

1 **Temperature as a modulator of sexual selection and sexual conflict**

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32

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34 population viability, meta-analysis.

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37 **Abstract**

38 A central question in ecology and evolution is to understand why sexual selection varies so  
39 much in strength across taxa. Here, we contend that temperature, a critical abiotic ecological  
40 factor at a global taxonomic scale, can be a critical modulator of sexual selection. We outline  
41 the main pathways by which temperature can affect the strength of sexual selection and  
42 related phenomena (e.g. sexual conflict). This framework suggests that temperature may  
43 modulate sexual selection in ways that, depending on species-specific underlying  
44 mechanisms, can both exacerbate or buffer its intensity. We then tested this general  
45 prediction by conducting a meta-analysis of available studies experimentally manipulating  
46 temperature and reporting effects on the variance of male/female fitness components  
47 and/or traits under sexual selection. Our results show that temperature can have a large net  
48 impact on sexual selection in both sexes. Current studies focus on the direct effects that  
49 environmental temperature has on traits linked with individual fitness and population  
50 viability, ignoring eco-evolutionary feedbacks. Here, we show that studying the feedback  
51 between temperature and sexual selection processes can be vital to better understand  
52 variation in the strength of sexual selection in nature, and its consequences for population  
53 viability.

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## 66 Introduction

67 Through the ages, our planet has witnessed an unimaginable array of lifeforms, of sounds,  
68 colours, smells, and behaviours, of “*endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful*”, in  
69 Darwin’s own words (Darwin 1859). Many of these biological phenomena have been shaped  
70 by sexual selection, one of the main engines of evolution. Driven by competition for  
71 reproduction (Andersson 1994; Jennions & Kokko 2010), since Darwin’s first formulation in  
72 1871 (Darwin 1871) sexual selection has become a cornerstone to understand the evolution  
73 of male and female adaptations and life-histories (Andersson 1994), speciation (Janicke *et al.*  
74 2018), and the maintenance of sexual reproduction itself (Agrawal 2001). Precisely due to its  
75 central role in evolutionary theory, we have also come to understand that sexual selection is  
76 an equally important determinant of population viability and evolvability, and thus of its  
77 capacity to withstand environmental change (Pomiankowski & Moller 1995). Indeed, sexual  
78 selection is a potent mechanism by which the genome can be purged of deleterious  
79 mutations (Radwan 2004; Whitlock & Agrawal 2009) and, in so doing, effectively protect  
80 populations against extinction (Jarzebowska & Radwan 2010; Lumley *et al.* 2015). Sexual  
81 selection has also been shown to increase the rate of adaptation in traits under both sexual  
82 and natural selection via “genetic capture”(Rowe & Houle 1996; Lorch *et al.* 2003), which is  
83 presumed to be particularly effective in response to directional environmental change (Long  
84 *et al.* 2012; Martinez-Ruiz & Knell 2017; Parrett & Knell 2018), allowing populations where  
85 sexual selection is present or intense to adapt faster and hence be more effective in tracking  
86 the environment.

87 Strong sexual selection can also lead to sexual conflict (including sexually antagonistic  
88 coevolution), which can have complex direct and indirect repercussions on different sexual  
89 selection mechanisms and population viability. On the one hand, sexually antagonistic co-  
90 evolution can lead to and/or reinforce reproductive isolation and speciation (Parker &  
91 Partridge 1998; Rice 1998) or promote increased intraspecific genetic variation without  
92 speciation (Gavrilets 2014), thereby functioning as an engine of biodiversity. On the other  
93 hand, sexual conflict frequently entails detrimental effects on male, and in particular female,  
94 fitness. Sexual conflict decreases male and female fitness by displacing the sexes from their  
95 respective evolutionary optima (i.e. gender load; (Rice & Chippindale 2002)), and can further  
96 decrease female fitness if it leads to male adaptations that harm females (i.e. male harm; e.g.  
97 (Pitnick & Garcia-Gonzalez 2002)). This, in turn, leads to a decrease in population productivity

98 (i.e. by depressing net female productivity (Holland & Rice 1999; Arnqvist & Tuda 2010;  
99 Berger *et al.* 2016)), which can even lead to population extinction (Le Galliard *et al.* 2005).  
100 Whether sexual conflict leads to one or the other outcome will depend, among other things,  
101 on population size (Gay *et al.* 2010), the potential for gender load (Berger *et al.* 2016), and  
102 the degree and form of associated male harm adaptations and female counter-adaptations  
103 (Arnqvist & Rowe 2005). In addition, sexually antagonistic co-evolution can feedback to affect  
104 the opportunity, form and/or intensity of sexual selection. For example, avoiding male  
105 harassment (a common source of harm to females) in crickets leads to a larger opportunity  
106 for (and stronger) sexual selection (Hall *et al.* 2008). To summarize, there is now ample  
107 theoretical and empirical evidence that sexual selection (and sexual conflict) is a fundamental  
108 engine of biodiversity, a driving force of male and female adaptations and life-histories, and a  
109 keystone determinant of population viability and extinction risk.

110         Given the undisputed relevance of sexual selection for individual phenotypes and  
111 population fates, a central question in evolutionary biology is to disentangle why sexual  
112 selection and sexual conflict vary so much in their form, strength and outcomes across taxa.  
113 Selection does not operate in a void, and we have long realized that abiotic ecological factors  
114 are crucial to understand the operation of sexual selection (Emlen & Oring 1977; Maan &  
115 Seehausen 2011), and more recently of sexual conflict (Arbuthnott *et al.* 2014; Berger *et al.*  
116 2014; Perry *et al.* 2017; García-Roa *et al.* 2018; Perry & Rowe 2018). Actually, and despite the  
117 fact that studies on the factors governing underlying eco-evolutionary interactions are still  
118 scarce (Svensson 2018), there is increasing evidence that sexual selection very frequently  
119 fluctuates with changing environmental conditions (Cornwallis & Uller 2010; Miller &  
120 Svensson 2014; Evans & Garcia-Gonzalez 2016). For example, the strength and direction of  
121 sexual selection vary with resource quality and availability (Gwynne & Simmons 1990;  
122 Gillespie *et al.* 2014), population density (Kokko & Rankin 2006), or sex ratio (Punzalan *et al.*  
123 2010), amongst others (Miller & Svensson 2014).

