# EVOLUTION OF POLYGYNY IN THE ANCESTORS OF RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS

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ABSTRACT.—We map behavioral characters related to mating system onto a phylogeny of the New World blackbirds (family Icteridae) in order to test hypotheses on the evolution of polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds (Agelaius phoeniceus). The two hypotheses we test are "long-term models" in the sense that, unlike most polygyny hypotheses, they allow the ancestral mating system to differ from the present one in characters other than female preferences for mated versus unmated males. In one model, polygyny evolves from the typical territorial monogamy system of most terrestrial passerines; in the second model, polygyny evolves from a system resembling that of monogamous Agelaius species, with marsh breeding and without male territoriality. Both hypotheses assume that female-biased parental care coevolves with polygyny. Our reconstruction suggests that the closest non-polygynous ancestor of Red-winged Blackbirds was characterized by monogamy, male territoriality, equal sharing of parental care between the sexes, and terrestrial breeding. Further, polygyny and female-biased care are suggested to have evolved on the same branch as marsh nesting. These results refute our second hypothesis in which polygyny evolves from "Agelaius monogamy," while providing provisional support for the first model in which polygyny evolves from territorial monogamy. Received 27 March 1998, accepted 17 June 1998.

THE EVOLUTION OF POLYGYNY in birds has been a particular focus of mating-systems research. Hypotheses emerging from work on avian polygyny have been extended both to other taxa and to other mating systems. Polygyny is defined in the ornithological literature as a mating system in which one male forms longlasting breeding associations with more than one female at a time (Wittenberger 1981). Polygyny hypotheses attempt to explain why a female would mate with a male that is already mated. Existing polygyny models thus concentrate to a large extent on the evolution of a single characteristic, female preference for mated versus unmated males, and assume that other characteristics form a fixed background against which this one trait evolves. We have argued in favor of extending such hypotheses to take a longer view of the evolution of polygyny, beginning with an ancestral mating system that may differ from the present one in many attributes in addition to female preferences (Searcy and Yasukawa 1989, 1995). We have proposed two such long-term models to explain the evolution of polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds (Agelaius phoeniceus; Searcy and Yasukawa

1995). Here, we attempt to test these two models using comparative data on Red-winged Blackbirds and their relatives, the New World blackbirds of the family Icteridae.

Red-winged Blackbirds provide a classic example of territorial polygyny. Males establish territories prior to the nesting season, and females subsequently settle on the territories to breed. In all populations studied, most of the territorial males attract more than one female (Searcy and Yasukawa 1995, Beletsky 1996). The number of young fledged per territory increases with increasing harem size (Beletsky 1996), and a male sires from two-thirds to three-quarters of the young hatched on his territory (Gibbs et al. 1990, Westneat 1993, Weatherhead and Boag 1995, Gray 1996). In such a system, polygyny is of obvious advantage to males, but the reason that females consent to polygynous mating is less obvious, which is why theory has focused on this question. The classic polygyny hypothesis, the polygyny threshold model (Verner and Willson 1966), proposes that polygynous mating is costly to females because a female choosing an alreadymated male must share his contribution to parental care and his territorial resources with his previous mates. Choice of an already-mated

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male can nevertheless be advantageous if the female is compensated for the cost of polygyny by obtaining a better territory for nesting (Verner 1964, Orians 1969). By contrast, the neutral mate-choice model and other no-cost hypotheses assume there is no cost of polygyny, so compensation is unnecessary (Lightbody and Weatherhead 1988, Searcy and Yasukawa 1989). Yet other polygyny models assume that there is a cost of polygyny for which females are not compensated, so those choosing already-mated males experience lower reproductive success than those simultaneously choosing unmated males (Alatalo et al. 1981, Stenmark et al. 1988, Johnson et al. 1994).

