

Daily energy expenditure of males following alternative reproductive tactics: Solitary roamers spend more energy than group-living males

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18					

Abstract

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In many species, males follow alternative reproductive tactics (ARTs), where one tactic (called bourgeois) has much higher reproductive success than alternative tactics followed by males with lower competitive ability. The extent to which ARTs differ in energetic costs is unknown, but it is important to understand the fitness payoffs of ARTs. We studied male African striped mice (Rhabdomys pumilio) which follow one of three ARTs: heavy bourgeois males defend harems of females and have 10 times higher reproductive success than smaller roamers, which have ten times higher reproductive success than philopatric males, which remain in their natal group and are the smallest males. Bourgeois and philopatric males live in social groups that defend one territory, while roamers are solitary and roam over larger areas. We predicted that roamers will face higher energetic costs compared to group-living males because they do not gain thermoregulatory benefits of huddling in groups and might travel larger distances as they have larger home ranges. We measured daily energy expenditure (DEE) of 30 males, resting metabolic rate (RMR) of 79 males, travel distances and daily ranges of 31 males and changes in body mass of 51 males. Roamers had higher DEE and higher RMR than both types of groupliving males. Philopatric males had shorter travel distances and smaller daily ranges than both roamers and bourgeois males, which did not differ from each other. This indicates that the higher DEE of roamers compared to bourgeois males cannot be explained by larger travel distances. Philopatrics gained body mass faster than bourgeois males and roamers, thereby increasing their competitive ability and thus the probability of later switching to a tactic of higher reproductive success. Our results suggest that roamers suffer energetic costs that might reduce their ability of gaining body mass and thus the likelihood of switching to the bourgeois tactic, indicating evolutionary trade-offs between investing energy into roaming versus gaining body mass.

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- **Key words:** alternative reproductive tactic, best-of-a-bad-job, energetics, field metabolic rate,
- 45 resting metabolic rate, trade-off

1. Introduction

Individuals can display discrete reproductive phenotypes, so-called alternative reproductive tactics (ARTs), to maximize their fitness under intra-sexual reproductive competition [1]. Conditional ARTs are most common, in which the most competitive individuals (also called bourgeois) follow a tactic which has a much higher reproductive success than alternative tactics adopted by less competitive individuals [1]. Typically, bourgeois males defend a breeding territory and multiple females, while males of lower competitive ability can be sneakers, satellites or roamers. Males following these latter tactics make "the-best-of-a-bad-job" and attempt to mate with females defended by bourgeois males until their competitive ability increases and they are able to switch to the bourgeois tactic [2–4].

Much attention has been placed on the fitness consequences of ARTs [5] and the neuro-endocrine mechanisms underlying different tactics [6]. Physiological mechanisms, such as the activation of the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis and the release of sex steroids, do not only influence behaviour [7], but also energy expenditure [8], and thus directly affect the evolution of complex traits such as ARTs. Therefore, understanding the energetic consequences of ARTs can help to integrate evolved physiological mechanisms with ultimate consequences.

Maintenance metabolism, for example measured as resting metabolic rate (RMR), is the cost of self-maintenance. RMR is the metabolic rate of an animal that is resting in a thermoneutral environment but not necessarily in the post-absorptive state [9], and can influence how much energy an individual can allocate to survival, growth, and reproduction [10]. Individuals following different tactics can also differ in their RMR [3,11,12], where for example, dispersing male Cape ground squirrels (*Xerus inauris*) have a higher RMR than natal males [11]. While we have rudimentary knowledge that ARTs might differ in RMR, it is unknown whether tactic-specific differences in RMR affect daily energy expenditure (DEE),

which is determined by a variety of factors, including RMR [13,14], which accounts for 30 - 40% of the daily energy demands [13–16].