124         Surprisingly, however, the role of temperature has received very little attention in  
125 relation to sexual selection and sexual conflict. While there is good evidence that sexual  
126 selection can influence the capacity of a population to withstand environmental change in  
127 the form of rising temperatures (Plesnar-Bielak *et al.* 2012b; Miller & Svensson 2014; Parrett  
128 & Knell 2018), the opposite causal relationship, that is, whether temperature fluctuations can

129 drive eco-evolutionary feedbacks affecting sexual selection, has received surprisingly little  
130 attention. Only a handful of studies so far have directly addressed this issue. In cold-water  
131 pipefish sexual selection seems to be stronger in warmer waters (Monteiro & Lyons 2012),  
132 and significant co-variation between water temperature and several potential indicators of  
133 sexual selection intensity (e.g. sexual size dimorphism) has been documented across  
134 populations along a thermal cline (Monteiro *et al.* 2017). Temperature has also been shown  
135 to disrupt mating patterns in *Artemia* (*Artemia franciscana*), ultimately modulating sexual  
136 selection intensity (Santos *et al.* 2018). In grey-seals (*Halichoerus grypus*), changes in local  
137 weather conditions affect the degree of polygyny and hence the opportunity for selection  
138 (Twiss *et al.* 2007). Similarly, a decade-long study in a population of free-ranging sand lizards  
139 (*Lacerta agilis*) reported that elevated temperatures correlated with an increase in the  
140 degree of polygyny, number of sires per clutch, and opportunity for post-copulatory sexual  
141 selection (Olsson *et al.* 2011). In the cigarette beetle (*Lasioderma serricorne*), thermal  
142 conditions affect post-copulatory but not pre-copulatory traits, which suggests that  
143 temperature variation moderates the relative weight of (as well as the covariances between)  
144 the two episodes of sexual selection which, in turn, would determine the total opportunity  
145 for sexual selection (Suzaki *et al.* 2018). Finally, in an elegant study in another beetle species,  
146 the seed beetle *Callosobruchus maculatus*, Berger and colleagues recently reported an  
147 increase in the opportunity for selection under conditions of exposure to a stressful thermal  
148 environment (Berger *et al.* 2014), with very similar results being subsequently reported in a  
149 more recent study in the same species (Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2017).

150

### 151 **A framework for the study of temperature and sexual selection**

152 In conjunction, the handful of studies above provides preliminary evidence in support of the  
153 idea that temperature can be a fundamental abiotic factor modulating sexual selection, but  
154 evidence so far is scant and mostly indirect. This is striking given that temperature is a  
155 keystone determinant affecting the physiology and ecology of most animal and plant species,  
156 along with many reproductive parameters that are key modulators of sexual selection (e.g.  
157 timing of reproduction, duration of the reproductive season, resource availability and quality,  
158 population density, sex ratio etc.). Furthermore, beyond such a limited body of evidence we  
159 also seem to lack a conceptual framework to explore how and why temperature effects on  
160 organisms may feedback to modulate the action of sexual selection, and when we might

161 expect such modulation to be important. A main objective of this paper is to fill this gap by  
162 outlining pathways by which temperature can directly or indirectly affect the opportunity for,  
163 and strength of, sexual selection, and by extension, a population's viability and evolvability  
164 (Fig. 1). We also discuss the most likely avenues of future research in this area, and briefly  
165 explore how understanding the link between sexual selection, sexual conflict (Box 1) and  
166 temperature may provide crucial insights into the effects of rapid temperature changes on  
167 populations (Fig. 2 & Box 2).

168

### 169 *Direct temperature effects on the ecology of sexual selection*

170 It has been long recognized that temperature can affect sexual selection through its effects  
171 on population dynamics (Gavrilets 2000; Gay *et al.* 2010). To the extent that temperature  
172 variation can underlie population growth (e.g. through the availability of nutrients), pose  
173 limits to population size, determine the spatial-temporal distribution of populations and  
174 individuals (e.g. driving population subdivision and consequently altering population sizes and  
175 the probabilities of encountering the opposite sex; (Yasui & Garcia-Gonzalez 2016)),  
176 population viscosity and/or mating patch size (McDonald *et al.* 2013; Pizzari *et al.* 2015;  
177 McDonald & Pizzari 2018), temperature can moderate sexual selection at large. Beyond these  
178 obvious effects, however, the strength and form of sexual selection ultimately depends on  
179 the mating system of any given population, and hence on the “ecology of sexual selection”  
180 (Emlen & Oring 1977; Schuster & Wade 2003). As we review below, temperature can have  
181 direct effects on many of the key parameters in the ecology of sexual selection (Fig. 1A).

### 182 *Environmental potential for polygyny*

183 There are multiple ways in which temperature may affect the environmental potential for  
184 polygyny/polyandry, mainly by affecting male and female spatial-temporal distribution. For  
185 example by prolonging/shortening the reproductive season (Sheriff *et al.* 2011), temperature  
186 shifts may make female reproduction more or less synchronous and/or shorten/spread out  
187 the breeding population in time, hence increasing/decreasing male opportunities to  
188 monopolize females and ultimately the environmental potential for polygyny/polyandry  
189 (Olsson *et al.* 2011). Similarly, in the Barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), warming temperatures  
190 have been reported to result in increased protandry, and this has been associated to an  
191 increase in the size of a secondary sexual character suggestive of stronger sexual selection

192 (Moller 2004). Female diapause is also controlled by temperature in many insect species,  
193 while males usually either lack reproductive diapause or have a less intense diapause than  
194 females (Pener 1992). As such, temperature effects on the onset of female reproductive  
195 diapause can, in theory, drastically affect the synchrony of female receptivity within the  
196 reproductive season, with potentially important consequences for polygyny and polygamy  
197 levels. In essence, temperature is bound to affect male and female timing in entering the  
198 mating pool, as well as the amount of time they spend there, which ultimately affect  
199 operational sex ratios and sexual selection (Kokko *et al.* 2012).

#### 200 *Sex-specific reproduction costs/benefits*

201 Changes in environmental temperatures and associated environmental stress can alter the  
202 costs/benefits of reproduction in a sex-specific way (e.g. costs of investment in offspring, sex-  
203 specific mortality linked to reproduction, costs of parental care, offspring survival etc.),  
204 affecting sex-specific selection pressures and the opportunity for sexual selection (Fig. 1). For  
205 example, Grazer and Martin (Grazer & Martin 2012) showed that the survival costs of  
206 reproduction for female *Tribolium castaneum* decrease at higher temperatures. Similarly, in  
207 seed beetles thermal stress has been shown to affect selective pressures in a sex-specific  
208 way, whereby thermal stress increased the opportunity for selection in adult males, but not  
209 females (Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2017). Studies looking at this link are still very scarce  
210 (Grazer & Martin 2012; Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2017), and focus on the short-term plastic  
211 consequences of thermal stress, but they provide good preliminary evidence that such  
212 effects are not only possible, but theoretically expected (Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2017).

