

Cultural evolution in the house finch: quantification and behavioral underpinnings

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Cultural evolution is the study of how cultural traits change over time through social transmission in particular behavioral and ecological contexts. Arguably no system provides a better model for the study of cultural evolution than socially learned birdsong. My Ph.D. focuses on quantifying subtle differences in the cultural evolutionary process between two populations of house finches (*Haemorrhous mexicanus*) living under vastly different ecological circumstances. In addition, I am examining behavioral variables that might elucidate the evolutionary forces that shape cultural traits in the house finch.