These "cost-no-compensation" models do not apply to Red-winged Blackbirds because in this species females that choose already-mated males do not have lower reproductive success than those choosing unmated males (Beletsky and Orians 1996, Searcy and Yasukawa 1996). This result argues that polygyny in Redwinged Blackbirds is explained by either a nocost model or a cost-compensation model. Nocost models are plausible because male Redwinged Blackbirds provide relatively little nonshareable parental care (Beletsky and Orians 1990, Yasukawa et al. 1990), and because females gain some protection from nest predation by nesting near one another (Ritschel 1985, Picman et al. 1988). No-cost models are supported by the results of removal experiments in Pennsylvania that show that females do not prefer to nest on territories with fewer females and do not have increased reproductive success when harem sizes are reduced (Searcy 1988, Searcy and Yasukawa 1995), and by a long-term population study in Washington that found females to have higher reproductive success when settling second or third on a territory than when settling first (Beletsky and Orians 1996). Polygyny in other redwing populations may be more plausibly explained by a costcompensation model, as for example in Ontario, where removal experiments indicate that females prefer to settle on territories where harem sizes have been lowered (Hurly and Robertson 1985, Pribil and Picman 1996).

The distinction between no-cost and costcompensation hypotheses, as applied to Redwinged Blackbirds, is not as great as it may seem in that it hinges on whether the cost of polygyny is nonexistent or merely small (Bensch 1997). In either case, the fact that the cost is low or nonexistent is in large part due to the low contribution of male Red-winged Blackbirds to provisioning of offspring. To take the extreme, only 6% of males in Washington feed any of the nestlings on their territories, and only about half of these assist with the first brood to hatch (Beletsky and Orians 1990). A female settling with an already-mated male is thus lowering her chances of receiving help by very little, because those chances are low to begin with. But why is the probability of male help so low? Paternal care may be low because males obtain greater reproductive benefit from advertising for additional mates (Beletsky 1996) or guarding other females on the territory (Whittingham 1994) than from provisioning young. Attracting and guarding additional females would not be options for a male if the species was not polygynous. Thus, low parental care can be thought of as a consequence as well as a cause of polygyny.

What these arguments indicate is that male parental care and the degree of polygyny may coevolve: as the frequency of polygyny rises, the payoff increases for activities such as advertising for additional mates and guarding them once they have settled, and this increased payoff selects for males that put more time into advertisement, courtship, and mate guarding and less into provisioning of young. As males decrease their contribution to parental care, the cost of polygyny decreases, causing the frequency and degree of polygyny to increase, which again increases the payoff for advertisement, courtship, and mate guarding (Searcy and Yasukawa 1989, 1995). If paternal care and polygyny coevolve in this way, a negative association ought to exist between the extent of male parental care and the degree of polygyny. Indeed, this prediction has been confirmed in a cross-species comparison of polygynous passerines (Searcy and Yasukawa 1995).

If the cost of polygyny can coevolve with the degree of polygyny, the polygyny models discussed above are not complete explanations of the evolution of polygyny, because these models assume a given level of cost and do not allow that level to evolve. Accordingly, we propose two new hypotheses to explain the evolution of polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds in which we assume that the cost of polygyny has evolved due to changes in male behavior.



FIG. 1. The first long-term model of the evolution of polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds. The starting point is an ancestor whose mating system is territorial monogamy, and the ecological change leading to polygyny is a shift in breeding habitat from terrestrial (woodland/forest) to marsh. Modified from Searcy and Yasukawa (1995).

We call these hypotheses "long-term models" because they take a somewhat longer view of polygyny evolution than do the conventional hypotheses.

A key decision in formulating a long-term model concerns the form of the starting point, i.e. the original ancestral mating system. In our first hypothesis, we assume that the starting point is territorial monogamy, the most common mating system in temperate passerines in general. In such a system, the great majority of breeding adults enter into socially monogamous mating relationships, breeding is done on territories defended mainly by the male, and the most important aspect of parental care, provisioning of the young, is shared equally or nearly equally by the male and female. Again following what is probably the norm for temperate passerines, we assume that the breeding habitat is forest or woodland.

