

Odd Couples

By Daphne J. Fairbairn. 2013. Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, NJ, USA, 08540-5237. 300 pages, 27.95 USD, Cloth.

Odd Couples is a very informative and enjoyable book for anyone interested in animal life history. The focus of *Odd Couples* is the question of how differences between the sexes in the animal kingdom are adaptive to the roles that each sex plays in the species life history. The differences presented in this book are not the obvious differences in sexual organs but the differences in body size, shape, and color. It also presents a careful examination of differences in behavior, movements, food habits, reproductive capacity, and other life history characteristics. These are all important to questions in evolutionary biology.

The author's goal in writing this book was to provide a readable book for both professional and lay readers. To this end she has been very successful. The book is well written for both audiences but is also thoroughly documented with notes and a complete list of references that permits the professional to track down the sources for all statements. A glossary provides another valuable element for the reader.

Individual chapters present a complete discussion of sexuality in elephant seals (*Mirounga* sp.), great bustards (*Otis tarda*), a cichlid fish (*Lamprologus callipterus*), yellow garden spiders (*Argiope aurantia*), blanket octopi (*Tremoctopus* sp.), giant seadevils (*Ceratias holboelli*, an anglerfish), bone-eating tubeworms (*Osedax* sp.), and shell-burrowing barnacles (*Trypetesa lampas*). Each species was selected by the author to represent the extremes in sexual characteristics among animals. Other chapters provide important background and general concluding remarks that help to set the stage as well as conclude the book.

Overall this book is very free of noticeable errors in spelling and is sturdily bound. I can recommend it for any interested naturalist whether professional or non-professional.

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