#### 213 *Potential reproductive rate (PRR), the operational sex ratio (OSR) and density*

214 Second, several studies have shown that temperature can drastically modulate the potential  
215 reproductive rate (PRR) of males and females, and in a sex-specific manner (Kvarnemo 1994).  
216 For example, environmental temperature has frequently been found to affect the availability  
217 of nutritional resources during reproduction (Vatka *et al.* 2011), which is generally expected  
218 to affect female more than male PRR because egg production is particularly dependent on  
219 food intake in many animals (Warner *et al.* 2007). Much in the same way, temperature shifts  
220 are likely to affect oviposition site availability in many species (e.g.(Fogleman 1979; Berger *et al.*  
221 *al.* 2008)), which could also differentially affect the PRR of females. On the other hand,  
222 temperature may differentially increase male (vs. female) PRR if male reproductive rates are

223 particularly dependent on activity levels, as is frequently the case in species with resource-  
224 defence polygynous systems. Temperature also drastically influences incubation time,  
225 particularly in species where egg development depends almost exclusively on environmental  
226 temperature (most ectotherms), thus greatly determining the PRR of the sex in charge of  
227 incubation and brood care (Kokko & Jennions 2008; Kokko *et al.* 2012). This is the case in  
228 sand gobies (*Pomatoschistus minutus*), where males build a nest and care for the eggs until  
229 hatching. Increased temperatures accelerate egg developmental rates and ultimately male  
230 PRR (Kvarnemo 1994). Sex-specific temperature effects on PRR are expected to modulate the  
231 operational sex ratio (OSR), and hence the strength of sexual selection (Kvarnemo 1996;  
232 Schuster & Wade 2003). Temperature can also directly affect the OSR, a phenomenon bound  
233 to be particularly common in species with temperature-dependent sex-determination  
234 (Cunningham *et al.* 2017). Finally, population density has been shown to be a crucial  
235 determinant of mating systems, and hence sexual selection processes, in many taxa. Density  
236 can strongly affect mating skew or mate encounter rates, for example, with cascading effects  
237 on mate choice, mate guarding, re-mating rates or female resistance (Kokko & Rankin 2006).  
238 In turn, population density (and population dynamics at large) is frequently bound to be  
239 under the strong influence of temperature (Gamelon *et al.* 2017). Through its effects on  
240 population density, temperature could thus also be an important determinant of sexual  
241 selection (Fig. 1).

242

### 243 *Indirect temperature effects on the ecology of sexual selection*

244 Temperature effects on the ecology of sexual selection can be mediated not only by direct  
245 effects of temperature on the ecology of sexual selection (Fig. 1A), but indirectly by  
246 temperature influences on phenotypic traits that subsequently modulate important  
247 parameters in the ecology of sexual selection (Fig. 1B).

### 248 *Behaviour, physiology and life-history traits*

249 Temperature has been shown to drive changes in many facets of reproductive behaviour,  
250 including underlying (e.g. physiological) mechanisms, which can in turn be important  
251 determinants of sexual selection intensity. For example, temperature is a key determinant of  
252 metabolism and activity levels in most species of animals (Kearney *et al.* 2010; Gunderson &  
253 Leal 2015), which can directly affect mate searching, the number of male-male and male-



254 female interactions, and general patterns of male and female spatio-temporal distribution.  
255 Much in the same way, temperature has been shown to modulate male-male competition  
256 intensity (e.g. aggressiveness (Kvarnemo 1998)), courtship rates, mating latency and duration  
257 (Jiao *et al.* 2009), female choice (Conrad *et al.* 2017), re-mating rates (Katsuki & Miyatake  
258 2009), and female fecundity (Nunney & Cheung 1997). There are also studies showing that  
259 temperature affects sexual signals and/or sexual signalling behaviour (Llusia *et al.* 2013;  
260 Sentis *et al.* 2015; Conrad *et al.* 2017), with potential impact on the mate choice and  
261 intrasexual competition. Actually, any effect of temperature on the phenotypic mean and  
262 variance of sexually selected characters is likely to influence selection on the trait (the  
263 covariance between trait magnitude and fitness). Given that the expression of many traits,  
264 including secondary sexual traits, can be dependent on temperature (West & Packer 2002;  
265 House *et al.* 2013; Reinhardt *et al.* 2015), the significance of this environmental factor on the  
266 evolution of mate preferences, and on sexual selection generally, will be evident. Post-  
267 copulatory processes have also been reported to be under the influence of temperature. It is  
268 well known that the sperm phenotype is in many species contingent on temperature  
269 (Reinhardt *et al.* 2015; Sales *et al.* 2018). Most notably sperm competition ability (i.e. in  
270 terms of both sperm offence and defence) has been shown to be profoundly influenced by  
271 temperature, via effects on the amount and quality of sperm transferred (Katsuki & Miyatake  
272 2009; Lieshout *et al.* 2013; Vasudeva *et al.* 2014). Sperm competitiveness determines siring  
273 success, which together with mating success is the main component of male reproductive  
274 success in polyandrous species. Critically, then, the action of temperature on sperm  
275 competitiveness has the potential to directly affect the opportunity for sexual selection,  
276 either through its effects on the variance across males in post-copulatory reproductive  
277 success, or on the covariance between the pre-mating and post-mating episodes of sexual  
278 selection (Evans & Garcia-Gonzalez 2016).

279         Finally, temperature has been shown to exert significant changes in life-history traits  
280 across different species and populations (Jensen *et al.* 2008; Isaac 2009), some of which are  
281 sex-specific (Rogell *et al.* 2014). Many of these changes (e.g. in lifespan, the onset of  
282 reproduction, survival, age or size at maturity) have great potential to affect important  
283 parameters modulating intra- or inter-sexual competition, such as the OSR, PRR or the  
284 environmental potential for polygyny. The broad influence of temperature on key  
285 reproductive behaviours and life-history traits highlights its potential importance as a

286 modulator of sexual selection, but makes it all the more surprising that this link has received  
287 such little attention so far.