Differences in DEE could influence growth, reproduction and health status, and thus significantly affect evolutionary fitness. Growth influences the balance between development time and size at maturity. In particular, small and young males of low competitive ability have to trade-off energy between growth and reproductive behaviours. In conditional ARTs, somatic growth and increases in body mass are important to improve a male's competitive ability and to enable him to switch to the bourgeois tactic with high reproductive success [1,17]. Currently, no information is available concerning differences in DEE between ARTs. Males following ARTs can be expected to differ in DEE if they differ for example in the energetic costs of tactic-specific behaviours such as travel distances and/or their RMR. Especially in small mammals with ARTs, thermoregulatory costs can also influence DEE, which will be higher in males sleeping solitarily than in males sleeping in huddling groups [18,19]. Thus, adopting ARTs might significantly influence DEE, and the trade-off between investing energy into reproduction or increasing competitive ability by gaining body mass, might differ between different tactics.

In the diurnal African striped mouse (*Rhabdomys pumilio*) body mass determines ARTs [3] and males pursue one of three tactics: (1) small philopatric male that remains in his natal group, resulting in very low reproductive success; (2) medium-sized solitary roamer with a 10 times higher reproductive success than philopatric males; or (3) large bourgeois breeding male which defends a territory with 2-4 breeding females and a reproductive success 10 times that of roamers [20]. The aim of this study was to examine whether males following ARTs differ in their DEE. To understand why DEE might differ, we also examined differences in RMR, changes in body mass, travel distance and daily range size. We expected roamers to have higher DEE, to travel greater distances and to have larger daily range sizes than breeders and

philopatrics. Individuals with a high RMR typically have a larger metabolic machinery [21–24], allowing for greater energy uptake [25,26]. A high RMR may be required to support energetically expensive processes, such as behaviour associated with reproduction and thermoregulation, and high RMR can be associated with high levels of activity [27,28]. Thus, we expected that roamers would have higher RMR than breeders and philopatrics, firstly because roamers travel through the territories defended by several bourgeois males in search of receptive females, and secondly because solitary roamers incur higher thermoregulatory costs at night compared to group-living males. Compared to solitary males, philopatric males may have to spend less energy for thermoregulation at night because they sleep in huddling groups. Striped mice, including adult individuals, gain body mass during the breeding season when food availability is highest [29]. Increasing body mass is important for males to gain a high competitive status [3], as heavier males are more likely to win territorial encounters [30], and to store energy reserves to cope with the coming summer dry season characterised by low food abundance [29]. We predicted that differences in DEE will also be represented by differences in body mass gain.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Study site and species

We collected data in the Succulent Karoo semi-desert of South Africa. Here, striped mice live in social groups, consisting of one breeding male (bourgeois tactic), two to four breeding females and their adult philopatric offspring of both sexes [31]. Solitary roamers occur during the breeding season [31]. Striped mice typically breed in the austral spring (August – December) when food is abundant [31,32], but in some years there is a second breeding season between January and March [33]. Females can give birth to 2–3 litters [34], at an average of 5 pups per litter [29]. Striped mice can reach sexual maturity at around 6 weeks of age, but

typically do not start reproducing in the breeding season when they are born [31]. Male striped mice are more likely to disperse than females, while females show a higher level of natal philopatry [35]. Approximately 70% of striped mice die before reaching the end of their first year [29], while in some years survival rate is much lower at only 1%. Around 30% of young males present at the start of the dry season survive until the next breeding season and can become breeders (then approx. 1 year old), but very few (less than 1%) survive for a second year (then being approx. 2 years old).

2.2. Determination of reproductive tactics

Using a combination of trapping, behavioural observations and radio-tracking, we determined male tactics [3]. Long-term monitoring of the field site and all its striped mouse groups, together with ear-tagging of all individuals at first capture, enabled us to track the tactic followed by each individual at all times. Males can switch from being philopatric to roaming to breeding male, or from philopatric directly to breeding male [3,36]. Sometimes males switch from breeding male back to roaming male, but they cannot return to their natal group as philopatrics. Roamers were either males that were born in the study site, and tagged when living as a philopatric male in their natal group, or immigrated into the study site.

We defined roamers as males that did not share a nest with other individuals, and territorial breeders as males that lived in groups other than their natal group [3]. Young adults that remained in their natal group (i.e. the group where they were previously trapped as juveniles) were defined as philopatrics. On average, philopatric males are significantly lighter than both breeders and roamers, and roamers are lighter than breeders [3].

