

Laboratory captivity can affect scores of metabolic rates and activity in wild brown trout

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1	Laboratory captivity can affect scores of metabolic rates
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29 Abstract

30 Phenotypic scoring of wild animals under standardized laboratory conditions is important as it allows field ecologists and evolutionary biologists to understand the 31 32 development and maintenance of inter-individual differences in plastic traits (e.g. behavior 33 and physiology). However, captivity is associated with a shift from a natural familiar environment to an unfamiliar and artificial environment, which may affect estimates of plastic 34 35 phenotypic traits. In the present study, we tested how previous experience with laboratory 36 environments and time spent in captivity affects behavioral (i.e. activity) and metabolic (i.e. 37 standard and maximum metabolic rates) scoring of our model species, wild brown trout Salmo 38 trutta. We found that individuals with previous experience of laboratory captivity (10.5 month 39 earlier) showed higher activity in an open field test than individuals with no prior experience 40 of laboratory captivity. Previous experience with captivity had no significant effect on 41 metabolic rates. However, metabolic rates seemed to increase with increasing time spent in 42 captivity prior to the collection of measurements. Although there are benefits of keeping wild 43 animals in captivity prior to scoring, our results suggest that whilst allowing for sufficient 44 acclimatisation researchers should aim at minimizing time in captivity of wild animals to increase accuracy and ecological relevance of the scoring of plastic phenotypic traits. 45

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Key words: phenotypic plasticity, sampling bias, phenotypic scoring, animal personality,
oxygen consumption, salmonids

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55 Introduction

56 A growing body of studies on plastic phenotypic traits, such as behavior and physiology, aim 57 to understand the development and maintenance of consistent phenotypic differences between 58 individuals (Sih et al., 2014; Auer et al., 2015) and their ecological implications (Des Roches 59 et al. 2018; Raffard et al. 2018). Studies of wild free-ranging animals exposed to the selection 60 pressures of their natural environment play an irreplaceable role in this type of research (see 61 Archard & Braithwaite, 2010; Adriaenssens & Johnsson, 2013). In order to test the 62 repeatability of phenotypic traits, it is necessary to measure these parameters on the same set 63 of individuals under identical environmental conditions at different time points (Dingemanse 64 & Wolf, 2013). These measurements are usually impossible to carry out in the field due to the 65 spatio-temporal heterogeneity of environmental conditions (physical and social environment) 66 in the wild. Neglecting the basic assumption that all individuals need to be scored under the same ambient conditions can lead to biased estimates of repeatability of differences between 67 68 individuals (e.g. pseudo-repeatability; Dingemanse & Dochterman, 2013). Therefore, mark-69 recapture studies combined with repeated phenotypic scoring of wild animals under 70 standardized laboratory conditions are necessary to bridge this methodological gap (Johnsson 71 & Näslund 2018). The main advantage of such studies is that focal individuals are residing in 72 their natural environment between scorings and yet are scored under the same ambient 73 conditions. However, by nature, captivity is inherently associated with novel environmental 74 conditions for wild animals and related to sources of stress (e.g. removal from the natural 75 environment, handling, transport, novel food and social conditions, confinement in an 76 artificial environment of holding tanks or cages), which can affect the measurements of 77 plastic phenotypic traits (Niemelä & Dingemanse, 2014).

78 To be able to generalize findings from mark-recapture studies on wild animals when 79 utilizing repeated standardized laboratory scorings of phenotypic traits, we need to understand 80 how estimates of phenotypic traits in laboratory settings are affected by captivity. Previous methodological studies have highlighted the effects of acclimation period (Biro, 2012; 81 82 Edwards et al., 2013) and the design of laboratory assays (Näslund, Bererhi & Johnsson, 83 2015; Polverino et al., 2016; Chabot, Steffensen, & Farrell, 2016) on the determination of plastic phenotypic traits. These studies were conducted over short time intervals (*i.e.* several 84 85 days or weeks) and focal individuals were obtained from hatcheries or kept in the laboratory 86 during the entire study period. The effect of captivity on the phenotypic traits of wild animals 87 over a longer time period still remains unknown.