Figure 1 offers one scenario for how the mating system of Red-winged Blackbirds might evolve from this particular ancestral system (Searcy and Yasukawa 1995). Change is initiated by a shift in breeding habitat from forest/ woodland to marshes. Marsh breeding might increase the incidence of polygyny for a number of reasons. First, in the initial stages of the shift, some males presumably would hold territories in marshes and some in the original habitat, thus creating higher variance in territory quality and a greater likelihood that the polygyny threshold will be exceeded. Second, territories within marshes may vary in quality more than territories in terrestrial habitats (Orians 1969), which again promotes polygyny through polygyny-threshold effects. Third, food may be more plentiful in marshes (Orians 1980), making it easier for females to dispense with male help and thus lowering the cost of polygyny. Finally, group defense against nest predators may be more effective in the smaller territories and more open habitat of marshes (Robinson 1986a), and if so, this would further lower the cost of polygyny. All of these factors might serve to increase the incidence of polygyny only slightly, but a slight increase in polygyny might be enough to put the species into the coevolutionary cycle in which the degree of polygyny increases as the cost of polygyny decreases (Fig. 1). Out of this cycle comes the present Red-winged Blackbird mating system with predominantly polygynous mating relations, parental care skewed toward females, male territoriality, and marsh breeding.

Our second long-term hypothesis assumes an ancestral mating system resembling that of the monogamous congeners of Red-winged Blackbirds (Searcy and Yasukawa 1995). Two species of *Agelaius* have monogamous mating systems. Yellow-winged Blackbirds (A. thilius) nest in loose colonies in marshes and ditches, with strictly monogamous pairing relations and no sign of male territoriality (Orians 1980). Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds (A. xanthomus) nest in loose colonies (Post 1981). Males are weakly territorial, defending only the area immediately surrounding the nest, but defending these areas before pairing so that they do offer a defended site to prospective mates (Post 1981). The species nests most frequently in mangroves but also in groves of trees in pastures (Post 1981). Provisioning of young is somewhat female-biased in Yellow-winged Blackbirds (Orians 1980) and is equal between the sexes in Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds (Post 1981). We took for our second hypothetical ancestor a mix of features from these two monogamous Agelaius, weighted toward features we thought more likely to be primitive. For the spacing system, we assumed no male territoriality, as in the Yellow-winged Blackbird, although the Yellow-shouldered Blackbird is not much different in this regard. For provisioning, we assumed equal sharing, as in the Yellowshouldered Blackbird. Finally, for breeding habitat, we assumed the ancestor bred in marshes, as in Yellow-winged Blackbirds.

Given this ancestral system, any increase in male territoriality would initiate a change to-

ward polygyny (Fig. 2). Territoriality could increase either because of a demographic change, decreasing intrusion pressure, or because of an ecological change, making resources more defendable. If males increased their defense of space, their territories would begin to take in multiple nesting sites, increasing the chances that more than one female would settle with a given male. Once the frequency of polygyny increases, the species enters the same coevolutionary loop as in the previous hypothesis; out of this loop emerges the redwing mating system.

Additional hypotheses could be formulated by varying either the ancestral mating system or the sequence of events by which the ancestral system is transformed to the present one. Our two hypotheses are therefore just two of the more plausible alternatives out of many. Here, we begin to test between the alternatives using a phylogenetic comparative analysis in which behavioral and ecological traits are mapped onto a phylogeny based on other characters (Brooks and McClennan 1991, Maddison and Maddison 1992). We hope to accomplish three objectives with the analysis: (1) to test between the character sets assumed for the ancestral mating system by the two hypotheses (we call these ancestral systems territorial monogamy and Agelaius monogamy, respectively); (2) to



FIG. 2. Second long-term model of the evolution of polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds. The starting point is a mating system resembling that of monogamous *Agelaius* species (i.e. marsh nesting, non-territorial), and the ecological change leading to polygyny involves selection for stronger territoriality. Modified from Searcy and Yasukawa (1995).

test whether the evolution of polygyny in the ancestors of Red-winged Blackbirds coincides with a shift to marshes, as assumed in our first hypothesis; and (3) to test whether the evolution of unequal parental care coincides with the evolution of polygyny, as assumed in both hypotheses.

#### **METHODS**

Our procedure is to map certain behavioral traits of extant species of icterids onto a phylogeny of the family (Lanyon and Omland unpubl. data) and onto a phylogeny of a subset of the family that includes the grackles and allies and to which *Agelaius phoeniceus* belongs (Lanyon and Johnson unpubl. data). These phylogenies have been generated from DNA sequence data and are relatively well resolved with high levels of bootstrap support for many nodes. The Appendix lists the 57 species in the overall data set.

