

**Publication****A complex mode of aggressive mimicry in a scale-eating cichlid fish****JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)****ID** 3380046**Author(s)** Boileau, Nicolas; Cortesi, Fabio; Egger, Bernd; Muschick, Moritz; Indermaur, Adrian; Theis, Anya; Büscher, Heinz H.; Salzburger, Walter**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Salzburger, Walter](#) ;**Year** 2015**Title** A complex mode of aggressive mimicry in a scale-eating cichlid fish**Journal** Biology letters**Volume** 11**Number** 9**Pages / Article-Number** 20150521

Aggressive mimicry is an adaptive tactic of parasitic or predatory species that closely resemble inoffensive models in order to increase fitness via predatory gains. Although similarity of distantly related species is often intuitively implicated with mimicry, the exact mechanisms and evolutionary causes remain elusive in many cases. Here, we report a complex aggressive mimicry strategy in *Plecodus straeleni*, a scale-eating cichlid fish from Lake Tanganyika, which imitates two other cichlid species. Employing targeted sequencing on ingested scales, we show that *P. straeleni* does not preferentially parasitize its models but—contrary to prevailing assumptions—targets a variety of co-occurring dissimilar looking fish species. Combined with tests for visual resemblance and visual modelling from a prey perspective, our results suggest that complex interactions among different cichlid species are involved in this mimicry system.

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