2.3. Daily energy expenditure (DEE)

Using the two-point 'doubly-labelled water' (DLW) method [37], we determined DEE of 30 males (Table 1) in the 2014 (N = 19) and 2015 (N = 11) breeding seasons. We weighed individuals (± 0.1 g), anesthetized them with di-ethyl ether and took a first blood sample (~ 100 μl) from the sub-lingual vein into glass capillaries, which we then flame-sealed. After disinfecting a part of the abdomen for an injection site, we injected DLW (1.0 g of 97 % ¹⁸O and 0.35 g of 99.9 % 2 H) intraperitoneally at a dose of 3.38 g/kg body mass (0.2 % \pm 0.008 % of an individual's body mass). We weighed syringes immediately before and after administration (± 0.0001 g, Mettler-Toledo balance). In small vertebrates, an isotopic equilibration in body water is typically reached within 1 hour [38,39]. Thus, after 1 hour, we took a second blood sample (~100 µl) to determine the maximum isotope enrichment. Subsequently, to compensate for the loss of feeding opportunities, each individual received food which comprised 7% of its body mass and consisted of 40% sunflower seeds and 60% apple. After another 30-45 min, individuals were released at their nests. We recaptured 27 individuals 24 h, one individual 48 h and two individuals 72 h after DLW injection and collected a third blood sample (~100 µl) to estimate the isotope elimination rate. We kept sealed capillaries in a fridge at 4°C until transport to the IPHC-DEPE laboratory in Strasbourg, France for isotope analysis.

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At the IPHC-DEPE laboratory, blood samples were vacuum distilled for 5 min and 0.1 µl distillate was injected into an elemental analyser with thermal conversion (TC/EA, Thermo, Bremen, Germany) which was connected to a continuous flow isotope ratio mass spectrometer (IRMS-DELTA V PLUS, Thermo, Bremen, Germany), as previously described [40]. In the TC/EA, distillates were pyrolyzed at 1400°C into H₂ and CO gas in a glassy carbon tube under pure He flow at 90 ml min⁻¹. H₂ and CO were further separated at 110°C on a molecular sieve GC column before sequential analysis in the isotope ratio mass spectrometer. Results were first drift corrected and optionally a memory effect correction was applied. Results were normalized

versus the VSMOW2/SLAP2 international scale. All analyses were performed in quadruplicate. As it is routinely done in all mass spectrometry laboratories, we re-measured samples if more than 3 out of 4 replicates of a given sample exceeded the standard deviation of the 4 replicates; limits were 2‰ for 2 H and 0.2 ‰ for 18 O. TBW was calculated from the 18 O dilution space divided by 1.007 to correct for *in vivo* isotopic exchange [41]. The average isotope dilution space ratio was 1.037 ± 0.011 (mean \pm SD). Production rate of CO₂ was calculated from the single pool model as recommended for the body size of striped mice [37,42]. CO₂ production was calculated following Speakman [37] and converted to DEE using Wier's equation [43] assuming a food quotient of 0.925 based on estimated proportions of macronutrients in the folivorous and granivorous diet of striped mice [32].

Table 1. Overview of sample sizes for measurements of DEE, RMR, change in body mass and all-day focal observations. All four variables are treated as independent studies as it was not possible to obtain all four measures from all males, even though there is some overlap between samples (for example, data for all four measures are available for 11 males).

	DEE	RMR	Body mass change	All-day observation
Breeder	8	41	19	14
Roamer	6	9	15	6
Philopatric	16	29	17	11
TOTAL	30	79	51	31

2.4. Resting metabolic rate (RMR)

We determined RMR of 79 males (Table 1) in the breeding seasons of 2015 (15 breeder, 3 roamer, 2 philopatric), 2016 (13 breeder, 3 roamer, 19 philopatric) and 2017 (13 breeder, 3 roamer, 8 philopatric). We trapped males in the morning at their nest using Sherman-style live-traps $(26 \times 9 \times 9 \text{ cm})$ and measured oxygen consumption (ml O₂h⁻¹) using an open circuit

