

# Behaviour in Humans & Other Animals

## Reproductive Behaviour

When animals are ready to **sexually reproduce**, they need to select a suitable **mate** of the opposite sex. This often involves special **courtship behaviour**. Usually the male will do some sort of display to try to attract a female.

For example, male birds often strut around showing off colourful feathers. Female birds tend to have dull, much less colourful feathers. (This is so that they are camouflaged when they are looking after their young in the nest.) The females are attracted to the males' colourful feathers.

Male Pheasant



## Mating

Most animals do not mate for life. They have several different mates. Some examples of animals that don't mate for life are given below:

### Lions

In a pride of lions there is usually one main male (often referred to as an 'alpha male'). He mates with all the females, which means that all the cubs in the pride are his.

### Sea-lions

Sea-lions behave in the same way. One 'alpha male' mates with all the females in his 'harem'.

There are some species which are **monogamous** (i.e. they have just one mate). Monogamous species include...

- puffins
- swans
- coyotes
- jackals.

However, monogamy amongst mammals is rare.

## Parental Care

### Mammals

Mammals care for their young in several ways:

- **Gestation / pregnancy** – a female mammal carries her young inside her uterus before they are born. This provides the unborn offspring with protection and so vastly increases their chance of survival.
- **Breast feeding** – a female nourishes her young with breast milk. This provides a constant and safe place to feed.
- **General protection** – a female, and sometimes the male, keeps an eye on their young as they are growing up. This helps to protect the offspring from predators and other harm. The young gradually learn from their parents how to look after themselves. But remember, some behaviours are **instinctive** – animals are born being able to do them.