Behavioral-trait evolution was reconstructed using version 3 of MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992), which uses parsimony criteria to reconstruct character states at ancestral nodes given the assumed phylogeny and knowledge of character states at terminal nodes (extant species). For our analysis, we assume that the behavioral characters we examine are unordered, meaning that a change between any two states of a given character is possible in a single step. In some species, different individuals or different populations exhibit multiple states of a given character (e.g. marsh and woodland habitat). In such cases, we assigned a single character state when there was a clear majority or preferred state; otherwise we coded the character as polymorphic. We examined five behavioral characters that are noted below. The character states assigned to each species are listed in the Appendix, together with the sources for the evidence.

Mating relations.-This character concerns the association formed between breeding males and females. The possible character states are monogamous, polygynous, and promiscuous. Monogamy is a long-term mating relationship between one male and one female, and a taxon is considered to be monogamous if more than 95% of mating relationships are of this form (Verner and Willson 1966). Polygyny is a long-term relationship between one male and more than one female, and a taxon is considered to be polygynous if more than 5% of mating relationships involve one male and multiple females. Promiscuity is characterized by short-duration associations between males and females and includes species such as Boat-tailed Grackles (Quiscalus major; Post 1994, 1995) and Crested Oropendolas (Psarocolius decumanus; Tashian 1957, Drury 1962) in which males compete for dominance in the vicinity of colonies of nesting females and dominant males obtain preferential access to females. These systems have also been termed "female-defense polygyny" (Webster 1994).

Spacing behavior.—This character refers to the spacing behavior of males during the breeding season. The possible character states are territorial or nonterritorial. In most cases these states are unambiguous, with males either maintaining highly exclusive areas surrounding their nests through aggressive defense, as in Red-winged Blackbirds (Searcy and Yasukawa 1995), or allowing other males to come close to their nests with no sign of aggression, as in Yellow-winged Blackbirds (Orians 1980). Ambiguous cases are ones in which males defend only very small areas surrounding their nests, in which case we used as the criterion for territoriality whether males defended and advertised the nesting area prior to pairing.

Nesting dispersion.—This character refers to the spatial dispersion of nesting females. The character states are dispersed or colonial. The criterion we use for coloniality is that females are more clumped than required by the spatial distribution of their preferred breeding habitat. By this criterion, we consider Redwinged Blackbirds to be non-colonial, because nesting females are widely distributed throughout their preferred marsh habitat.

*Preferred nesting habitat.*—The possible character states are marsh, grassland, and woodland. The last category includes forest, forest edge, and a variety of habitats with scattered trees, such as mangroves, riparian woodland, and swamps.

Parental care.—We define parental care with respect to the relative contribution of each sex to the provisioning of offspring. The possible character states are equal, meaning that the sexes contribute fairly equally to provisioning; unequal, meaning that males do contribute to feeding young but females contribute substantially more than males; female only, meaning that males take no part in provisioning; and none, meaning that neither parent provisions (i.e. brood parasites).

## RESULTS

Figure 3 illustrates the phylogeny for the entire set of 57 species of blackbirds for which DNA data were obtained. At the base of the phylogeny is a polytomy from which five clades emerge. These five clades consist of: (1) the Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) only; (2) orioles, genus *Icterus*; (3) meadowlarks (*Sturnella*) and their allies; (4) oropendolas and caciques (*Psarocolius* and *Cacicus*); and (5) grackles (*Quiscalus*) together with a large number of other genera including cowbirds (*Molothrus*) and the various *Agelaius* spe-



FIG. 3. Mating system character states mapped onto the phylogeny of the entire sample of 57 species of icterids. The squares at the top of the phylogeny show our assignment of character states to extant species; patterns in the rest of the phylogeny are assignments made by MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992).

cies. Because the grackle clade contains *Agelaius phoeniceus* and its closest relatives, and because the phylogeny for this clade is so well resolved, we will concentrate on this clade for the remainder of our analysis.

The phylogeny indicates that the genus Agelaius is not a monophyletic group (Lanyon 1994). Instead, Agelaius phoeniceus appears in a clade together with the second North American Agelaius species, A. tricolor, and two Caribbean species, A. humeralis and A. xanthomus. The South American Agelaius species appear in a separate clade intermixed with other South American species of the genera Xanthopsar, Molothrus, and Pseudoleistes.