### 288 *Body size, sexual size dimorphism and condition*

289 Body size, a primary determinant of both inter- and intra-sexual competition, is under the  
290 strong influence of environmental temperature via both plastic and evolutionary responses  
291 (Lindmark *et al.* 2018). In the seed beetle *Stator limbatus* temperature has been shown to  
292 affect scramble competition, whereby smaller males are more successful at finding mates  
293 than large males when at cool temperatures (Moya-Laraño *et al.* 2007). Similarly, sexual size  
294 dimorphism is a frequent proxy of sexual selection intensity, and also likely to be affected by  
295 temperature (Fox *et al.* 2007). For example, via changes in the time and size at emergence,  
296 temperature has been shown to reduce sexual dimorphism in some insects (De Block & Stoks  
297 2003), which is predicted to affect the capacity of males to monopolize females and in turn  
298 decrease the opportunity for selection (Vanpa *et al.* 2008). Shifts in temperature during  
299 development have also been shown to directly influence sexual dimorphism (Ketola *et al.*  
300 2012). Indeed, sexual differences in the sensitivity to rearing temperatures, which would lead  
301 to variation in sexual size dimorphism, may be widespread (Fox *et al.* 2007). More generally,  
302 temperature changes may, at least in the short-term, affect sexual selection due to sex-  
303 biased effects on metabolic rate and/or PRR in species exhibiting strong sexual size  
304 dimorphism. In species with strong sexual size dimorphism, and controlling for other  
305 potential effects discussed above, temperature will tend to affect the metabolic rate of the  
306 smaller sex more than that of the larger sex, simply due to the surface/volume relationship  
307 (i.e. surface scales bi-dimensionally with size, while volume scales tri-dimensionally with size).  
308 In particular, increasing temperatures will tend to increase the relative PRR of the smaller sex  
309 (e.g. males in species with strong fecundity selection –such as *D. melanogaster*– and females  
310 in most species with strong sexual selection), which would result in modifications in the  
311 strength of sexual selection.

### 312 *Constraints and trade-offs*

313 Temperature may also modulate sexual selection by its effects on existing trade-offs. For  
314 example, environmental temperatures can affect pathogen abundance and virulence, as well  
315 as hosts' susceptibility and immune response (Elliot *et al.* 2002). To the extent that immunity  
316 is related to body condition and that it trades-off with reproductive effort and primary and

317 secondary sexual traits (Simmons & Roberts 2005; Cotter *et al.* 2010; Mills *et al.* 2010),  
318 studying the interplay between thermal ecology and immune ecology, and their combined  
319 effects on sexual selection, may inform on other avenues via which temperature can affect  
320 processes underlying sexual selection.

321 Finally, some studies have established links between temperature variation and  
322 changes in the levels of genetic variance (measured as additive genetic variances, heritability,  
323 or evolvability) and in morphological or life-history traits (Bubliy & Loeschcke 2002; Sgro &  
324 Hoffmann 2002; Husby *et al.* 2011; Martinez-Padilla *et al.* 2017). These results show that the  
325 evolutionary potential of populations to adapt to changing environments is constrained by  
326 genetic architectures that can be temperature-dependent. They also raise the intriguing  
327 possibility that temperature can significantly affect the genetic variances of sexually selected  
328 traits, or traits that mediate the benefits of sexual selection. For instance, in Martinez-Padilla  
329 *et al.*'s (Martinez-Padilla *et al.* 2017) study on data from 20 European wild bird populations  
330 belonging to 12 species, the evolutionary potential of traits that were related to body size  
331 and body mass (relevant for sexual selection in general), were seen to be associated with  
332 environmental favourability, which was greatly influenced by temperature.

### 333 *Temperature effects through correlated abiotic factors*

334 It is important to note that many of the effects described above may be driven by abiotic  
335 factors that are correlated with temperature, and not by temperature itself (Fig. 1). For  
336 example, increases in environmental temperature may facilitate eutrophication and  
337 consequently lead to elevated water turbidity (Paerl & Paul 2012), which may have obvious  
338 consequences for the action of sexual selection in aquatic animals in which mate choice is  
339 based on visual signals, and/or increase the importance of scramble competition vs. mate  
340 choice. Human activities leading to higher turbidity have been identified as important threats  
341 to the biological diversity of one of the most notable examples of explosive evolution known,  
342 the highly diverse species flocks of cichlid fish from the Great Lakes of Africa. In these fish,  
343 water turbidity is known to interfere with mate choice and to relax sexual selection  
344 (Seehausen *et al.* 1997; Maan & Seehausen 2011), and similar findings have been reported in  
345 other systems (Engstrom & Candolin 2007; Candolin *et al.* 2016). In contrast, in the broad-  
346 nosed pipefish, *Syngnathus typhle*, a species with male pregnancy, turbidity strengthens  
347 sexual selection (Sundin *et al.* 2017). What seems clear, although largely overlooked, is that

348 temperature may be an important mediator in these effects.

349

### 350 **Meta-analysis: experimental evidence that temperature impacts on sexual selection**

351 To test whether available data support the idea that temperature can significantly modulate  
352 sexual selection, we conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the existing  
353 literature focusing on studies that experimentally manipulated temperature and measured its  
354 impact on either: 1) mating or reproductive success of males and/or females or 2) its effect  
355 on traits known to be under sexual selection. Our focus in this review is to explore  
356 temperature effects *per se*, beyond any effects that temperature may have due to subjecting  
357 individuals/populations to a new environment to which they are maladapted. Environmental  
358 duress can modulate the strength of sexual selection in a variety of ways (Arbuthnott &  
359 Whitlock 2018), for example increasing sexual selection if the variability in fitness is inflated  
360 when populations are pushed off their fitness peak (Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2017;  
361 Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2018a). As such, drastic temperature changes can modulate sexual  
362 selection not due to specific effects of temperature but by imposing a stressful environment,  
363 much in the same way as a pollutant or a sharp change in another abiotic factors would. To  
364 avoid conflating this type of effects, here we explicitly avoided studies implementing  
365 heat/cold shock treatments and also assessed the potential influence of using extreme  
366 temperature treatments (see below).

