

Cripps's Corner. Forest-Road. Sussex.

July 31. 30

My dear Fisher

I am going to have one more attempt to clear my brain about this sexual selection problem, and if I fail again, I hope you won't waste more time in trying to put me back again on the right track.

I am inclined to think that you ought to show the mean values of x in your table more fertile than the extremes. I have pencilled in what I understand you to mean. The average row will not then decline from left to right; but as each separate horizontal row will do so, I suppose that is all that is needed for selection to be effective.

You say that the correlation between early breeding and number of offspring is solely due to environmental causes. Sexual selection can in this way only act on such qualities as are correlated with early breeding; such as vigor or constitution. I do not see how beauty, antlers, long horns, &c, can be thus correlated or can, therefore, be the result of this kind of selection.

Moreover your x has to do with the date

at which the desire to start breeding is felt. Do you mean that it also decides when the optimum is? Do you mean that there is a different optimum in each horizontal row? Natural selection may tend to produce this result, but if so you should say so. Then there should be a tendency for the families to be largest in the centre of each horizontal row, and the postulated effect of correlation has to work against this tendency. If the optimum is the same in all rows, the desires only being different, then the tendency against which the postulated correlation has to work will be even greater at the extremes of the sexes.

Thus I do not see how much help is derived from this theory. Nor do I see that it is needed. With the aid of an instructive ~~point~~ ~~to~~ objection to too early mating, all the qualities which make a male attractive to the other sex would, I think, be promoted. In your book p. 138, I do not think you discuss the effect of delay in getting a mate, which, I think, is an ad selection.

Now I may be blundering as badly as ever. If so, better leave me in the quand! I wish somebody tackled problem No 2.

Yours sincerely
Leonard Dawkins

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

P. S. Twitell's request still
troublesome. Plan is a
print I shall have to
refer to the Council.

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