In mapping the behavioral and ecological traits onto the grackle clade, we assigned to the outgroup those character states that were most common among the four sister clades, i.e.



FIG. 4. Mating systems mapped onto the phylogeny of the grackles and allies clade. The squares at the top of the phylogeny show our assignment of character states to extant species; patterns in the rest of the phylogeny are assignments made by MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992).

clades 1 to 4 above. The character states assigned to the outgroup are given in the Appendix. The outcome of the analysis of the grackle clade changed very little when this outgroup was omitted.

Mating systems are mapped onto the entire phylogeny in Figure 3 and onto the grackle clade in Figure 4. Mating system is revealed to be a fairly conservative character in the icterids, with polygyny in particular having evolved just four times in the entire family: (1) in the meadowlark clade, (2) in the Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), (3) in a clade consisting of *Agelaius phoeniceus* and its sister species *A. tricolor*, and (4) in a clade consisting of two South American *Agelaius* species, *A. ruficapillus* and *A. icterocephalus*.

To test between our long-terms models of the evolution of polygyny, we need to reconstruct the characteristics of the closest, non-polygy-nous ancestor of *A. phoeniceus*. The ancestor at



FIG. 5. Male spacing behaviors mapped onto the phylogeny of the grackles and allies clade. The squares at the top of the phylogeny show our assignment of character states to extant species; patterns in the rest of the phylogeny are assignments made by MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992).

the node joining redwings with *A. tricolor* is suggested to have been polygynous, but the ancestor at the next node, joining the redwing/ tricolor clade with the two Caribbean *Agelaius*, is suggested to have been monogamous (Fig. 4). Thus, polygyny in redwings seems to have evolved from monogamy, as almost all polygyny hypotheses assume. This closest monogamous ancestor of Red-winged Blackbirds is found to have the following characteristics.

Male spacing behavior: territorial (Fig. 5). Territoriality is a primitive trait in the grackle clade, and the monogamous redwing ancestor retains this behavior, as do most of its closest relatives.

Female nesting dispersion: equivocal (Fig. 6). Dispersed nesting is shown to be the primitive



FIG. 6. Female nesting dispersion mapped onto the phylogeny of the grackles and allies clade. The squares at the top of the phylogeny show our assignment of character states to extant species; patterns in the rest of the phylogeny are assignments made by MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992).

state in the grackle clade as a whole, but colonial nesting occurs in many close relatives of *A. phoeniceus,* including the grackles, the two Caribbean *Agelaius (A. humeralis* and *A. xanthomus),* and the redwing's sister species, *A. tricolor.* 

Preferred nesting habitat: woodland (Fig. 7). A preference for woodlands is primitive in the grackle clade and is retained by most extant species. Marshes have been invaded three times within the grackle clade: once by the *A. phoeniceus/A. tricolor* lineage, once by *Amblyramphus holosericeus*, and once (perhaps twice) by the South American Agelaius/Pseudoleistes lineage.

Parental care: equal (Fig. 8). Equal provisioning of nestlings by males and females is found to be the primitive state for this character for the grackle clade as a whole. The monogamous ancestor of *A. phoeniceus* and *A. tricolor* retained



FIG. 7. Preferred nesting habitat mapped onto the phylogeny of the grackles and allies clade. The squares at the top of the phylogeny show our assignment of character states to extant species; patterns in the rest of the phylogeny are assignments made by MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992).

this state. Unequal sharing of parental care is indicated to have evolved at the same time that polygyny and preference for marshes evolved in the joint ancestor of *A. phoeniceus* and *A. tricolor.* 

### DISCUSSION

The phylogenetic analysis suggests that polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds evolved from monogamy, and that the most recent monogamous ancestor of redwings was territorial, shared parental care equally between the sexes, and bred primarily in a terrestrial woodland habitat. The analysis cannot discriminate whether breeding females in this monogamous ancestor nested colonially (as in *A. tricolor*) or non-colonially (as in *A. phoeniceus*).