respirometry system (Foxbox, Sable Systems, New Jersey, USA) in a respirometry laboratory next to the field site. We determined each individual's body mass (± 0.1 g) and transferred them into one of three metabolic chambers (1000cm³ each). After an initial 20 min, we initiated O₂ measurement and video recorded the mice in the metabolic chambers using a webcam (Microsoft HD webcam). The metabolic chambers were immersed in a propylene container and each chamber was equipped with a metal grid to separate mice from their urine and faeces. Temperature was controlled using a temperature controller (Pelt5, Sable Systems). We measured RMR at $30 \,^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 1.0 \,^{\circ}\text{C}$, which lies within the striped mouse thermoneutral zone [44]. Measurements were taken every 3 sec., and data were collected in three 45 min cycles, each cycle consisting of a 5 min baseline recording, followed by a 10-min recording per mouse chamber and ended with a 10 min baseline recording. This cycle was repeated four times, resulting in 40 min of measurements per mouse and a total data collection period of 3h. A flow regulator (FB8, Sable Systems) controlled the air flow through the chambers ($\sim 700 \pm 0.28$ ml min⁻¹) and measurements of oxygen consumption were taken using an oxygen analyser (Foxbox, Sable Systems). Weekly, we calibrated the oxygen analyser to an upper and lower value in dry air. We analysed metabolic records using a macro program in ExpeData software (Sable Systems). To establish RMR, we used the mean of the lowest 89 consecutive readings (equivalent to 4.45 min) of oxygen consumption (ml O₂h⁻¹) per individual [45]. In a first step, we corrected O2, CO2, and the flow rate for water vapour dilution and subsequently, we calculated oxygen consumption using the equation:

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$$VO2 = \frac{FR*((FiO2-FeO2)-FeO2*(FeCO2-FiCO2))}{(1-FeO2)},$$

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where FR is the flow rate, FiO₂ and FiCO₂ are input fractional concentrations of O₂ and CO₂ to the chamber, respectively; FeO₂ and FeCO₂ are excurrent fractional concentration of O₂ and CO₂ from the chamber, respectively. Further, we visually checked all videos to confirm that

individuals were resting (i.e. motionless and not showing piloerection) during the selected 4.45 min period used to establish RMR.

Measuring RMR in striped mice during the active phase instead of during the night could have led to measuring elevated metabolic rates. However, RMR values reported in this study are lower [3] or comparable [44] to values reported in previous studies on striped mice, and our RMR measures are not significantly different from striped mouse sleeping metabolic rate (SMR) measured in our field respiratory laboratory [46]. To examine repeatability of RMR, we used a second respirometry trial for 17 males (9 breeder, 2 roamer, 6 philopatric). Respirometry trials were conducted within 25.2 days of each other on average (± 14.6 days).

2.5. Body mass change, age determination and all-day focal observations

We recorded body mass of 51 males (Table 1) in 2014 (N = 19), 2015 (N = 17) and 2016 (N = 15) at the beginning of the breeding season in September or October, or for roamers when they first appeared in the breeding season, and again 4 weeks later. We calculated the change in body mass as the percentage of body mass change per day. For 37 males (12 breeders, 9 roamers and 16 philopatrics) we were able to establish their age at the time of the body mass measurement, because they were previously trapped as juveniles, enabling us to estimate their birth date (using the growth curve from [47]). We were unable to determine the age of 7 breeders, 6 roamers and 1 philopatric because they were too old (too heavy) at first capture.

We conducted one all-day behavioural observation on 31 males (Table 1) in 2014 (N = 20) and 2015 (N = 11), as done in a previous study [48]. We observed individuals from the time they emerged from their nest in the morning until they returned in the evening. During observations, observers carried a GPS (Garmin etrex, Garmin International, Olathe, KS, USA), automatically recording a track, which provided a proxy of the distance travelled by the focal

mouse [49]. Using Ranges 6 [50], we calculated daily range size (area covered during an all-day observation) as 99% kernel.

