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Mate sampling influences the intensity of sexual selection and the evolution of costly sexual ornaments

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Highlights

- During mate choice, females access a restricted sample from the available males.
- This mate sampling can influence mating decisions and thus sexual selection.
- In computer simulations, increased mate sampling intensified sexual selection.
- In an empirical dataset, we observed a pattern consistent with simulation results.

We conclude that mate sampling is a crucial process modulating sexual selection.

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