These results are sufficient to disprove our second long-term model for the evolution of polygyny in Red-winged Blackbirds. That



FIG. 8. Patterns of parental care mapped onto the phylogeny of the grackles and allies clade. The squares at the top of the phylogeny show our assignment of character states to extant species; patterns in the rest of the phylogeny are assignments made by MacClade (Maddison and Maddison 1992).

model assumes that the present redwing mating system evolved from a monogamous system with non-territorial spacing behavior among males, equal sharing of parental care, and a preference for marsh nesting (Fig. 2). The phylogenetic analysis confirms monogamy and equal parental care as characteristics of the immediate non-polygynous ancestor of redwings but denies the nonterritorial spacing system and the preference for marsh nesting. The rejection of the latter two character states causes us to reject this model.

The results are much more consistent with our first long-term model. This hypothesis assumes that the present mating system evolved from a monogamous system with territorial spacing behavior among males, equal sharing of parental care, and a preference for terrestrial habitats such as forest or woodland (Fig. 1). All of these assumptions are in accord with our reconstruction of the characteristics of the closest non-polygynous ancestor of Red-winged Blackbirds. Moreover, the model suggests that the evolution of the polygynous mating relations and female-biased parental care coincided with the shift from terrestrial to marsh breeding, and this temporal association of character changes is also supported by our results. That is, the phylogenetic analysis suggests that the mating system changed from monogamy to polygyny, parental care changed from equal in the sexes to female-biased, and habitat preference changed from woodlands to marshes, all on the branch that leads up to the immediate ancestor of *A. phoeniceus* and *A. tricolor.* 

Orians (1972, 1980) and Robinson (1986a) have suggested that polygyny is correlated with marsh nesting among the icterids, echoing similar suggestions for African ploceids by Crook (1964) and for North American passerines in general by Verner and Willson (1966). According to our results, polygyny originated in marsh-nesting lineages in two of the three instances in which polygyny evolved in the grackle clade. Only a minority of lineages in the clade is or has been polygynous (Fig. 4), so the evolution of polygyny appears to be concentrated in marsh-nesting lineages; however, a concentrated-changes test (Maddison and Maddison 1992) shows that the concentration is not statistically significant (P = 0.19). The test cannot be run on the results for the family as a whole because of the occurrence of polytomies in the larger phylogeny (Fig. 3).

Unequal parental care is suggested to have evolved from equal parental care four times in the grackle clade (Fig. 8): (1) Common Grackle (Quiscalus quiscula), (2) A. phoeniceus / A. tricolor clade, (3) Yellow-hooded Blackbird (A. icterocephalus) or its ancestors, and (4) Yellowwinged Blackbird or its ancestors. Only in the case of the A. phoeniceus / A. tricolor clade does the evolution of unequal care clearly coincide with the evolution of polygyny. In the Common Grackle lineage, unequal care definitely evolves in the absence of polygyny because neither the Common Grackle nor its ancestors are or were polygynous. More information is needed on parental care in the relatives of A. icterocephalus and A. thilius to resolve how unequal care evolved in those lineages. In the larger icterid analysis, unequal care evolves either once or twice in the meadowlark clade (not depicted), but the analysis cannot resolve whether the evolution of polygyny precedes or coincides with the evolution of unequal care. Phylogenetic analysis of additional polygynous groups will be needed to test whether the evolution of unequal care coincides with the evolution of polygyny more often than expected by chance.

In conclusion, the phylogenetic analysis allows us to reconstruct the characteristics of the closest non-polygynous ancestor of Redwinged Blackbirds with some confidence. The results on this ancestor allow us to reject one of our long-term models for the evolution of polygyny in redwings, that assuming a starting point of "Agelaius monogamy." The reconstructed character states of this ancestor conform to those assumed in our other hypothesis, the one assuming a starting point of territorial monogamy. Furthermore, the sequence of evolutionary changes found in the reconstruction conforms to the assumptions of the hypothesis, with polygyny evolving on the same branch as marsh nesting and female-biased parental care. What this analysis cannot confirm is the causal part of the hypothesis, i.e. the idea that the change to marsh nesting caused the evolution of polygyny. The causal hypothesis would be better supported if we could show that evolutionary changes to polygyny are concentrated in marsh-nesting lineages, but in our analysis of the grackle clade such a concentration was not statistically significant. Further testing of the causal hypothesis, with a larger sample of evolutionary changes to polygyny, is in order.