367         It is also important to note that there are no clear theoretical expectations regarding  
368 the directionality of temperature effects on sexual selection processes. As laid out in the  
369 proposed framework above, increases/decreases in temperature are not necessarily  
370 expected to impact sexual selection parameters in the same direction across different  
371 species. Some biological processes will tend to exhibit monotonic relationships temperature  
372 that are relevant to selection. For example, given that temperature constraints certain  
373 fundamental biochemical properties such as protein folding and enzymic reactions, it has  
374 recently been proposed that mutations will have increasing fitness effects, and hence lead to  
375 stronger selection, with increasing temperatures (Berger *et al.* 2018). However, the net  
376 relationship between temperature and sexual selection across taxa is likely to rest largely on  
377 the physiology, morphology, behaviour and mating system of each species. Thus, our main  
378 aim was not so much to explore the directionality of the relationship between temperature

379 and sexual selection, but to test the more general prediction that temperature has the  
380 potential to affect sexual selection in different species, irrespective of direction.

### 381 *1- Literature Search and Data Collection*

382 We conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the existing literature following the  
383 PRISMA protocol (Liberati *et al.* 2009) as closely as possible. More specifically, we looked for  
384 studies that experimentally manipulated temperature and measured its impact on either: 1)  
385 mating or reproductive success of males and/or females or 2) its effect on traits known to be  
386 under sexual selection. We only extracted trait values when it was clear from the reported  
387 paper, or the raw data, that the trait directly impacted reproductive success. If traits had a  
388 tenuous link with reproductive fitness they were not included. We conducted a first literature  
389 search on 11/09/18 using the Scopus, PubMed and Web of Science (WoS) databases with the  
390 search terms “sexual selection” AND “selecti\* intensity” AND “temperature” or “sexual  
391 selection” AND “selecti\* strength” AND “temperature” for animal taxa. Overall, very few  
392 papers were found with these search strings (21 total: Scopus = 5, PubMed = 11 and WoS =  
393 5). After removing duplicates only 15 papers were relevant and 2 more were added through  
394 forward and backward searches of citations and references in the 15 papers. Given the small  
395 number of hits, we conducted a second search on 17/09/18 across the same databases (i.e.,  
396 Scopus, PubMed and WoS), using a more general search query: “sexual selection” AND  
397 “fitness” AND “temperature” OR “mating success” AND “fitness” AND “temperature” OR  
398 “reproductive success” AND “fitness” AND “temperature”. This search string was able to  
399 capture a broader set of studies for screening. In total, we found 747 studies (Scopus = 291;  
400 PubMed = 98; WoS = 358) and after removing 249 duplicates, we were left with 498 unique  
401 studies for more detailed screening. Based on the title and abstract we excluded studies that  
402 were not on animals (n = 38), had no measure of sexual selection or traits under sexual  
403 selection (n = 354), did not do a temperature manipulation (n = 145), and where the effects  
404 of temperature could not be isolated because they were confounded by other abiotic or  
405 biotic variables (n = 46). We also excluded n = 12 review and theoretical model papers. Note  
406 that many studies met more than one of the above criteria, and after this search we were left  
407 with a total of 61 papers across both searches as being potentially relevant. We carefully  
408 screened these papers to identify articles that met all our above inclusion criteria, and at this  
409 stage we also excluded all papers reporting heat/cold shock treatments), which left us with a  
410 final set of 19 studies.

411 We extracted mean fitness or trait value from each temperature treatment along  
412 with the standard deviation and sample size for each group from tables and figures [using the  
413 R package *metaDigitise* to extract from figures – (Pick *et al.* 2018)]. Experimental designs  
414 were highly variable across studies and there were designs that exhibited some level of non-  
415 independence in replicate measurements within temperature treatments (e.g.,  
416 measurements of replicate individuals from isofemale lines). Given that this can affect the  
417 sampling variance of the effect size we used conservative sample sizes (i.e., the number of  
418 independent lines, or number of mating cages) (Noble *et al.* 2017a). However, when raw data  
419 were available, and could be clearly interpreted, we calculated an intraclass correlation  
420 coefficient for the clusters (e.g., lines) and computed an ‘effective sample size’ for the  
421 treatment and used this for calculating the sampling variance (Noble *et al.* 2017a). Fitness  
422 was often reported on a proportion scale (e.g., the average proportion of mating’s/offspring  
423 sired). While these are not normally distributed, they were often treated as so in the paper,  
424 and given that we required ratio-scale data for our effect sizes (see below) we assumed that  
425 these were approximately normally distributed in accordance with the study. Nonetheless,  
426 we conducted a sensitivity analysis to determine if effect sizes calculated with proportion  
427 data were different than non-proportion data and included this as a covariate to assess their  
428 impact on inferences. This has little impact on our major conclusions and so we assumed  
429 proportion data was similar to effect sizes derived from other measurement types (See  
430 *Supplementary Materials Section 6.2*). A few studies conducted experimental manipulations  
431 under fluctuating conditions, but for comparison across studies we focused on constant  
432 temperature treatments. In addition, several studies used more than two temperature  
433 treatments, in which cases we extracted only the extreme temperatures provided within the  
434 most “natural” range for each population (i.e. within the range of minimum-maximum mean  
435 monthly temperatures in spring-summer). We acknowledge that some studies included were  
436 on populations that were part of experimental evolution experiments reared in the lab at  
437 specific constant temperatures. It is not entirely clear the impact this may have on variance if  
438 the temperature manipulation was conducted using conditions population were reared at  
439 (see *Supplementary Materials section 6.2* for a more thorough discussion of this problem),  
440 however, we dealt with this issue to some extent by analysing magnitudes of variance  
441 difference (see below). Finally, we were conservative and only used data from treatments

442 where there was potential for sexual selection to occur (e.g., multiple males and / or females  
443 competing) and excluded data from treatments of single pair mating experiments.

#### 444 *2- Effect size statistics– Comparing variance in fitness*

445 We compared how temperature impacted both the mean and variance across experimental  
446 groups using the log response ratio (lnRR), the log variance ratio (lnVR) and the log coefficient  
447 of variation ratio (lnCVR) (for effect size equations see Nakagawa et al. 2015). We were most  
448 interested in how variance in reproductive success, or traits known to be directly related to  
449 reproductive success, change as a function of temperature as this directly tests temperature  
450 effects on sexual selection, and so, we focus mainly on lnVR and lnCVR in our meta-analysis,  
451 but we report the results from lnRR in the *Supplementary Materials*. We used lnVR as a direct  
452 estimate of the variance, however, lnVR does not account for mean-variance relationships  
453 that existed in our data (See *Supplementary Materials*), and so, we used lnCVR to estimate  
454 how variance in reproductive success change independent of changes in average fitness /  
455 trait between temperature treatments (Nakagawa et al. 2015). In all cases, when using  
456 directional effect sizes (i.e., not absolute magnitude) positive effect sizes indicated higher  
457 temperature treatments had a larger variance compared to lower temperature treatments,  
458 whereas negative effect sizes indicated the opposite.

