavioural Ecology Research Group
Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

Aquatic Newtons: intuitive physics in goldfish

This project aims at exploring how fish comprehend and use the rules of physics in their aquatic world. More specifically, I am interested in their appraisal of buoyancy, gravity, and drag.

SELECTED SCIENTIFIC WORKS

PUBLICATIONS

Tomasek M, Soller K, Jordan A (2025) Wild fish use visual cues to recognise individual divers. *Biology Letters.* http://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2024.0558

Tomasek M, Dufour V*, & Jordan A* (2025). Experimental study of social learning in three wild shell-dwelling Tanganyikan cichlids that vary in sociality. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.46867/ijcp.47088

Tomasek M, Soller K, Dufour V*, Jordan A* (2024) Differences in inhibitory control in two species of Tanganyikan bower-building cichlids contrasting in building flexibility. *Ecology & Evolution.* https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.11406

Tomasek M, Stark M, Dufour V*, Jordan A* (2023) Cognitive flexibility in a Tanganyikan bower-building cichlid, *Aulonocranus dewindti*. *Animal Cognition.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10071-023-01830-w

Tomasek M, Ravignani A, Boucherie P H, Van Meye S, Dufour, V (2023) Spontaneous vocal coordination of vocalizations to water noise in rooks (*Corvus frugilegus*): an exploratory study. *Ecology and Evolution* https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.9791

THESES

Tomasek M (2025) The evolution of cognitive abilities in an adaptive radiation model: Tanganyikan cichlids. PhD thesis. https://theses.hal.science/tel-05612958v1
Awarded Best PhD thesis of 2025 by the French Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour (SFECA)

Tomasek M (2022) Impact of health in behavioural and cognitive research: focus on aquatic organisms (in French). Veterinary thesis. https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-03934194

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SELECTED ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Decision-making strategies of two related fish species diverge under increased perceptual load (2025)
Awarded Best student talk, **SFECA Congress, Nanterre, France**

Inhibitory control in Tanganyikan bower-building cichlids covaries with bower complexity (2025)
ISBE Congress, Melbourne, Australia

Growing wild: Fish cognition in the field (2025)
Invited speaker, Hólar University, Iceland

Pubescent teenagers or Tanganyikan cichlids? Cognitive experiments with unmotivated wild fish (2023)
Awarded Best Student Talk, **Behaviour Congress, Bielefeld, Germany**

SELECTED SCIENCE COMMUNICATION WORKS

Science fiction novel: *The Ceiling* (Original title: *Le Plafond*) (2025, ed. Librinova)
Shortlisted for the Librinova Star Prize 2025

Three Minutes Thesis competition: 2nd National Jury Prize; 1st Local Jury Prize & Audience Prize

Podcasts: *Savant Sachant Chercher* (2024); *Principes Fondamentaux* (2025)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

Association Ethosph'R (Board member since 2025)
Scientific association for animal welfare, laboratory animal rehabilitation and resocialisation, and science communication on ethology

SFECA Early Career Researchers' Group
Organization of a congress to discuss ethical challenges in ethology (diversity and inclusion, animal welfare, environmental impacts)

WORK EXPERIENCE

CICHLID COGNITION (Social learning, field experiments)
January-May 2022 - Alex Jordan, Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour Konstanz, Germany

ROOK COGNITION (Theory of mind, dominance relationships)
Summer 2020 - Valérie Dufour, Cognitive and Social Ethology, CNRS Strasbourg, France

CEPHALOPOD HATCHLING BEHAVIOUR (Stress regulation, imprinting)
Summer 2018 - Anne-SophieDarmaillacq,Laboratoire Ethos, CNRS Caen, France

ROOK VOCALISATIONS (Biomusicology)
Summer 2017 - Valérie Dufour, Cognitive and Social Ethology, CNRS Strasbourg, France

EDUCATION, TRAINING, & DEGREES

UNIV. CLERMONT-AUVERGNE & MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE OF ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR
2022 - 2025
PhD, The evolution of cognitive abilities in the Tanganyikan cichlid adaptive radiation
Supervision: Valérie Dufour (LAPSCO, CNRS & UCA, France) & Alex Jordan (MPIAB, Germany)

VETERINARY SCHOOL OF LYON
2017 - 2022
Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine, Self-specialization in fish medicine

ÉCOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE DE LYON
2016 - 2022
Bachelor'sand Master's degrees in Biosciences

CLAUDE BERNARD UNIVERSITY - LYON
2017 - 2019
Master's degree in Biomedical Research: Behavioural Psychobiology, Biostatistics and Modelisation