Finally, we comment on the relationship between our first long-term model and the standard near-term models of polygyny. Our first model suggests that polygyny initially evolves from territorial monogamy in large part because of cost compensation (or polygyny threshold model) effects; that is, at first females pay a cost of polygyny because of compensation from getting a better territory or male, as envisioned by Verner (1964), Verner and Willson (1966), and Orians (1969). Then, as the cost of polygyny and the degree of polygyny coevolve, the cost of polygyny tends to disappear, so that no-cost models supplant cost-compensation models as the near-term explanation of polygyny (Lightbody and Weatherhead 1988, Searcy and Yasukawa 1989). This idea, that cost-compensation polygyny evolves toward no-cost polygyny, may be applicable to a number of highly polygynous species besides Redwinged Blackbirds, such as Yellow-headed Blackbirds (Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus; Lightbody and Weatherhead 1987, 1988) and Fan-tailed Warblers (Cisticola juncidis; Ueda 1984).

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APPENDIX. Species and characte	r states used in the a	nalysis. Dasnes indi	cale cliaracier state is t			
Species	Mating relations	Spacing behavior	Nesting dispersion	Preferred habitat	Parental care	References <sup>a</sup>
Grackle clade outgroup	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	ļ	
Dolichonyx oryzivorus	Polygamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Grassland	Equal	1, 2, 3
Leistes militaris	1	Territorial	Colonial	Grassland		4, 5, 6
Sturnella bellicosa	ł		,	Grassland		6, 7
Sturnella magna	Polygamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Grassland	Unequal	8, 9, 10
Sturnella neglecta	Polygamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Grassland	Unequal	9, 11
Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus	Polygamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Marsh	Unequal	12, 13
Agelaius cyanopus	1	ļ		Marsh	1	5,6
Agelaius humeralis	Monogamous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Equal	6, 14
Agelaius icterocephalus	Polygamous	Territorial	Colonial	Marsh	Unequal	15
Agelaius phoeniceus	Polygamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Marsh	Unequal	16, 17
Agelaius ruficapillus	Polygamous		Colonial	Marsh		6, 7, 69, 70
Agelaius thilius	Monogamous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Marsh	Unequal	18
Agelaius tricolor	Polygamous	Territorial	Colonial	Marsh	Unequal	19, 20, 21
Agelaius xanthomus	Monogamous	Territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Equal	22
Agelaius xanthophthalmus	, 	ļ	1	Marsh	1	6
Amblyramphus holosericeus	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Marsh	Equal	6, 18
Amblycercus holosericeus	Monogamous	1	Dispersed	Wooded	ł	26
Cacicus cela	Promiscuous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Female only	23, 24, 25
Cacicus leucoramphus	1		1	Wooded	1	25
Cacicus solitarius	Monogamous	I		Wooded	ł	6, 25
Cacicus uropygialis	Monogamous		Dispersed	Wooded	I	27
Curaeus curaeus	Monogamous	I		Wooded		6, 25
Dives warszewiczi	1	1	ļ	Wooded	I	26, 28
Euphagus carolinus	Monogamous	[	Dispersed	Wooded	Equal	29, 30
Euphagus cyanocephalus	Mono/Poly	Non-territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Equal	31, 32
Gnorimopsar chopi	Į	1		Wooded		5, 6
Gymnomystax mexicanus	Monogamous	Non-territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	1	33
lcterus cayanensis	Monogamous	1	ł	Wooded		34
Icterus cucullatus	]		1	Wooded	1	30
Icterus bullockii	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed / colonial	Wooded	Equal	35, 36, 37, 38
Icterus graceannae	1	]	-	Wooded	1	25
Icterus icterus	Monogamous	Ι		Wooded		5, 7, 25
Icterus leucopteryx	1			Wooded	1	39
Icterus mesomelas	Monogamous	1	Dispersed	Wooded		25, 26
lcterus nigrogularis	1	1	1	Wooded	I	25
Icterus parisorum		:	: : : :	Wooded		39
Icterus spurius	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed / colonial	Wooded	Equal	30,40
Lampropsar tanagrinus	ł	P.		Wooded		c7
Macroagelatus imtnurni			1	wooaea	1	0, 20