88 In the present study, we used wild brown trout Salmo trutta as a model species to 89 repeatedly measure individual open field test activity, standard metabolic rate (SMR), and maximum metabolic rate (MMR). Activity measured in an open field test is a common 90 91 behavioural test in animal personality research (David & Dall, 2016). Standard metabolic rate 92 (i.e. basic post-digestive energetic costs required to sustain life) and maximum metabolic rate 93 (*i.e.* maximum aerobic performance capacity of an organism) are widely used physiological 94 traits that are linked to the fitness of animals (Metcalfe et al., 2015). Specifically, we tested i) 95 how activity, SMR, and MMR differ between individuals with previous experience of laboratory captivity (i.e. 10.5 months before the scoring) and naïve control individuals (no 96 97 previous experience of captivity), and ii) how the time spent in the laboratory (*i.e.* in holding tanks) prior to respirometry affects SMR and MMR. 98

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100 Materials and Methods

101 Study site and fish sampling

102 The sampling was conducted from April 2015 to April 2016 within the upstream stretch of 103 Ringsbäcken, a small stream running through a sub-boreal forest in southern Sweden 104 (57°40.318'N, 12°59.300'E). The initial sampling of individuals was conducted by 105 electrofishing between April 7 to April 10, 2015 at four sampling sites. Environmental factors 106 in the stream (i.e. water temperature and pH, depth and width of stream channel, bottom and 107 canopy characteristics) were similar across the four sampling sites, but non-native brook trout, 108 Salvelinus fontinalis, reside in the three upstream sampling sites (Závorka et al. 2017). A 109 previous study has revealed that co-existence with non-native brook trout can affect the 110 phenotypic syndrome of native brown trout (Závorka et al. 2017). Therefore, the site where 111 the experimental brown trout were collected was included in the statistical analyses (see 112 details below).

113 Captured brown trout (219 individuals: body mass mean \pm SD = 10.9 \pm 7.1 g, fork 114 length mean \pm SD = 95.7 \pm 22.6 mm) were anaesthetized (benzocaine; 0.5 ml L⁻¹), measured 115 for fork length (from the tip of the upper jaw, to the end of the central-most caudal fin ray) and body mass, and fin clipped (0.5 cm² of the left pelvic fin). Fin clips were taken for stable 116 117 isotope analyses published elsewhere (Závorka et al. 2017). Individuals were implanted with 118 12-mm PIT-tags (HDX ISO 11784/11785, Oregon RFID, Portland, OR, USA) in the body 119 cavity, and following recovery the fish were released back into the stream. During the first 120 recapture session using electrofishing between June 3 and June 10, 2015, 72 tagged 121 individuals (body mass mean \pm SD = 11.7 \pm 6.7 g, fork length mean \pm SD = 99.9 \pm 19.2 mm) 122 were recaptured. During the second recapture session between April 18 and April 21, 2016, 123 63 tagged individuals (body mass mean \pm SD = 20.4 \pm 8.8 g, fork length mean \pm SD = 122.9 124 \pm 17.6 mm) were recaptured. Among the 63 individuals caught during the second recapture 125 session in 2016, 31 individuals had been previously recaptured and kept in the lab in 2015. 126 The other 32 recaptured individuals had not experienced laboratory conditions and only 127 underwent the initial sampling and tagging in April 2015. After each recapture, individuals 128 were transported to the laboratory facility, measured for fork length and body mass, fin 129 clipped (left pelvic fin), and placed in holding tanks. Holding tanks (71 L, 0.65×0.32×0.34 m) 130 contained shelter (rocks, plastic tubes, and plastic plants) and aerated freshwater from a semi-131 recirculating flow-through filtration system (flow rate 2 L min⁻¹) and housed 10-11 132 individuals per tank. Photoperiod followed natural light cycles and water temperature in the 133 holding tanks were kept at $11 - 13^{\circ}$ C throughout the laboratory captivity. Individuals were 134 fed daily till apparent satiation during the whole period with a mix of chironomid larvae, 135 maggots, and earthworms. After completing the lab scoring which took three weeks in both 136 years (June-July 2015 and April-May 2016), individuals were released back into the 137 Ringsbäcken stream. Focal individuals were therefore exposed to natural conditions for the 138 majority of the experimental period.

