

Abstract:

Parental care has plays a crucial role in both the individual success of the chicks and the overall current and future fitness of their parents. Most studies examining the costs versus benefits of parental care in birds focus on the incubation period and the subsequent care at the nest. However, in terms of chick survival and further increasing the "cost" of parental care, the critical period comes when chicks leave the nest and become independent (the post-fledging period). Success during this time is associated with an increased likelihood of surviving to the following year. In this paper, I will focus on the impact of parental care on birds during the post-fledging period and the specific parameters illustrating changes in the fitness of parents and their offspring. For each species, I will interpret the results considering various ecological factors (altricial vs. precocial birds, short-lived vs. long-lived species, feeding strategy etc.) that influence the duration and form of parental care (feeding, protection from predators, social support, etc.).

Keywords: post-fledging, parent-offspring conflict, offspring survival, parental investment, fitness