Chat Log: UNIT 12 HOMES

Monday, November 29, 2010

7:59 PM: HOST: Do you have any questions about finding a proctor for your final exam?
8:00 PM: Allen has entered the room.
8:00 PM: Barb: no, my supervisor said he did not mind but with the holidays and then a death in his family i have not been able to speak with him since last monday but he or his administrative assistant agreed to help
8:00 PM: HOST: Hi Allen
8:00 PM: Allen: Hi
8:01 PM: HOST: Barb, a supervisor or assistant sounds like a good choice for a proctor. Please send me a name and contact info, so I can make arrangements.
8:02 PM: Barb: No problem, i will first thing in the morning.
8:02 PM: Allen: That reminds me, I need to contact the education services office at my college to set up proctoring for the exam.
8:03 PM: Caitlin has entered the room.
8:03 PM: HOST: Allen, the education services also sounds like a good option. Please get a name and contact info for me.
8:03 PM: HOST: Hi Caitlin
8:03 PM: Caitlin: hello
8:04 PM: Allen: Will do. Our last week of the semester is next week so I'll need to see if they're open - probably will be but...
8:04 PM: HOST: Caitlin, we are doing check-ins about arranging a proctor for your final exam
8:05 PM: Caitlin: yeah I have no clue about that
8:05 PM: HOST: Here is the weblink:
http://wfscc.tamu.edu/jpackard/behavior/wfsc422/Documents/final.pdf
8:06 PM: Deliah has entered the room.
8:06 PM: HOST: Caitlin, do you have a supervisor or educational services at a nearby library who could proctor?
8:06 PM: HOST: Hi Deliah
8:06 PM: Caitlin: i have a boss
8:06 PM: Caitlin: I think I'm banned from the library here
8:07 PM: Deliah: Hello Dr. Packard
8:07 PM: HOST: Caitlin, if you can send me the name and contact info for your boss, I could make the contact for you.
8:08 PM: Caitlin: alrighty
8:08 PM: Caitlin: thank you
8:08 PM: Emma has entered the room.
8:08 PM: HOST: Hi Emma
8:08 PM: Emma: Hi
8:10 PM: HOST: This is our last week for Unit 12. Creating a home
8:11 PM: HOST: would you like to focus on BLOG or Prey Inquiry tonight?
8:11 PM: Rafael has entered the room.
8:11 PM: Sarah Yates has entered the room.
8:12 PM: HOST: Hi Rafael & Sarah!
8:12 PM: Rafael: good evening Dr. Packard
8:12 PM: Sarah Yates: hello
8:13 PM: HOST: would you like to focus on BLOG or Prey Inquiry tonight?
8:13 PM: Emma: Im game for either
8:13 PM: Allen: blog
8:13 PM: Barb: either
8:13 PM: Deliah: either
8:14 PM: HOST: OK. lets start with BLOG. Do you want an overview first or start out with particular questions?
8:16 PM: Barb: overview
8:17 PM: Allen: Maybe an overview - the grad reading is a little different so correlating that reading with the questions would help
8:17 PM: Caitlin: good call
8:18 PM: Deliah: yeah and overview it a great idea
8:18 PM: HOST: OK. I agree that this unit was the most divergent in terms of trying to find a section in Dugatkin that would be relevant to "Home Building"
8:18 PM: Rafael: that would be great, i had to read the prisoner dilemma section a few times.....
8:19 PM: HOST: Rafael, I admire your persistence. Although game theory is a major theoretical approach in Animal Behavior, it is not all that relevant to practical approaches to problem solving, which is our focus in this course.
8:19 PM: HOST: that is why the assigned readings were for the last part of the chapter, not the first
8:20 PM: Rafael: makes sense
8:21 PM: HOST: So for the first topic, "Building materials", we pick a few good examples of how species use body secretions, or materials from their environment, or both
8:21 PM: Felicity has entered the room.
8:22 PM: Felicity has left the room.
8:22 PM: HOST: The two examples for body secretions are spiders and honeybees
8:22 PM: HOST: the two examples for external materials are paper wasps and hummingbirds
8:23 PM: Caitlin: :)
8:23 PM: Felicity has entered the room.
8:23 PM: HOST: the hummingbird example is fun because they collect spider web for the "glue" that sticks together the plant materials
8:24 PM: HOST: Then for the second part of the lecture, we focus on proximate perspectives. This is a wrap-up review on the major take home point of the course, that instinct and learning interaction in shaping most behaviors.
8:25 PM: HOST: So by this time, you should feel comfortable applying those three hypotheses about adaptations that we introduced in the first part of the course: instinct, social transmission and learning
8:26 PM: HOST: our examples are swallows, chimps, weaverbirds, and beaver
8:27 PM: HOST: Then the last section of the lecture is a review of the other major take home message of the course: ultimate perspectives
8:28 PM: HOST: The focus is more on phylogenetic history, and understanding why structures
are adapted to different environments

8:28 PM: **HOST**: So for the undergrads, the most relevant example from Halliday is the divergence of the mound and magnetic termites

8:30 PM: **HOST**: For the grads, we stretch this theme a bit by looking at cooperative species that build their structures in a group....examples are cooperatively breeding birds and social spiders

8:30 PM: **HOST**: but there are also good examples from other chapters, like the naked mole rats

8:31 PM: **HOST**: and the roommates that are different species, the "interspecific mutualisms"

8:31 PM: **Caitlin** has left the room.

8:31 PM: **Caitlin** has entered the room.