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140 Scoring of the phenotypic traits

141 The scoring protocol was identical in both years of the study and followed the protocol 142 used in Závorka et al. (2017). In order to allow evacuation of food contents and to standardize 143 hunger levels, individuals were not fed during acclimation to behavioural scoring (one day 144 before the assay) and respirometry (four days before the assay). Previous studies have shown 145 that these fasting periods are sufficient and appropriate to provide behavioural and metabolic 146 scores of long-term ecological significance in brown trout (Závorka et al. 2015, 2016, 2017). 147 Activity of individuals was scored four days after capture of individuals in 2015 and two days 148 after capture of individuals in 2016. Activity was scored by open field test using a still water 149 in barren tank with a rectangular base $(0.61 \times 0.45 \text{ m}, \text{ water level } 0.10 \text{ m})$ as arena and a 150 video camera (Toshiba Camileo S20, Tokyo, Japan) positioned above the trial tanks to record 151 fish tracks. Total distance moved over 10 minutes after a 15 minutes acclimation period was

152 extracted from the recordings using an automated tracking software (LoliTrack 4.0 Loligo 153 Systems ApS, Viborg, Denmark) and used as proxy for individual activity. When subjected to 154 the trial, fish were gently netted from the holding tank and placed into trial tanks. Trial tanks 155 were cleaned and refilled with fresh water for each trial. Trials were performed from 08.00 156 until 17.00 under the same environmental conditions (homogenously distributed dim fluorescent light ~100 lux, water temperature ~12 $^{\circ}$ C, pH ~7.5, oxygen concentration ~10.7 157 mg/l, and conductivity ~170 μ S/cm). SMR and MMR were determined using intermittent 158 159 flow-through respirometry (Clark, Sandblom & Jutfelt 2013). Depending on the size of the 160 individual, fish were introduced into either a small (volume: 0.584 L, diameter: 6.4 cm, 161 length: 15.5 cm) or large (volume: 1.112 L, diameter: 6.4 cm, length: 31.0 cm) custom-made 'static' intermittent flow-through cylindrical perspex respirometers. These respirometers were 162 163 submerged in a larger experimental tank with recirculating aerated freshwater (temperature ~10 °C. salinity ~0.1 ppt, pH ~7.9, conductivity ~275 µS/cm, Na⁺ ~5 mmol/L, K⁺ ~0.3 164 mmol/L, Ca²⁺ ~0.4 mmol/L). Water was continuously circulated through each respirometer 165 using an in-line submersible pump within a recirculation loop, and the partial pressure of 166 167 oxygen in the water within the respirometer was measured continuously at 0.5 Hz using a 168 FireSting O2 system (PyroScience, Aachen, Germany), which was calibrated in accordance 169 with the supplier's manual. Water within the respirometer was refreshed with automated flush 170 pumps for 5 min in every 20 min period, ensuring that oxygen levels in the respirometers 171 always remained above 90% air saturation. The slope of the decline in the partial pressure of 172 oxygen in the water within the respirometers during each 15 min period between flush cycles 173 was then used to calculate oxygen uptake using the following formula:

174 oxygen uptake =
$$[(V_r - V_f) \times \Delta C_{wO_2}]/\Delta t$$

where V_r is the volume of the respirometer, V_f is the volume of the fish (assuming that the overall density of the fish is 1g/ml of tissue), ΔC_{wO_2} is the change in the oxygen concentration 177 of the water within the respirometer (C_{wO_2} is the product of the partial pressure and 178 capacitance of oxygen in the water, the latter being dependent on salinity and temperature), 179 and Δt is the time during which ΔC_{wO2} is measured (Clark, Sandblom & Jutfelt 2013). SMR 180 was measured as the average of the lowest 20% of oxygen uptake measurements that were recorded over the time the fish were in the respirometers (~18 h over night, Chabot et al. 181 182 2016). MMR was determined by recording oxygen uptake immediately after the individual 183 had been subjected to an exhaustive exercise protocol where fish were chased for 3 min 184 around a circular tank (diameter 0.3 m, water depth 0.2 m) containing 10°C, aerated 185 freshwater (Clark, Sandblom & Jutfelt 2013).

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187 Statistical analyses

The effect of experience with laboratory captivity on plastic phenotypic traits (*i.e.* activity, SMR, and MMR) was tested with a linear model using experience (categorical variable with two levels: experience or naïve), body mass, interaction between experience and body mass, and sampling site of individuals origin (categorical variable with four levels) as independent variables.

