

Wyatt reviewed in *Biologist* (2004) 51(2):119

The role of pheromones in animal behaviour is an exciting and expanding area of research. This is amply demonstrated in Tristram Wyatt's innovative account. Mate choice, territorial courtship behaviour and sexual selection all have proximal clues in odorant release. Whilst scent marking and the release of alarm pheromones have been known for sometime, the elucidation of neurological pathways that affect behaviour is relatively new.

Interspecies recognition of pheromones has both advantages and disadvantages; the release of alarm pheromones may alert members of a guild to potential predators, whilst wolf packs are able to track moose and determine the age, sex and health of the targeted prey solely on the basis of their scent and pheromones released. Insects in particular have made good use of scent camouflage and mimicry to acquire both food and mates.

One of the most tantalising chapters concerns humans. It is surprising that in view of the emphasis that humans place on body odours, as the perfume industry shows, that so little has actually been written about the biology of the subject. With the advances in molecular genetics and the ability to distinguish between MHC (MLA) in humans as well as other animals, it should not be surprising to learn that humans use smell to recognise kin and make mate choice decisions based on similarities and differences in MHCs.

*Pheromones and animal behaviour* is a well-balanced account including numerous examples of both vertebrate and invertebrates species. It will appeal to both undergraduates and researchers or anybody interested in broadening their understanding of this fascinating field of research. I am sure it will become the standard text for many years to come.

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