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The effects of rearing conditions on sexual traits and preferences in zebra finches

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Stellingen

1. Male song contains sufficient information on the phenotypic quality of the singer for female mate choice in zebra finches.
(This thesis.)
2. Developmental condition is an important cause of variation in male song and female preferences in zebra finches.
(This thesis.)
3. Most studies testing the developmental stress hypothesis (Nowicki et al. 1998 *American Zoologist* 38:179-190), which proposes that poor developmental condition can adversely affect song learning in songbirds, did not look at song learning.
(This thesis.)
4. Metabolic efficiency may play a role in mediating the long-term survival consequences of rearing conditions in zebra finches.
(This thesis.)
5. The term “song complexity” lacks proper definition in many publications on bird song and should be either better defined or avoided.
6. A systematic analysis of the causes and consequences of between-individual variation in mating preferences is necessary to fully understand the evolutionary dynamics between preferences and sexually selected traits.
7. Measures of state used to assess state-dependent life-history strategies are often based on current condition although past condition might be equally important to consider given that its long-term consequences are often not evident until late in adult life.
(See Metcalfe & Monaghan 2001 *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 16(5):254-260.)
8. Our understanding of sexual selection can benefit from taking into account state-dependent life-history traits and individual past experiences.

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