193 The effect of the time spent in the laboratory captivity prior to metabolic 194 measurements on SMR and MMR of individuals was analysed using a linear model that 195 contained time spent in captivity in days, year of the experiment (categorical variable with 196 two levels: 2015 and 2016), interaction between time spent in captivity in days and year of the 197 experiment, sampling site of individual origin, and body mass as independent variables.

In order to test hypothetic explanations of our findings that could be resolved with our data (see discussion), we tested the following two post hoc hypotheses: *i*) specific growth rate (SGR) differed between experience and naïve trout (hypothesis was tested by a linear model using experience, sampling site of individual origin, and their body mass as independent variables), *ii*) time spent in captivity before metabolic measurements was related to initial
body mass (*i.e.* body mass at capture) and activity of individuals (hypothesis was tested by a
linear model using activity, sampling site of individual origin, and their body mass as
independent variables).

The significance of the response variables of the fitted models was evaluated using an ANOVA (Type III sums of squares) using the car package for R (Fox & Weisberg 2011). Fit of the models was evaluated by a Shapiro–Wilk test and by visual inspection of the normality of the models' residual distribution. SGR, SMR, MMR, and body mass were log_{10} transformed in all models. Non-significant interactions among the independent variables were removed from tested models. Statistical analyses were made in R 3.2.3 (R Core Team, Vienna, Austria).

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214 Results

We found that individuals with previous experience of laboratory captivity had a significantly 215 216 higher activity at the second scoring occasion in 2016 than naïve individuals ($F_{1:57} = 10.03$, p 217 = 0.0025, Fig. 1a). Activity of individuals was not significantly related to the interaction of 218 laboratory experience and body mass ($F_{1:56} = 0.72$, p = 0.3999), body mass ($F_{1:57} = 0.31$, p =219 0.5822) or sampling site of origin ($F_{3:57} = 0.57$, p = 0.6379). There was no significant effect of 220 previous experience with laboratory captivity on mass specific SMR ($F_{1:57} = 2.32$, p = 0.1333, 221 Fig. 1b) or mass specific MMR ($F_{1:57} = 1.15$, p = 0.2875, Fig. 1c). SMR and MMR of individuals were increasing with body mass of individuals (SMR: $F_{1:57} = 331.05$, p < 0.0001; 222 223 MMR: $F_{1;57} = 426.99$, p < 0.0001), but were not significantly related to the interaction term 224 between laboratory experience and body mass (SMR: $F_{1:56} = 0.04$, p = 0.8414; MMR: $F_{1:56} =$ 225 0.40, p = 0.5317) or sampling site of origin (SMR: $F_{3;57} = 0.05$, p = 0.9843; MMR: $F_{3;57} =$ 226 0.26, p = 0.8560).

227 We found that both mass specific SMR ($F_{1;128} = 4.61$, p = 0.0336, Fig. 2a) and mass 228 specific MMR ($F_{1;128} = 11.27$, p = 0.0010, Fig. 2b) were higher in individuals that were kept in the holding tanks for longer periods prior to exhaustive exercise and respirometry. There 229 230 was no significant effect of interaction between time spent in captivity and year of the experiment on mass specific SMR and MMR (SMR: $F_{1;127} = 2.61$, p = 0.1090; MMR: $F_{1;127} =$ 231 232 2.64, p = 0.1064). Mass specific MMR was higher in 2016 than in 2015 ($F_{1;128} = 15.82$, p =233 0.0001), but there was no difference in SMR between the two years of the experiment ($F_{1;128}$) = 0.01, p = 0.9042). Similar to the model described in the previous paragraph, SMR and 234 MMR of individuals increased with their body mass (SMR: $F_{1;128} = 240.98$, p < 0.0001; 235 236 MMR: $F_{1;128} = 1085.86$, p < 0.0001), but was not related to their sampling site of origin 237 (SMR: $F_{3;128} = 0.6268$, p = 0.5990; MMR: $F_{3;128} = 0.15$, p = 0.9320).

