

Leks

By Jacob Höglund, Rauno V. Alatalo

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The evolution of leks--clusters of small territories where males congregate and display in order to attract mates--is of central issue in behavioral ecology, because of the insights it offers into female mate choice, sexual selection, and the evolution of mating systems. In the first book on the subject, Jacob Höglund and Rauno Alatalo draw together existing knowledge on two main aspects of lekking. Why do leks evolve in some species and not in others? Why do females of certain lekking species select their mates even though such behavior reaps few or no material benefits for them? In each case they emphasize the importance of understanding the selective forces that act on individuals in natural populations. Höglund and Alatalo synthesize the available information on lekking in all animal groups and suggest new areas of research.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Leks are among the greatest wonders of the natural world. These aggregations of displaying male birds, mammals, and (by some definitions) insects, apparently existing solely as mating arenas where females come, mate with one or more highly popular males, and leave having obtained nothing more than sperm to fertilize their offspring, have captivated naturalists for centuries. Höglund and Alatalo, experts in avian behavior and sexual selection, attempt to answer these questions and to place lekking systems in a broad context of sexual selection theory."--***Science***

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