

Classes #20: Sociobiology, introduction
Friday Oct 28, 2005

Reading:

- John Alcock, *The Triumph of Sociobiology* (Oxford 2001), pp 3-21.

Study questions:

1. Why did a group of scientists (especially from Harvard and MIT) write a manifesto, published in the *New York Review of Books* in 1975, against a large new book by Edward O. Wilson (of Harvard) entitled *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*? See pp 3-5; p 20.
2. What is the primary analytical tool of a sociobiologist? (I don't mean a computer! See p 10.)
3. What simple experiment on the function of aggregations of whirligig beetles (fig 1.2) was carried out by Watt and Chapman, and what was the result? Was their question "proximate" or "ultimate" in nature, as these terms are defined by Alcock?
4. Which kind of question (proximate or ultimate) is more important?
5. How did the evolutionary analysis of behavior begin?
6. Why is variation within species so important for evolution?
7. Did E. O. Wilson invent the field of Sociobiology? Discuss.