In the test of the first post hoc hypothesis, we found no significant difference in specific growth rate of naïve and experienced individuals ($F_{1;58} = 0.36$; p-value = 0.5482). For the second post hoc hypothesis, we found that activity measured at the beginning of laboratory captivity was not significantly related to the time spent in the lab before the respirometry ($F_{1;128} = 0.71$; p-value = 0.4022). However, there was a significant negative relationship between the initial body mass and the time that individuals spent in the lab before the respirometry ($F_{1;128} = 13.33$; p-value = 0.0003).

245

246 Discussion

We found that individuals with previous experience of laboratory captivity (10.5 month earlier) displayed higher activity in an open field test than individuals with no prior experience. Previous experience with captivity had no significant effect on metabolic rates (*i.e.* SMR and MMR). However, we found that SMR and MMR were apparently increasing with increasing time spent in laboratory captivity. While these findings are limited only to our model species (*i.e.* brown trout), we suggest that captivity in laboratory environment may
similarly affect plastic phenotypic traits in other animal model species (McPhee and Carlstead
2010).

255 There are at least three potential mechanisms that could explain why individuals with 256 previous experience to laboratory captivity displayed a significantly higher activity when 257 compared to naïve individuals. First, laboratory-experienced individuals may recognize the 258 test conditions from their previous time in captivity, which could have subsequently changed 259 their response in the open field test. For example, experienced individuals may have 260 perceived the scoring environment more familiar than naïve individuals. Along these lines, it 261 has been suggested that measurement of activity in the open field test with an unfamiliar 262 environment corresponds to boldness, and exploratory behaviour, while the same test in a 263 familiar environment corresponds predominantly to activity (Réale et al., 2007). Since 264 experienced individuals have previously been scored in the lab only once, the change in their behaviour was more likely a response to a change in the context of the behavioural test (i.e. 265 266 the context of the behavioural test has changed for experience individuals from unfamiliar to 267 familiar) rather than habituation to the repeated treatment (Edwards et al., 2013). This 268 explanation would require that the individuals retain the information about laboratory 269 captivity for over 10 months. Substantial variability exists amongst fishes in their capacity to 270 retain information, which differs across species and contexts. For example, brook sticklebacks 271 Culaea inconstans forget foraging skills after 8 days (Croy & Hughes, 1991), whereas the 272 same skills can be retained by rainbow trout Oncorhynchus mykiss for over 3 months (Ware 273 1971). In an angling experiment, Beukema (1969) showed that carp Cyprinus carpio 274 previously hooked, remain harder to catch a year later when compared to unhooked carp, 275 which suggests that stressful stimuli may be retained for a long time by fish. Here, it may be 276 possible that the fish perceived the first test as a negative and stressful experience, leading to

277 a faster initiation of the exploratory escape response, which then could explain the increased 278 activity when compared to the first trial the preceding year. The second alternative is that 279 captivity may alter post-release performance of experienced individuals in the wild, which 280 subsequently changes their behaviour. For example, brown trout fry in captivity can grow slower than conspecifics from the same population that remained in the native stream 281 282 (Näslund, Sandquist & Johnsson, 2017). In addition, brown trout released in a stream after lab 283 captivity may lose their territory (Závorka et al., 2015), which may lead to further reductions 284 in growth, followed by compensatory growth (Johnsson & Bohlin, 2006) with associated 285 long-term increases in activity (Orpwood, Griffiths & Armstrong, 2006). However, in our 286 study we found no difference in specific growth rate of naïve and experienced individuals. 287 The third possible explanation of higher activity of experienced individuals is a sampling bias 288 during recapture with respect to an individual's activity, as active individuals may be more 289 susceptible to capture (Howard 1982; Biro & Dingemanse, 2009; Koeck et al. 2018). 290 Therefore, it is more likely to have a high proportion of active individuals amongst those 291 captured twice than those only captured once. However, earlier results suggest either that no 292 activity related sampling bias occurs in our model species (*i.e.* brown trout) when recapturing 293 using electric fishing (Adriaenssens and Johnsson 2013), or that recapture probability is 294 driven by an interaction between fish activity and body size (Näslund et al. 2018). All these 295 explanations can bias conclusions of mark-recapture studies using repeated laboratory scoring 296 of wild animals. Changes in individual behaviour would lead to an overestimation of open 297 field test activity of repeatedly scored individuals, while the sampling bias could lead to an 298 underestimation of survival in the less active individuals that may have a lower probability to 299 be caught.