#### 459 *3- Moderator Variables*

460 We collected a number of variables we, *a priori*, predicted would moderate the impact of  
461 temperature on sexual selection within and across studies. These included: 1) the  
462 temperature difference between experimental treatments (continuous variable) – larger  
463 temperature differences between treatments are likely to lead to greater effect sizes; 2) the  
464 sex of the sample – we predict stronger sexual selection and effects of temperature in males  
465 compared to females (Janicke *et al.* 2016); 3) life-history stage at which the temperature  
466 manipulation took place (i.e., ‘lifetime’, ‘juvenile/early’, ‘adults’) – given that temperature can  
467 impact development that subsequently affects reproductive traits and success; and 4)  
468 whether the trait in question was a ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ proxy for sexual selection, where  
469 ‘direct’ estimates were those measuring some aspect of mating or reproductive success and  
470 ‘indirect’ were those estimated with traits that were linked to mating or reproductive  
471 success. In some cases, “hot” or “cold” temperature treatments were necessarily outside of  
472 this range, so we also classified all effects sizes depending on whether the temperature  
473 treatment was “natural” or “stressful”. Briefly, if experimental individuals came from a

474 natural population, treatments were categorized as “natural” vs. “stressful” depending on  
475 whether they were within the aforementioned max-min temperature range for that  
476 population. If experimental individuals came from populations adapted to the lab (i.e. kept  
477 for more than 100 generations under a constant temperature regime), we considered  
478 temperature treatments  $> 4^{\circ}\text{C}$  away from their normal rearing temperature as stressful. In  
479 two cases, experimental individuals came from long-term lab populations reared at a given  
480 temperature that were then subject to a short-term ( $< 20$  generations; (Plesnar-Bielak *et al.*  
481 2012a; Plesnar-Bielak *et al.* 2018)) experimental evolution study at a different temperature;  
482 in these two cases we considered the long-term rearing temperature as the “adapted”  
483 temperature.

#### 484 4- Meta-analysis

485 We used multi-level meta-analytic (MLMA) and multi-level meta-regression models (MLMR)  
486 to test temperature effects on sexual selection and to explore drivers of effect size variation  
487 (Hadfield & Nakagawa 2010; Nakagawa & Santos 2012). In all models we included a random  
488 effect of study and species and also included an observation-level random effect to estimate  
489 a residual variance given *metaphor* (Viechtbauer 2010) does not estimate one by default.  
490 While we had a diversity of species in our dataset, these were taxonomically biased towards  
491 insects and we had difficulty resolving the phylogenetic position of most of the taxa in our  
492 dataset (tested with TimeTree.org – only 5 / 15 species were identified) – we therefore were  
493 limited in our ability to control for phylogeny in our analyses (Chamberlain *et al.* 2012; Noble  
494 *et al.* 2017a). However, we generated tree topology and assessed the impact of including  
495 phylogenetic correlation matrices in our models. In many cases, including phylogenetic  
496 correlation matrices or not including them did not impact our results (See *Supplementary*  
497 *Materials*) and so we just controlled for species in our models. We also assessed publication  
498 bias by looking at funnel plots (See Fig. S1 – Section 5, *Supplementary Materials*).

499 In addition to estimating the overall directional mean effect across studies from our  
500 MLMA models, we estimated measures of effect size heterogeneity using  $I^2$  (Higgins &  
501 Thompson 2002; Nakagawa & Santos 2012). We estimated the between study heterogeneity  
502 ( $I^2_{\text{stdy}}$  – proportion of variation in effects from shared studies), species heterogeneity ( $I^2_{\text{sp}}$  –  
503 proportion of variation in effects from shared species) and total sampling heterogeneity ( $I^2_{\text{err}}$   
504 – proportion of variation in effects resulting from sampling variance). However, as discussed  
505 above, directional predictions regarding temperatures role on sexual selection processes



506 depends on many factors which make clear directional predictions on how variance is  
507 expected to change challenging. As such, we estimated the overall magnitude of variance  
508 difference across temperature treatments. To avoid bias in these estimates, we modelled the  
509 directional effect sizes assuming a normal distribution and then subsequently transformed  
510 this mean estimate using the folded normal distribution, to get the mean absolute magnitude  
511 (sensu (Morrissey 2016)). To estimate uncertainty around this estimate, we used a Bayesian  
512 approach with *MCMCglmm* (Hadfield 2010), and applied the entire posterior distribution of  
513 mean estimates to the folded normal to generate 95% credible intervals.

514 We tested whether our hypothesized moderators explained heterogeneity in effects  
515 using our MLMR models. Given our limited sample size (Males:  $n = 31$  effects from  $k = 14$   
516 studies; Females:  $n = 18$  effects from 9 studies), we limited the number of moderators fit to  
517 each model to two, and modelled the sexes separately as subset analyses. We ended up not  
518 modelling developmental stage given that most of the studies manipulated temperature over  
519 the lifetime of the animals. A full presentation on the results and models run can be found in  
520 the *Supplementary Materials Sections 2, 3 and 6*.

#### 521 *5- Meta-analysis results and discussion*

522 Experimental studies assessing the effects of temperature on sexual selection are currently  
523 biased towards insects (16/19 studies), with only one on arachnids and two on fish. Between  
524 study heterogeneity was moderate to high for males ( $I^2_{\text{stdy}}$ : InVR = 0.77, InCVR = 0.34) and  
525 small to non-existent for females ( $I^2_{\text{stdy}}$ : InVR = 0.13, InCVR = 0), however, differences  
526 between males and females likely reflect the different number of effects reported for each  
527 sex. Nonetheless, there was still a high degree of heterogeneity beyond simple sampling  
528 variance ( $I^2_{\text{err}}$  - Males: InVR = 0.16, InCVR = 0.31; females: InVR = 0.33, InCVR = 0.31).