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2.6. Statistical analyses

All analyses were conducted in R3.3.3 [51]. Raw data are presented as mean \pm SD. There is a well-known positive relationship between body mass and both RMR and DEE [52,53]. Therefore, we used residual DEE and residual RMR, calculated as residuals of the regression of DEE or RMR on body mass [14,54,55]. As we did not find a significant interaction between body mass and tactic on RMR (ANCOVA: F = 0.47, df = 2, P = 0.62; Fig. 1A), nor between body mass and tactic on DEE (ANCOVA: F = 1.26, df = 2, P = 0.30; Fig. 1B), we assumed that the relationship between RMR and body mass and between DEE and body mass was similar for all tactics. To examine differences between ARTs, we used five linear mixed models (LMMs) with Gaussian error structure and identity link using the package 'lme4' [56]. As response variables we used (a) residual DEE, (b) residual RMR, (c) change in body mass, (d) travel distance or (e) daily range size. We log-transformed the daily range size data to reach normality of residuals. We used tactic as a fixed predictor and group ID and year as random factors. To account for potential influences of a group's territory, we used group ID as a random factor because more than one individual was measured per group. We assigned a unique group ID to each roamer because they roam over the territories of several groups [3]. For model validation, we visually inspected Q-Q plots and scatterplots of residuals plotted against fitted values, and we checked for the assumptions of homogeneous and normally distributed residuals. To analyse tactic-specific differences in age and body mass, we used one ANCOVA per response variable and pairwise comparisons post hoc using t tests, with P-values which were corrected for multiple testing using the Holm method [57]. For the subset of 12 males, for which we concomitantly collected DEE, travel distance and RMR (measured on the same day as DLW injection), we examined the influence of RMR and travel distance on DEE using one ANOVA. We used DEE as the response variable and body mass, RMR and travel distance as predictor variables. We used one ANCOVA to examine tactic-specific differences in the relationship between travel distance and DEE *post hoc*. We used a paired t test and Kendall's rank correlation to examine whether RMR measurements were repeatable within individuals.

3. Results

Age differed between tactics (ANCOVA: F = 18.58, df = 2, P < 0.0001), with breeders (14.1 \pm 4.3 months) being significantly older than roamers (P = 0.025; 10.6 ± 1.8 months) and philopatrics (P < 0.0001; 6.3 ± 3.3 months). Roamers were significantly older than philopatrics (P = 0.008). There were significant differences in body mass between males following different tactics (ANCOVA: P = 49.27, P < 0.0001), with breeders being heavier than roamers (P = 0.0004; P = 0.0004; P

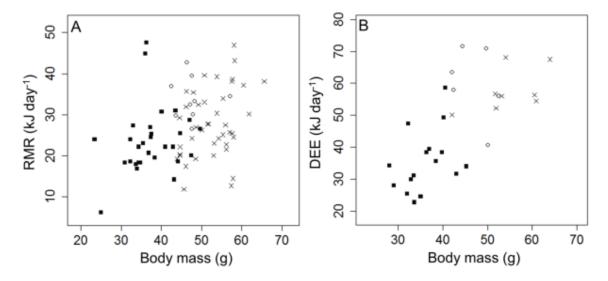


Figure 1. Relationship between body mass and (A) resting metabolic rate (N = 79 males) and (B) daily energy expenditure (N = 30 males) of philopatrics, roamers, and breeders (*filled squares*, *open circles* and *crosses*, respectively).

Mean absolute values of DEE were 35.5 ± 9.6 kJ day⁻¹ for philopatrics, 60.2 ± 11.5 kJ day⁻¹ for roamers, and 57.6 ± 6.6 kJ day⁻¹ for breeders. Roamers had 1.2 higher mass-specific DEE than breeders (LMM: Estimate \pm SE: 9.99 ± 4.74 , t = 2.10, P = 0.04) and 1.3 higher mass-specific DEE than philopatrics (Estimate \pm SE: 11.79 ± 4.23 , t = 2.78, P = 0.01; Fig. 2A). There was no difference between breeders and philopatrics (Estimate \pm SE: 1.79 ± 3.79 , t = 0.47, P = 0.64; Fig. 2A).

