

This bachelor thesis is about hatching synchrony in birds. Generally, among birds there are two types of hatching - asynchronous and synchronous- and the type of hatching is primarily determined by the time of the onset of incubation.

In many bird species, including most precocial ones, incubation does not begin until the last egg has been laid, which results in hatching of all the eggs within a few hours. In synchronously-hatched broods, all the chicks are about the same age. Thus no single individual has an advantage in size or strength over any of its siblings in the nest. The survival probability is then similar for all chicks which maximizes number of fledglings under favourable condition.

In contrast many species of birds begin to incubate as soon as the first eggs is laid and hatch their eggs asynchronously over a period of days or weeks, handicapping last-hatched chicks with an age and size disadvantage. Many hypotheses have been proposed to explain why female birds start to incubate before clutch completion and some of those suggest that asynchronous hatching is a parental strategy for raising the largest number of offspring that food resources will allow when the abundance of food for the chicks cannot be predicted at the time that eggs are laid.

The selective pressures leading to the evolution of synchronous or asynchronous strategies would appear from the literature to be the product of a great number of factors, for example female condition, food supply, embryo sex, risk of predation the nest, ambient temperature, intraclutch egg-size variation and so on.