Species	Mating relations	Spacing behavior	Nesting dispersion	Preferred habitat	Parental care	Referencesª
Molothrus aeneus	Promiscuous	I	I	Grass/wooded	None	26, 41, 42
Molothrus ater	Mono/Poly/Prom	Non-territorial	Dispersed	Marsh/grass/wooded	None	43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48
Molothrus badius	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	Equal	49, 50
Molothrus bonariensis	Promiscuous	Territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	None	50, 51
Molothrus rufoaxillaris	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	None	7, 51
Nesopsar nigerrimus	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	Equal	52
Oreopsar bolivianus	Monogamous	Territorial	Dispersed	Wooded	'	53
Psarocolius angustifrons	Promiscuous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Female only	23, 54
Psarocolius atrovirens		I	I	Wooded	1	25
Psarocolius decumanus	Promiscuous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Female only	55, 56
Pseudoleistes guirahuro			I	Marsh		6, 25
Pseudoleistes virescens	Monogamous	Non-territorial	Dispersed / colonial	Marsh		57
Gymnostinops yuracares	)	I		Wooded		6
Quiscalus lugubris	Monogamous	1	Colonial	Wooded		7, 58
Ouiscalus major	Promiscuous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Marsh/wooded	Female only	59, 60, 61, 62
Quiscalus mexicanus	Polygamous	Territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Female only	7, 59, 63, 64
Ouiscalus niger	Monogamous	I		Wooded	Ī	6, 7
Quiscalus quiscula	Monogamous	Non-territorial	Colonial	Wooded	Unequal	65, 66, 67
Scaphidura oryzivora	, 	1		Wooded	None	6, 39
Xanthopsar flävus	Monogamous	Territorial	Colonial	Marsh		7, 68, 69
<sup>a</sup> (1) Martin 1974; (2) Wittenberger 1978; (12) Lightbody and Weatherhead 1987; (13) and Emlen 1939; (21) Payne 1969; (22) Post (31) Williams 1952; (32) Patterson et al. 1988	<ol> <li>Wittenberger 1982; (4) Go</li> <li>Willson 1966; (14) Whitting</li> <li>1981; (23) Robinson 1986a; (</li> <li>(33) Skutch 1967; (34) Fra</li> </ol>	chfeld 1979; (5) Short 197; ham et al. 1996; (15) Wiley 24) Robinson 1986b; (25) ga 1987; (35) Flood 1985; (	5; (6) Orians 1985; (7) Skutch 1 and Wiley 1980; (16) Beletsky Ridgely and Tudor 1989; (26) 36) Miller 1931; (37) Pleasants	966; (8) Knapton 1988; (9) Lanyo 1996; (17) Searcy and Yasukawa 5kutch 1954; (27) Skutch 1972; (2) 1979; (38) Williams 1982; (39) Av	m 1957; (10) Gross 19: 1995; (18) Orians 198; 8) Orians 1983; (29) K OU 1983; (40) Enstror	77; (11) Dickinson et al. 1987; 2; (19) Orians 1961; (20) Lack ennard 1920; (30) Bent 1958; n 1993; (41) Carter 1984; (42)

APPENDIX. Continued.

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Clottelter 1995; (43) Yokel 1986; (44) Teather and Robertson 1986; (45) Eiliot 1980; (46) Payne 1973; (47) Ankney and Scott 1982; (48) Dufty 1982; (49) Fraga 1991; (50) Friedmann 1929; (51) Mason 1987; (52) Wiley and Cruz 1980; (53) Orians et al. 1977a; (54) Schander 1965; (55) Tashian 1957; (55) Drury 1962; (57) Orians et al. 1977b; (58) Selander 1965; (59) Selander and Giller 1961; (60) Post 1994; (61) Post 1995; (62) Bancroft

1987; (63) Selander and Hauser 1965; (64) Kok 1972; (65) Wiley 1976; (66) Ficken 1963; (67) Howe 1979; (68) Belton 1985; (69) Hudson 1920; (70) Lyon 1997.