Mean absolute values of RMR were 23.5 ± 8.1 kJ day⁻¹ for philopatrics, 34.0 ± 5.1 kJ day⁻¹ for roamers and 27.8 ± 8.3 kJ day⁻¹ for breeders. Roamers had 1.3 higher mass-specific RMR than breeders (Estimate \pm SE: 15.65 ± 5.25 , t = 2.97, P = 0.004) and 1.1 higher mass-specific RMR than philopatrics (Estimate \pm SE: 17.28 ± 5.56 , t = 3.10, P = 0.003; Fig. 2B). There was no difference between breeders and philopatrics (Estimate \pm SE: -1.63 ± 3.68 , t = -0.44, P = 0.65; Fig. 2B). Paired RMR measurements of 17 males correlated with each other (Kendall's rank correlation: z = 2.60, P = 0.009, tau = 0.46) and were not significantly different from each other (paired t test: t = 0.21, df = 31.97, P = 0.83).



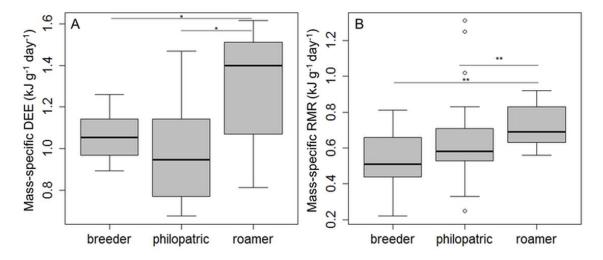


Figure 2. (A) Differences in mass-specific DEE between breeders (N = 8), philopatrics (N = 16) and roamers (N = 6). (B) Differences in mass-specific RMR between philopatrics (N = 29),

breeders (N = 41) and roamers (N = 9). Black lines indicate median values, boxes confidence intervals, whiskers minimum and maximum values of non-outlier data, and open circles show outliers. Significant differences are illustrated (*P < 0.05; **P < 0.01).

Philopatrics gained body mass faster than breeders and roamers (philopatric vs. breeder: Estimate \pm SE: 0.43 \pm 0.09, t = 4.84, P < 0.0001; philopatric vs. roamer: Estimate \pm SE: 0.28 \pm 0.09, t = 2.94, P = 0.006; Fig. 3), while roamers and breeders did not differ with regard to body mass changes (Estimate \pm SE: 0.16 \pm 0.09, t = 1.69, P = 0.09; Fig. 3). Philopatrics travelled shorter distances than breeders and roamers (philopatric vs. breeder: Estimate \pm SE: 695.47 \pm 166.93, t = 4.17, P = 0.011; philopatric vs. roamer: Estimate \pm SE: 599.19 \pm 207.26, t = 2.89, P = 0.012; Fig. 4A), but distance travelled did not differ between roamers and breeders (Estimate \pm SE: 96.28 \pm 200.94, t = 0.47, P = 0.65; Fig. 4A). Philopatrics had smaller daily range sizes than breeders and roamers (philopatric vs. breeder: Estimate \pm SE: 0.61 \pm 0.19, t = 3.12, P = 0.032; philopatric vs. roamers: Estimate \pm SE: 0.93 \pm 0.23, t = 3.91, P = 0.015; Fig. 4B), while roamers did not differ from breeders (Estimate \pm SE: 0.33 \pm 0.23, t = 1.40, P = 0.30; Fig. 4B).

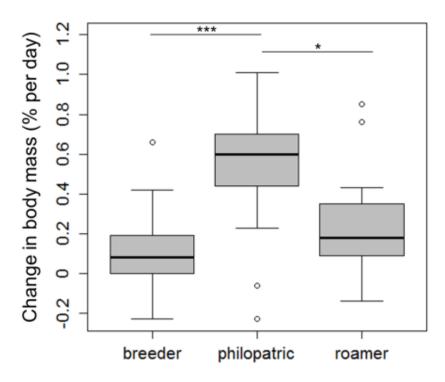


Figure 3. Differences in body mass change between breeders (N = 19), philopatrics (N = 17) and roamers (N = 15). Black lines indicate median values, boxes confidence intervals, whiskers minimum and maximum values of non-outlier data, and open circles show outliers. Significant differences are illustrated (*P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; *** P < 0.001).

