

ASSORTATIVE MATING: A REPLY TO MUELLER

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We agree with Mueller's (1995) commentary in his stressing of the need for care when interpreting the results from analyses based on correlation coefficients. In our paper (Warkentin et al. 1992), we attempted to downplay emphasis on these data and inserted cautionary notes in the text to make readers aware of potential difficulties with any interpretation given.

As discussed (Warkentin et al. 1992), we considered the issue of data independence raised by Marzluff and Balda (1988) and how this would affect the type of analyses chosen for mate choice studies. We suggested that the dependence/independence of mate choice works on a continuum rather than a rigid dichotomy. Affecting the dependence/independence of mate choice data are such factors as group size, behavior, and pair-bond longevity. Given the circumstances of our pop-

ulation, we felt that the data warranted analyses by correlation coefficient.

Unfortunately, Mueller (1995) has apparently chosen to focus on one of the least important facets of the results and discussion in our paper. We were interested in assessing various aspects of assortative mating, taking into consideration such factors as age, previous breeding experience, and location of origin (Warkentin et al. 1992). We included body size but, as indicated at one point in the discussion, suggested that the influence of morphometrics (as we had measured them) on assortative mating should be considered to be minimal in this study. We found little or no evidence for assortment of mated pairs based on body morphometrics, but an apparently strong affect of age/experience on which an individual is chosen for a partner (Warkentin et al. 1992).

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LITERATURE CITED

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