Abstract

Obligate brood parasitism has evolved in 109 bird species around the world, which is approximately 1 % of all bird species. This alternative reproductive strategy is associated with complex evolution of the relationships between parasite and host(s) which is responsible for many adaptations on both sides. One of the important adaptations is the timing of egg laying either within a season, time of a day, or nesting stage of an individual host pair. The speed of laying itself is also no less important adaptation. Because brood parasitism is present worldwide in many different bird orders and parasites use variable species as their hosts, this adaptation is expected to be variable as well. My thesis will review information about timing of egg laying in all main taxonomical groups of brood parasites and will compare this adaptation between specialists and generalists, between closely related parasites with different hosts or between sedentary and migratory parasitic species. The main focus is on the question of coevolution with the host in relation to different timing strategies and an attempt to explain the differences in these strategies.

Keywords: birds, coevolution, brood parasitism, egg laying, timing