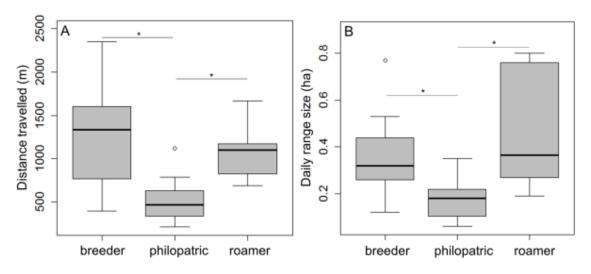


Figure 4. Differences in (A) travel distance and (B) daily range size between breeders (N = 14), philopatrics (N = 11) and roamers (N = 6). Black lines indicate median values, boxes

confidence intervals, whiskers minimum and maximum values of non-outlier data, and open circles show outliers. Significant differences are illustrated (*P < 0.05).

Body mass (ANOVA: F = 17.08, df = 1, P = 0.003, N = 12 males) and distance travelled (F = 5.68, df = 1, P = 0.04) influenced DEE (Fig. 5A+B), while RMR (F = 0.95, df = 1, P = 0.35) did not. There was no significant interaction between travel distance and tactic on DEE (ANCOVA: F = 0.92, df = 2, P = 0.44).

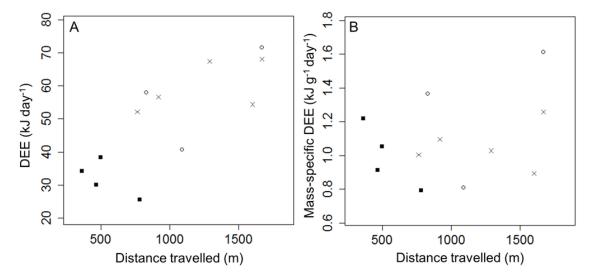


Figure 5. Relationship between travel distance and (A) daily energy expenditure (DEE) and (B) mass-specific DEE of philopatrics, roamers, and breeders (*filled squares*, *open circles* and *crosses*, respectively; N = 4 philopatrics, 3 roamers and 5 breeders).

4. Discussion

Acquisition and expenditure of energy are key factors influencing individual fitness. We found that males following the solitary 'roamer' tactic spent more energy, in terms of RMR and DEE, than group-living males. At the same time, roamers gained body mass at a slower rate than philopatrics, indicating possible energy trade-offs between roaming and body mass gains.

In contrast to our results, a previous study on striped mice reported that roamers had a lower RMR than breeders and philopatrics, which was argued to be due to roamers being constrained by high thermoregulatory costs, which potentially forced them to save energy in their total energy budget, via decreasing their RMR [3]. The contrasting findings of these two studies may be the result of differences in the study design. An observer was present during RMR measurements in the previous study [3], whereas we video recorded animals inside metabolic chambers in the current study to minimize disturbance of the animals. Animals may perceive the presence of an observer as stressful, which can influence metabolic rate [58]. Overall, 60% higher RMR values in the previous study compared to the current study support this interpretation. Because we used a more controlled setting and had a higher sample size (79 males versus 27 males), we consider our current results as more representative with regard to tactic-specific differences in RMR.

Roamers had a higher RMR than breeders and philopatrics and these differences in RMR mirror the tactic-specific differences in DEE. It has been purported that RMR and DEE are intrinsically linked [13,59–61], and thus, differences in RMR could explain why roamers had a higher DEE than breeders. However, when concurrently measuring RMR and DEE in the same individual, RMR did not significantly influence DEE, but our sample size was restricted to 12 males for this part of the analysis. Inter-specific studies reported positive relationships between DEE and RMR (or BMR) in mammals and birds [13–15,62], while at the intra-specific level no such relationship was found [52,55,63,64]; with the exception of one study [65]. Thus, the nature of the relationship between DEE and RMR (or BMR) remains unclear.

