The African village weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*) is a polygynous bird that nests in often large colonies. Male village weavers are noted for their spectacular nestbuilding and their flapping displays beneath their nests to attract mates. We video-recorded, coded (with JWatcher) and analyzed the behavior of a colony of village weavers in Awash National Park, Ethiopia, at the height of the breeding season. We found that male village weavers (1) spent most of their time on behaviors related to reproduction rather than survival; (2) spent a greater proportion of time on behaviors involving female choice (i.e., nest building and display) vs. male-male competition (i.e. territory defense and stealing nest material); and (3) performed their mating displays in synchrony. These results support predictions of intense sexual selection in polygynous animals, and suggest that village weaver colonies function as leks, or competitive mating displays to females.

**Male breeding display synchrony:**
We developed a $0 - 1$ display synchrony index $S$, which is the number of neighboring males in display at time $t$. Males in this colony displayed with a synchrony of 0.252, as compared with 0.128 predicted by chance alone.

**Background**

The African village weaver is a polygynous passerine bird. The male weaves a complex nest, and displays to females by hanging upside down from the nest and flapping his bright yellow wings. If the female accepts she lines the inside of the nest, copulates with the male and lays her eggs. The male continues to build more nests to attract more mates. If the female rejects the nest, the male tears down the nest and builds a new one. Males also establish and guard their territories aggressively, to prevent other males from mating with their females or stealing nesting materials. These weaverbirds breed in colonies and appear to breed in synchrony. Locating food and reducing the risk of predation and brood parasitism are thought to be the main advantages of the breeding colony in weavers. However, living in colonies also increases the competition for nesting space, resources, and mates.