8:31 PM: **Rafael**: the social spiders were news to me

8:32 PM: **Rafael**: interesting study done on their evolutionary history

8:32 PM: **Caitlin**: i’m not really a fan of that example either

8:32 PM: **Allen**: yes, fascinating

8:32 PM: **HOST**: For undergrads, the interspecific mutualisms are covered in the chapter titled "Living together"

8:33 PM: **Deliah**: thank Dr. P

8:33 PM: **HOST**: Actually, we frequently saw the webs of the communal spiders in east Texas, in Big Thicket

8:33 PM: **HOST**: They were also new to me, and I was delighted to see that they have been studied

8:34 PM: **Allen**: neat - it’s interesting they would evolve communalism that predisposes them for extinction

8:35 PM: **HOST**: yes, I like that aspect, because it shows that not all evolutionary change is "for the benefit of the species"

8:35 PM: **Rafael**: definitely Allen, i thought that was an odd twist

8:35 PM: **HOST**: Rafael and Allen, would you mind explaining for Deliah and Sarah?

8:35 PM: **Deliah**: I am sorry Dr. P but can u explain what you mean by communal spiders in east Texas

8:37 PM: **HOST**: On some of the woody debris in the forest, there were places where several spiders had spun their webs. It was obviously several spiders, not just one spider that had been really active.

8:38 PM: **HOST**: I'm more used to the solitary orb weavers who spin their webs across the path where I walk, and catch my face in the sticky part of the web..yuck!

8:37 PM: **Rafael**: sure.....

8:37 PM: **Allen**: Okay - communalism is spiders has apparently evolved 18-19 times but ultimately this group living leads to in-breeding and high female to male rations (10:1) that makes the species prone to extinction

8:40 PM: **Rafael**: so initially the individuals would benefit from cooperative nest maintenance and hunting, but their coopoperation over time would dispose them toward extinction

8:40 PM: **HOST**: Allen, would the phylogenetic history of the communal spiders be an example of convergent evolution?

8:41 PM: **Allen**: Yes, there does not appear to be a phylogenetic ancestor

8:41 PM: **Allen**: communal ancestor

8:42 PM: **HOST**: Deliah, does this make sense to you? does it bother you that a genotype for
"communal nesting" might also be associated with a genotype for extreme sex ratios, that also means the species is at risk of extinction?

8:43 PM: Caitlin: it bothers me
8:43 PM: Caitlin: ill
8:43 PM: Caitlin: lol
8:43 PM: Deliah: It makes a bit of sense but not alot
8:44 PM: Deliah: sorry!!!
8:45 PM: HOST: it is hard to understand if we think about natural selection in the way it is defined in many high school classrooms as "selection for the more beneficial trait that will make one population increase more than another"
8:45 PM: HOST: but if we think of the logic of natural selection in terms of changing proportions of genotypes in one population, then we realize that there might first be the benefits of communal nesting due to some change in the physical environment
8:45 PM: Allen: I guess you could say the communalism helps the colony in the proximate but has ultimate negative consequences
8:46 PM: HOST: yes, in the longer term, colonial nesting results in a change in the social environment, which does not favor persistence of the colonial genotype
8:47 PM: HOST: this is why I keep trying to stress that we need to think about both the physical environment, the things we talked about in Part 4 of this course....and the social environment, which we talked about in Part 2
8:48 PM: HOST: Who has identified a BLOG Q that you would like for us to work on in our remaining chat time?
8:50 PM: HOST: This is a tough one: Q12.3 For a social species of your choice, explain how you would test what aspects of nesting behavior (i.e. site selection, nest building) are shaped by social learning?
8:51 PM: Caitlin: could you use bower birds?
8:52 PM: HOST: yes, if you explained that the structures are not really nests
8:52 PM: HOST: what are your ideas about testing social learning in bowerbirds?
8:53 PM: Caitlin: Have a older male and his apprentice build their structure and then follow the apprentice and then have another younger male build his structure without mentorship
8:53 PM: Caitlin: ?
8:54 PM: HOST: which species are you thinking of that has "apprentices"?
8:55 PM: Caitlin: top of my head I can't think of the species
8:56 PM: HOST: how about if we pick an easier example, like the beaver? could you think of some experiments to run in a zoo setting?
8:56 PM: Caitlin: in a zoo they would be limited by materials and space
8:57 PM: HOST: remember there are two aspects of social learning....learning from peers (horizontal) and learning from parents (vertical)
8:57 PM: Allen: Compare dams built by inexperienced beavers with no exposure to experience beaver and those that are
8:57 PM: Allen: "experienceD"
8:58 PM: HOST: what do the rest of you think about Allen's experiment?
8:58 PM: Rafael: sounds like a good set up to check social learning
8:58 PM: Emma: What features of the structure would indicate an experience beaver
8:59 PM: Allen: dam strength and/or leakage
8:59 PM: Emma: sounds good
8:59 PM: Barb: sounds good
9:00 PM: Deliah: sound good
9:01 PM: HOST: Good brainstorming! this is where you find out whether you really can apply the concepts from the beginning of the course, to examples that are very different at the end of the course
9:01 PM: HOST: anything else before we sign off tonight?
9:01 PM: Rafael: nothing here
9:01 PM: Barb: nope
9:01 PM: Deliah: no
9:02 PM: Allen: no
9:02 PM: HOST: OK. Have a good week! Next monday is our last review session
9:02 PM: Sarah Yates: nope good here
9:02 PM: Emma: I'm good...have a nice night
9:02 PM: Sarah Yates: goodnight!
9:02 PM: Sarah Yates has left the room.
9:02 PM: Emma has left the room.
9:02 PM: Felicity has left the room.
9:02 PM: HOST: goodnight!
9:02 PM: Barb has left the room.
9:02 PM: Caitlin has left the room.
9:02 PM: Allen has left the room.
9:03 PM: Deliah: Goodnight! Have a great day!
9:03 PM: Deliah has left the room.
9:03 PM: Rafael has left the room.
9:03 PM: HOST has left the room.

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