

Female movements and behaviour when choosing a male: a radio telemetric study of the Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*).

S. Bensch

Dep. of Ecology, Animal Ecology, Uni. of Lund, Ecology Building, S-223 62 Lund, Sweden

All theories on the evolution of mating systems, rest upon assumptions about female choice behaviour. Among territorial passerines, little is known about the behaviour of females prior to settling in a territory and to what extent they visit different males and territories before making their choice. At Kvismaren in South Central Sweden, we introduced radio tagged females of Great Reed Warblers captured 140 km south of our study site. The females were continuously tracked from release until they formed a pair-bond with a male. The females chose mates within 3 days after release and before settling they had visited the territories of 2-5 males. Some of the females mated with already mated males despite first having visited unmated males. Since a male can mate with several females and his assistance to each of them in feeding the young is skewed in favour of the primary female each of the positions within a harem has different expected fitness gains. These positions or "breeding options" were scores for each of the males' territories based on how often these options had been occupied by females in previous years. Both introduced and resident females chose higher ranked breeding options significantly more often than expected from random choice.

The importance of male Sedge warblers in determining reproductive success.

M. Borowiec

Wroclaw University, Sienkiewicza 21 50 - 335 Wroclaw Poland

In 1987-1989 153 nestlings were weighted in 37 nests. When analyzing the growth in particular nests, I found that in some nests the nestlings increased their weight much quicker than in others. The differences in the nestling growth rate do not result from different time of clutch and different quality of territories.

From the data on the intensity of feeding nestlings by parents follows that females feed nestlings more regulary than males do.

The studies on the composition of food brought to nestlings by males and females reveal some differences. It turns out that:

- 1) compared to females males delivered more frequently odonata and caterpillars,
- 2) mean size of prey items was larger, and
- 3) mean number of insects in single portions was higher.

It seems that the data on the differences in nestling growth rate, and the differences demonstrated in the quality of food brought and in the feeding intensity, indicate that Sedge warbler males may have a high parental input in raising nestlings, and this may in turn have an effect on the viability of young in the future.

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Autor(en)/Author(s): Bensch Staffan

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