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Apr 17th, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Beetle Ballads

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Morgan, Ty R., "Beetle Ballads" (2019). *University of Montana Conference on Undergraduate Research (UMCUR)*. 17.
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Sexual Selection: Male Competition & Female Choice

Old View

- Winning fights = Winning females



New View

- Winning fights is only the beginning!
- Behavior beyond male competition



Japanese Rhinoceros Beetles

- Fierce competition for resources
- Males “sing” to court females after fighting



Research Questions

- 1) Are females successfully choosing higher quality mates?
- 2) If so, what characteristics are females using to distinguish male “quality”?

Courtship & Mating Replication

- 62 random pairings of 42 male & 42 female Japanese rhinoceros beetles
- Mating box equipped with:
 - Food source
 - Microphone/Video Camera

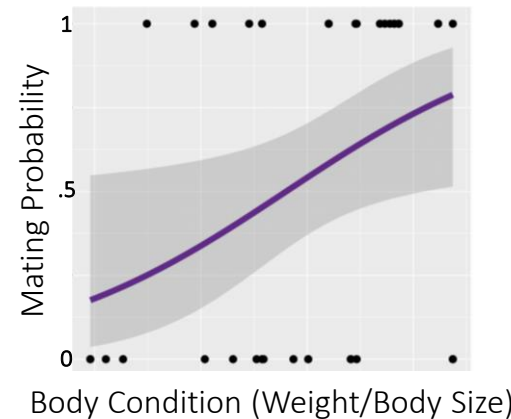
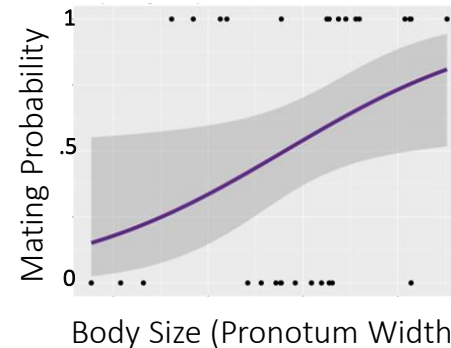


Beetle Ballads

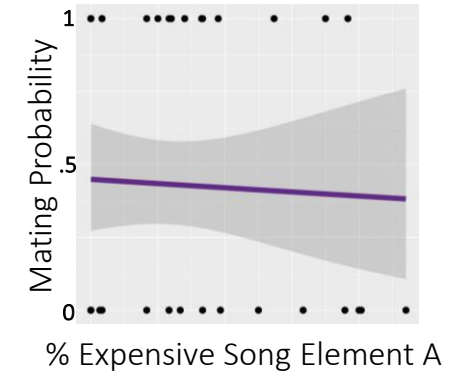
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Females Choose High Quality Mates!

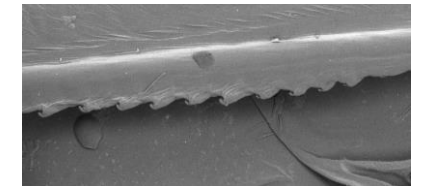


Song Length & Proportion: Not the Story!



Conclusions/Future Research

- Courtship in Japanese rhinoceros beetles exemplifies the ‘New View’ of sexual selection in resource dependent mating systems.
- Proportion & length of courtship songs show no correlation to male quality, females are still distinguishing high quality males from low quality males.
- Future Research: Differences in song production mechanism produce different frequencies and trill rate, allowing females to choose high quality males.



Acknowledgments

Thank you to Douglas Emlen, Jillian Delsol, Cerisse Allen, and Cole Sander for their help throughout my research.