Alternative Reproductive Tactics
An Integrative Approach
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Preface

The study of alternative reproductive tactics (ARTs) is a hot topic in evolutionary and behavioral ecology. ART refers to consistent variation in the reproductive behavior (involving, e.g., mating, nesting, fighting) of males or females within one population. This variation offers a special opportunity to study the evolution and functional causes of phenotypic variation, a general problem in evolutionary biology. A large body of published data exists on ARTs, but there has been no conceptual unification of the available information, nor any strong effort to integrate it into a general framework. Apart from a recent book by S. M. Shuster and M. J. Wade (2003) (*Mating Systems and Strategies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) that addresses the topic of ARTs within the larger scope of mating systems, there has been no major publication covering this topic. Moreover, the few reviews available in the literature are taxon specific and do not fully integrate the proximate and ultimate levels of analysis in understanding ARTs. Clearly, integration of data, concepts, and analysis levels is overdue. In trying to meet this challenge, Rui Oliveira joined forces with Michael Taborsky and Jane Brockmann, who were among the contributors to a symposium on ARTs at the 27th International Ethological Conference in Tübingen. The three of us have complementary connections to active researchers in the field and all three have been studying ARTs from very different perspectives. Following the Tübingen conference we started a fruitful discussion in order to establish the plan of a book, identifying the areas to be covered and who would be the most appropriate to write about each of quite a few essential topics. We decided to use an integrative approach to the field inviting people both from the area of ultimate causes (evolutionary and behavioral ecology) and from the field of proximate mechanisms (behavioral physiology). We asked authors to write a chapter on a specific issue selected by us and not to write short reviews about their own work, so that this book can be more than the sum of its parts. It is with great pleasure that we thank all the authors for investing a lot of time and effort in writing their chapters to meet these requirements, and for their generous patience with successive delays in finalizing the book.

Since ARTs can be viewed as a model system for studying the evolution of variation, which is one of the central questions in evolutionary biology, the potential audience for this book is very broad, including readers interested in animal behavior, life histories, phenotypic plasticity, biological game theory, evolutionary theory, and ecology in general. Thus, although this is not a textbook we hope it may become a reference for postgraduate courses in the above-mentioned areas.

We have organized the book in four parts, together with an opening general introduction and a final concluding chapter.

In the opening chapter we try to clarify concepts and address the levels at which questions about the evolution of ARTs should be asked. This is important because alternative hypotheses often turn out to be simply a matter of asking questions at different levels. Therefore, in this chapter we also attempt to provide a framework, language, and theoretical basis for studying ARTs. It is important to note, though, that we did not impose our framework on the other authors of this volume. In accordance with the topic, which deals with the intriguing wealth of biological variation between individuals of a population, we intended to allow different concepts and frameworks within the pages of this book. As with ARTs existing in a population, only time will show which concepts will finally persist.

Part I of the book summarizes the study of ultimate causes and origins of ARTs. It opens with a chapter on the evolution, life histories, and adaptiveness of ARTs viewed within the scope of alternative allocation phenotypes (Brockmann and Taborsky). It is followed by a chapter in which the use of comparative methods is proposed as a tool with a large potential to reveal phylogenetic patterns of ARTs in the study of their evolution (Almada and Robalo). This part ends with a chapter where dynamic game modeling is applied to the study of ARTs (Lucas and Howard).

Part II summarizes our current knowledge of the proximate mechanisms of ARTs. It starts with a chapter on the interaction between genetic and environmental factors on
the development of ARTs (Emlen), which is followed by
two chapters on neural (Bass and Forlano) and endocrine
mechanisms underlying ARTs (Oliveira, Canário, Ros).

Part III is a compilation of taxonomic reviews with the
goal to provide an overview of the occurrence of ARTs in
the animal kingdom. This part covers most animal taxa
for which ARTs have been described, namely insects
(Brockmann), crustaceans (Shuster), fish (Taborsky),
amphibians (Zamudio and Chan), reptiles (Calsbeek and
Sinervo), birds (Krüger), nonprimate mammals (Wolff),
and primates (Setchell). The few examples of ARTs in
invertebrates not covered by these taxonomic reviews
were addressed where appropriate in text boxes of other
chapters.

Part IV is a compilation of chapters on emerging per-
spectives on ARTs, such as the role of animal communi-
cation in the evolution of ARTs (Gonçalves, Oliveira, and
McGregor), the relationship between ARTs and mate
choice for good genes or good care (Neff), a co-evolutionary
approach to sexual conflict and ARTs within a sex (Alonzo),
and the viewing of cooperative breeding as an ART (Koenig
and Dickinson).

In the final chapter the editors reflect on what emerges
from all the contributions to this book as the current status
of the study of ARTs, and the prospects for future research
in this field. It is a summarizing chapter attempting to pull
all the topics together, pointing to major questions and
suggesting the importance of studying the evolution of
ARTs integratively.

All chapters were reviewed by the three editors and by
external reviewers. We are very pleased that the authors
made an extraordinary effort in considering the editors’ and
reviewers’ comments in revising and amending their con-
tributions. A large body of external reviewers made a sig-
nificant contribution to the contents of this book and we
would like to express our gratitude to their extensive criti-
cisms and suggestions about each manuscript.

Apart from the dedicated work of authors and reviewers,
this book would not have been possible in its current format
without the contribution and support from various people
and institutions. We are grateful to Desmond Morris who
kindly permitted us to use one of his paintings for the cover
of this book. Desmond Morris was one of the earliest
ethologists to describe ARTs (in sticklebacks: Morris, D.
1954. The causation of pseudofemale and pseudomale
behaviour: a further comment. *Behaviour* 7, 46–56) so we
felt his artwork was particularly appropriate for this book.
The Mayor Gallery (London) kindly provided technical
support for the reproduction of this painting. The editors at
Cambridge University Press, Martin Griffiths, Clare
Georgy, and Shana Coates, were both patient and sup-
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Grace Kiltie worked directly with HJB on the formatting
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