

HOST-PARASITE EVOLUTION: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND AVIAN MODELS.

Edited by Dale H Clayton and Janice Moore. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. £25.00 (paper). xiii + 473 p; ill.; organisms and subject indexes. ISBN: 0-19-854893-1 (hc); 0-19-854892-3 (pb).1997.

This volume attempts to be both general and specific. The first 12 chapters are the general part, providing an overview of host-parasite evolution (the term "coevolution" is studiously avoided). The specific part is the last five chapters, on avian models, and the six appendixes on techniques, resources, and Latin names. The premise, we assume, was that the general section would be applicable to a wide range of systems, while the more specific section provides a list of host-parasite systems in which the general principles can be studied. This division is not entirely successful. Most chapters in the first section use almost exclusively avian examples, which is not in itself a bad idea; many studies of host-parasite phylogenies, for example, or of parasite effects on host sexual selection, have been carried out in birds, so little is lost by the narrow focus. On the other hand, readers interested in a truly general treatment of, say, parasite community ecology, may be disappointed.

The general chapters address topics ranging from the genetic control of immunity (Wakelin and Apanius) to parasitism and life history evolution (Møller) and the role of parasitism in co-speciation (Hoberg *et al.* and Paterson and Gray). The chapters on topics with which we were familiar were thorough and competent, though yielding few surprises.

The chapters on less familiar subjects were sometimes daunting. For example, readers who lack a background in systematics will find the chapters on host-parasite speciation hard going. Nearly all the chapters do contain thorough, up-to-date references, and having all the material on such a diversity of aspects of host-parasite interactions in one volume is a plus.

The appendixes, which deal mainly with field and laboratory methods in avian parasitology, are an unexpected highlight of the book. These are a thoughtful inclusion for the merely curious, and extremely useful for researchers planning to embark on similar lines of research.

The book will probably find its way to the shelf of those working in bird-parasite interactions, as it provides a comprehensive summary of the field and a convenient gateway to the vast primary literature.

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