529 The overall directional mean effect on variance in all cases did not differ from zero  
530 (although there does seem to be a trend whereby higher temperatures are associated with  
531 increased variance), so there was no clear directional impact of temperature on sexual  
532 selection (Fig. 3). In contrast, the magnitude of effects was moderate, suggesting that  
533 temperature does indeed influence direct and indirect measures of sexual selection (Fig. 3).  
534 At an average temperature difference between treatments of 7.5 degrees Celsius, male  
535 variance decreased at the higher temperature relative to the lower temperature if the  
536 temperature manipulation was stressful or if it was a direct measure of reproductive fitness

537 (Fig. 3A – lnVR). However, this effect was driven by changes in the mean phenotype and  
538 when controlling for the mean there was no significant change in variance resulting from  
539 stressed or natural conditions and as well as direct fitness measure (Fig. 3B). In contrast,  
540 when controlling for the mean, traits indirectly associated with reproductive success showed  
541 an increased variance relative to lower temperatures (Fig. 3B). Results from females generally  
542 mirrored results from males, excepted it was not possible to robustly compare direct and  
543 indirect fitness measures given that indirect measures came from one study. An interesting  
544 difference with males is that, accounting for changes in the mean, stressful temperatures  
545 seemed to explain the observed increase in the variance of reproductive success in females  
546 (Fig. 3C & D). This may indicate that temperature effects on the variance of female  
547 reproductive success, and hence potentially sexual selection, are largely mediated by  
548 environmental duress. In contrast, temperature effects on males were not dependent on  
549 whether temperature treatments were natural or stressful, suggesting temperature *per se*  
550 impacts sexual selection in males.

551 In conjunction, our meta-analysis offers suggestive evidence in support of the idea  
552 that temperature may be an important modulator of sexual selection. As evidenced by our  
553 systematic search, available data are scant and come mostly from studies that did not aim to  
554 measure the relationship between temperature and sexual selection. We did find a few other  
555 observational studies reporting correlations between temperature and sexual selection in  
556 wild populations (the most relevant ones are discussed above), but interpretation in these  
557 cases is problematic due to the large number of confounding co-variables (e.g. humidity,  
558 precipitation). In addition, we failed to include Santos et al.'s (Santos *et al.* 2018) relevant  
559 study where they clearly show that temperatures disrupt mating patterns, which impacts  
560 sexual selection intensity, in *Artemia*. In this study, the authors measured selection  
561 differentials based on size differences between mated and unmated individuals. Body size  
562 has been shown to be under sexual selection in this species, but we opted to conservatively  
563 eliminate this from our meta-analysis because body size is also under strong natural selection  
564 and directly influenced by temperature. For the reasons stated above, available studies were  
565 altogether surprisingly scarce. This difficulted proper evaluation of interesting arising  
566 questions, such as the existence of sex-specific temperature effects on sexual selection and a  
567 general trend in the directionality of such effects (Berger *et al.* 2018).

568

## 569 **Concluding remarks**

570 To conclude, there is now ample theoretical and empirical evidence that sexual selection  
571 (and sexual conflict) is key to understand male and female adaptations and life-histories, and  
572 can be a critical determinant of population viability. Given the relevance of sexual selection  
573 for individual phenotypes and population fates, a central question in evolutionary biology is  
574 therefore to disentangle why sexual selection and sexual conflict vary so much in their form,  
575 strength and outcomes across taxa. The role of ecology in explaining sexual selection has  
576 been considered prominent so far; albeit less so in the case of sexual conflict. Surprisingly,  
577 though, the specific role of temperature, perhaps the most important abiotic ecological  
578 factor at a global taxonomic scale, has been relatively ignored. Here, we provide preliminary  
579 evidence that temperature can indeed modulate sexual selection in a biologically meaningful  
580 way, and develop a framework that will hopefully foster much needed research in this area.  
581 We contend a priority for the immediate future is to explore fundamental questions about  
582 the interplay between temperature and sexual selection, with respect to short-term plastic  
583 changes (i.e. behavioural plasticity; Box 3), intergenerational and transgenerational effects,  
584 evolutionary responses, and the consequences such processes have for population viability.  
585 For example, upcoming studies will need to consider the effects of adult vs. developmental  
586 thermal environments, constant vs. fluctuating temperature regimes (or heat/cold shocks),  
587 or the role of behaviour in buffering temperature effects on reproductive parameters and  
588 mating systems in natural populations (and thus sexual selection processes).

589         Specifically, there is much need for experimental studies, ideally on individuals from  
590 wild populations, that manipulate temperature within their natural range and ask how such  
591 manipulation affects their mating system, ensuing sexual selection and/or sexual conflict  
592 intensity, and if possible population viability. Similarly useful will be comprehensive field  
593 studies that seek to: a) Identify differences in traits between populations (e.g. secondary  
594 sexual traits), b) document whether such differences can be explained by variation in the  
595 strength and/or form of sexual selection (e.g. strength of male-male competition, relative  
596 importance of inter- vs. intra-sexual selection), c) document the causes and underlying  
597 mechanisms of sexual selection (e.g., social interactions, OSR etc.), d) show that temperature  
598 changes causal interactions in ways that modify selection (e.g., weaker social interactions in  
599 hot climates) and e) study the consequences of temperature's impact on sexual selection in  
600 terms of population viability. In addition to advancing our understanding of sexual selection

601 (and sexual conflict) we suggest studies along these lines can be fundamental for a  
602 comprehensive understanding of the impact that rapid environmental changes in  
603 temperature (e.g. due to global warming) may have in terms of population extinction. While  
604 current studies focus mainly on the direct effects that rising temperatures have on traits  
605 linked with population viability, this approach ignores the potentially important feedbacks on  
606 processes mediating sexual selection (Fig. 2). Beyond directly affecting population viability,  
607 rising temperatures may modulate sexual selection in ways that can both exacerbate (e.g. if  
608 rising temperatures slow sexual selection and, with it, the ability to purge mutations and/or  
609 viability of populations) or buffer (e.g. if rising temperatures decrease sexual conflict, and  
610 with it gender load) its impact on populations.

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623 **Supplementary material:** <https://osf.io/5eqfu/>  
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Figure 1.