The trends between metabolic rates (*i.e.* mass specific SMR and MMR) and time in captivity observed in this study indicate either that metabolic rates of individuals are

302 increasing with time spent in captivity, or that individuals with high metabolic rates tend to be 303 inadvertently scored later than individuals with low metabolic rates. The tendency for an 304 increasing SMR with time spent in captivity could be due to the differences in the quality and 305 quantity of food supplied in captivity compared to that available in the wild. Auer et al. (2016) have demonstrated that individuals fed ad libitum display a higher post-digestive SMR 306 307 than individuals fed on a lower ration. Individuals in our study were fed daily till apparent 308 satiation during the entire period of captivity. Therefore SMR may have increased over time 309 in captivity as a consequence of plastic changes in their metabolic machinery or changes in 310 specific dynamic action (Secor, 2009) in response to the abundant food availability under 311 laboratory conditions. The MMR of vertebrates is thought to be predominantly affected by 312 oxygen consumption of skeletal muscle (Weibel et al., 2004), and thus should not be affected 313 by a short-term change in food availability (Auer et al., 2016). A second explanation of the 314 increase of SMR and MMR with time in captivity could be an inadvertent sampling bias 315 during collection of individuals from the holding tanks. Such a bias could occur if SMR and 316 MMR were associated with a behavioural trait that affects probability of individuals being 317 collected by a dip net (Biro & Dingemanse, 2009). We found that activity measured at the 318 beginning of laboratory captivity was not related to the time spent in the lab prior to 319 respirometry (*i.e.* active individuals were not collected from holding tanks for metabolic 320 scoring prior to less active individuals). However, there was a significant negative 321 relationship between the body mass at the beginning of laboratory captivity and the time that 322 individuals spent in the lab prior to respirometry. This suggests that we may have 323 inadvertently scored the larger individuals earlier than the small ones. Nonetheless, the latter finding does not directly explain the relationship between time spent in the lab and mass 324 325 specific metabolic rates as those are mass independent.

In summary, we found that laboratory captivity can have an effect on the standardized 326 327 scores of plastic behavioural and metabolic traits. We emphasize that there can be benefits of 328 keeping wild animals in captivity prior to scoring (i.e. using acclimation period) when 329 maintained under adequate holding conditions (Niemelä & Dingemanse 2014; Näslund & 330 Johnsson 2016; Johnsson & Näslund 2018). Benefits may include reductions in stress, 331 acclimation to surroundings, or standardization of environmental conditions prior to testing. 332 However, our results also indicate potential drawbacks of laboratory captivity. Therefore, we 333 suggest that researchers should aim to minimize the time that wild animals need to spend in laboratory captivity whilst allowing for a sufficient acclimatisation period to the novel 334 335 conditions in order to increase accuracy of phenotypic scoring. Field ecologists and evolutionary biologists frequently use laboratory scores for evaluation of phenotypes in the 336 337 wild animals. Therefore, we emphasize, in agreement with Niemelä & Dingemanse (2014), 338 that laboratory scores of plastic phenotypic traits need to be interpreted with caution and 339 preferably in association with phenotypic scoring in the wild.

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348 Data accessibility statement

349 Should the manuscript be accepted, data will be archived at figshare.com (doi:
350 10.6084/m9.figshare.4685032).

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460 Figure legend

Figure 1 – Laboratory scores of naïve and experienced individuals of juvenile brown trout. Boxplots demonstrate the distribution of a) activity, b) mass specific SMR, and c) mass specific MMR (n = 32 and 31 for naïve and experienced individuals for all measured traits, respectively). The experienced individuals were scored for the same traits under the same conditions 10.5 months earlier, while naïve individuals had no previous experience with laboratory conditions. Box edge represents the mean and 25^{th} and 75^{th} percentiles and whiskers cover the 95^{th} percentiles. Filled circles represent individual data points.

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Figure 2 – Relationship between time spent in captivity before exhaustive exercise and respirometry and a) mass specific SMR, b) mass specific MMR (n = 72 and 64 in the year 2015 and 2016 respectively for both measured metabolic rates) of juvenile brown trout. Filled circles and triangles represent measurements collected in 2015 and 2016 respectively. Naïve and experienced individuals were analysed together, as laboratory experience had no effect on the scores of metabolic rates.

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