

FEATURE ARTICLES

**POLYGyny AND EXTRA-PAIR PATERNITY IN A POPULATION OF
SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHERS**

TALIMA PEARSON^{1,3}, MARY J. WHITFIELD², TAD C. THEIMER¹, AND PAUL KEIM¹

¹*Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011*

²*Southern Sierra Research Station, Weldon, CA 93283*

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³ E-mail: talima.pearson@nau.edu

Abstract. Although polygyny can potentially increase male reproductive success, the benefits of this strategy could be offset by losses to extra-pair paternity or reduced offspring survival. We developed microsatellite markers to assess the influence of extra-pair offspring (EPO) on reproductive success and paternity in monogamous and polygynous pairs of the facultatively polygynous Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*). Based on genotypes of 140 offspring from 56 clutches over six years, 14% of nestlings in our study population were extra-pair offspring, with 23% of all successful nests containing at least one EPO. We found that polygynous males produced 2.11 ± 0.35 offspring per season, compared to 1.15 ± 0.18 for monogamous males. This increased reproductive success was due primarily to the increased number of nests of polygynous males, as the number of offspring per pair did not differ between monogamous and polygynous males. Twenty of the 140 genotyped nestlings were extra-pair offspring. Sires could be assigned to 16 of these; one polygynous male sired two EPO in one nest, two monogamous males sired eight EPO in two nests, and four nonterritorial males sired six EPO in four nests. Overall, these results indicate that in this population, females of polygynous males did not raise a disproportionate number of EPO as a result of the polygynous mating strategy of their mate, and that both territorial and nonterritorial males sired EPO.

Key words: extra-pair offspring, microsatellite, polygyny, reproductive success, Willow Flycatcher.