As expected, roamers had a higher DEE than males of the two group-living tactics. Males following ARTs often differ with regard to energetically costly behaviour. For example, dispersed male Cape ground squirrels (*X. inauris*) spend less of their time feeding than natal

males [11] and in field crickets (Gryllus integer) courtship songs are more energetically costly than the mobile activity associated with the silent satellite strategy [66]. Differences in the expression of energetically costly behaviour between tactics of male striped mice could explain differences in DEE, as we showed previously for striped mice [46]. Our study showed that DEE increased with increasing travel distances and that this relationship was similar for males of all tactics. While roamers have larger home ranges than both group-living males (measured over 7 days; [3]), in the current study we found that roamers and breeders travelled similar distances during the day and had similar daily ranges. Importantly, these results indicate that the higher DEE found in roamers cannot be explained by higher locomotor activity. One behavioural aspect that differs between group-living males and solitary roamers is huddling with conspecifics at night. Striped mice nest above ground inside shrubs, and ambient night temperatures (ranging between -2 and 19°C during the study) are always considerably below their thermoneutral zone (30 \pm 1.0 °C; [44]). Group-living males (breeders and philopatrics) huddle with other group members and thereby save energy [18]. In contrast, solitary roamers likely incur higher thermoregulatory costs at night, which can be up to 50% higher compared to group-living males [18]. Thus, the higher energetic costs of the roaming tactic might be due to the higher thermoregulatory costs of solitary living.

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Why do males invest energy into the roaming tactic instead of surviving in the safety of their natal group until their competitive abilities improve to become bourgeois males? This could be due to their older age when compared to philopatrics combined with a high mortality rate and the fact that males typically experience only one reproductive cycle in their lifetime. Striped mice breed in spring and, although individuals can reach adulthood at the end of the breeding season in which they were born [31], they have to survive the hot dry season in summer before they can reproduce in the next spring. However, only around 30% of young males present at the start of the dry season survive until the next breeding season and can

become breeders (then approx. 1 year old), but very few (< 1%) survive for a second year (then being approx. 2 years old) [29]. If roamers were to remain philopatric and continue gaining body mass, they might only be able to switch to the bourgeois tactic when the only breeding season they experience has already passed. Thus, roamers might rather invest into gaining some, although comparatively diminished, reproductive success [20], since the alternative of remaining philopatric might not lead to any direct fitness benefits in the short breeding window available for them.

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Philopatrics were the youngest and lightest individuals, as also reported in a previous study [3], and, as expected, travelled shorter distances and gained body mass at a faster rate than breeders and roamers. Similarly, yearling male golden-mantled ground squirrels (Spermophilus saturatus) allocate more energy into body mass gain than older males, thereby improving their condition [67]. In the European ocellated wrasse (Symphodus ocellatus) nonreproductive males also gain body mass while reproductive males show considerable weight loss [68]. In contrast, male dispersed and natal Cape ground squirrels (X. inauris) have a similar body mass and body condition [11]. Philopatric male striped mice had lower DEE and lower RMR than roamers, suggesting that they followed an energy minimization strategy. Likewise, natal male Cape ground squirrels (X. inauris) have a lower RMR than dispersed males [11], and unadorned small male swordtails (Xiphophorus nigrensis) keep a stable metabolic rate in the presence of females while males with a large sword increase their metabolic rate [69]. In striped mice, faster body mass gain might be the main benefit of remaining philopatric versus adopting a solitary roaming tactic. If philopatrics were to switch tactic before reaching an appropriate body mass, they might gain only very little or no reproductive success. Small males face a trade-off between following a roaming tactic with comparatively low reproductive success versus remaining in the safety of their natal group to increase their competitive abilities, allowing them to subsequently switch to a tactic with a much higher reproductive success.

Because they are significantly younger than roamers, they have a much higher probability to survive until the next breeding season. Thus, small males might benefit the most if they invest in gaining body mass to improve their competitive abilities.

In conclusion, our study indicates that male ARTs of striped mice differ in DEE and RMR. Compared to group-living males, roamers had higher RMR and higher DEE. Roamers invest energy into roaming to gain some reproductive success, but gain body mass at a slow rate, which predicts a lowered likelihood of switching to the bourgeois tactic followed by the heaviest males of the population. Small philopatric males primarily invest in gaining body mass. Our study showed that ARTs are associated with changing investment and allocation between metabolic processes and body mass, and that future tactics might depend on the energy investment in prevailing tactics. In sum, considering energy-trade-offs in behavioural and life history traits provides important insights into the evolution of ARTs.

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Competing Interest

444 No competing interests declared.

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