

Comments and Study questions for Dugatkin. Chapter 7. Mating Systems

Ethology and Behavioral Ecology

Spring 2008

1. What is a pair bond and what does the idea of pair bond have to do with defining mating systems? Does the text use the pair bond concept to define mating systems? Know the definition of each of the four types of mating systems covered in the text.
2. Compare and contrast polygyny and polyandry in terms of the selective pressures that are likely to result in each system. Be able to discuss these systems in terms of the costs and benefits to each sex.
3. What are the two types of promiscuous mating systems? Explain.
4. We will discuss the polygyny threshold model in class. Know the lark bunting example and be able to discuss it.
5. What is the evidence for extrapair copulations in supposedly monogamous systems?
6. What is sperm competition? Why is it of potentially such great importance in males? Know the famous dung fly example – both in terms of sperm competition and mate guarding. Does the fact that sperm morphologies differ convince you that these morphologies have necessarily evolved as a result of sperm competition? Explain.
7. The dunnock "mating system" is one of the most famous in animal behavior. Be familiar with this system and what its elucidator, Nick Davies, has to say about his work and what he learned.