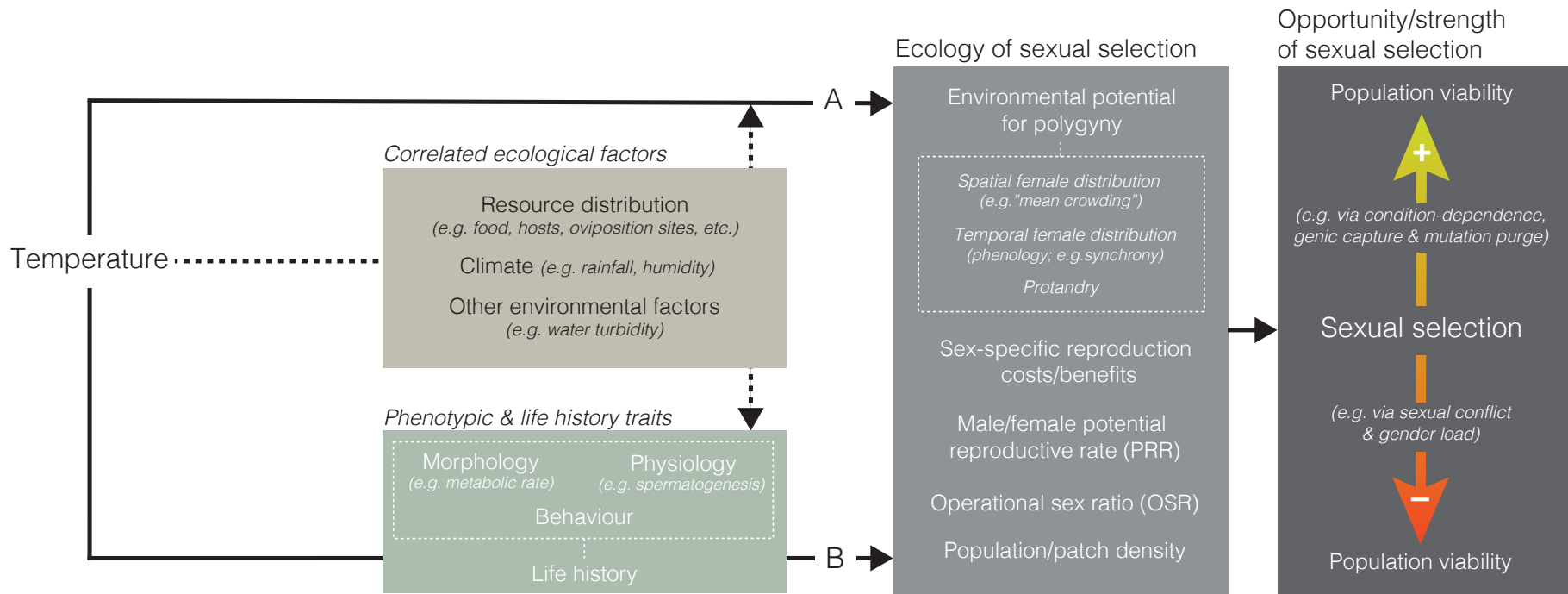




Figure 2.

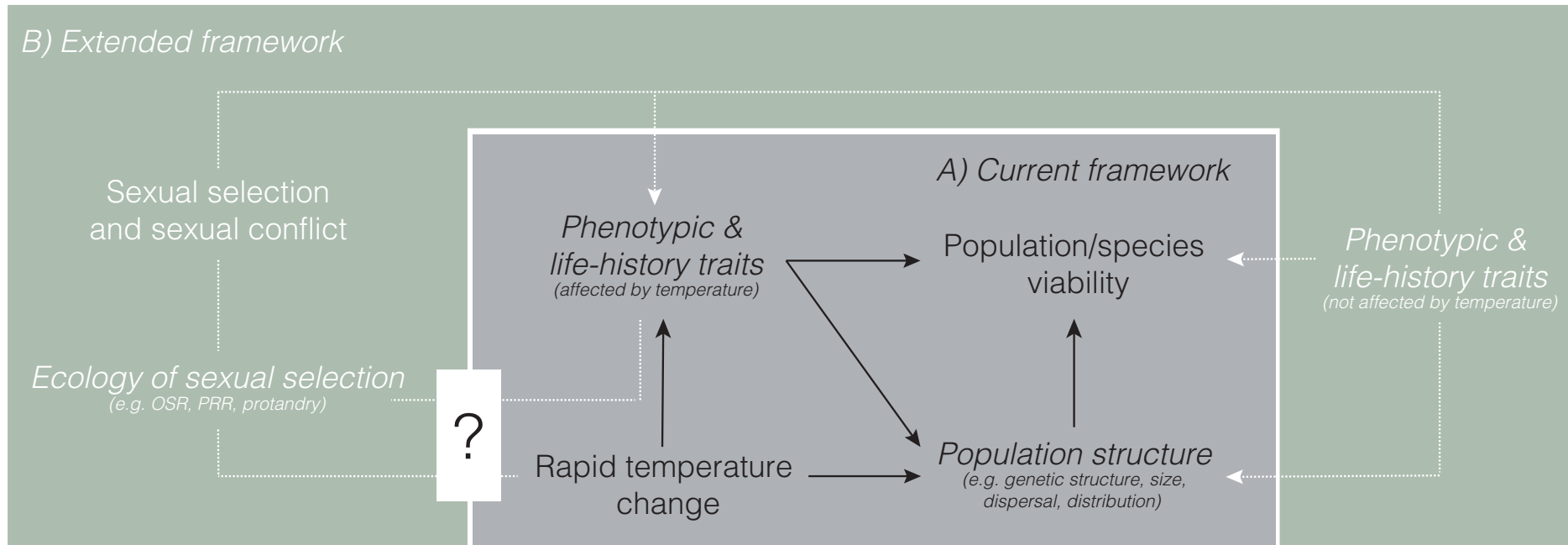
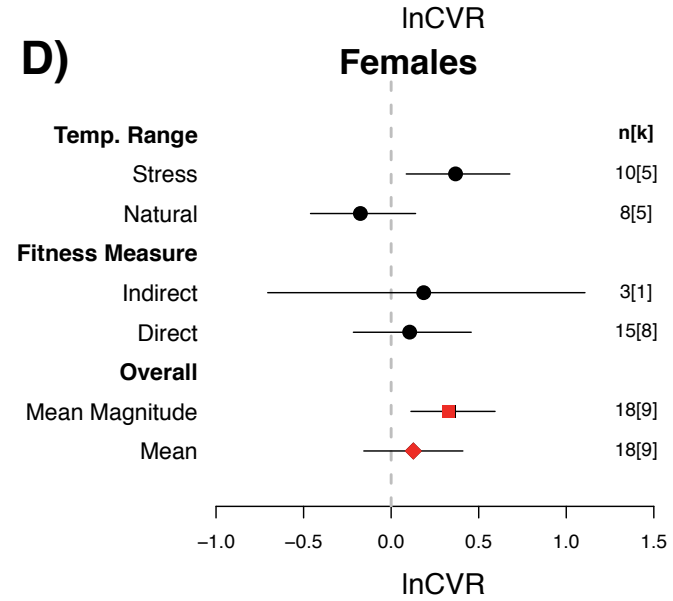
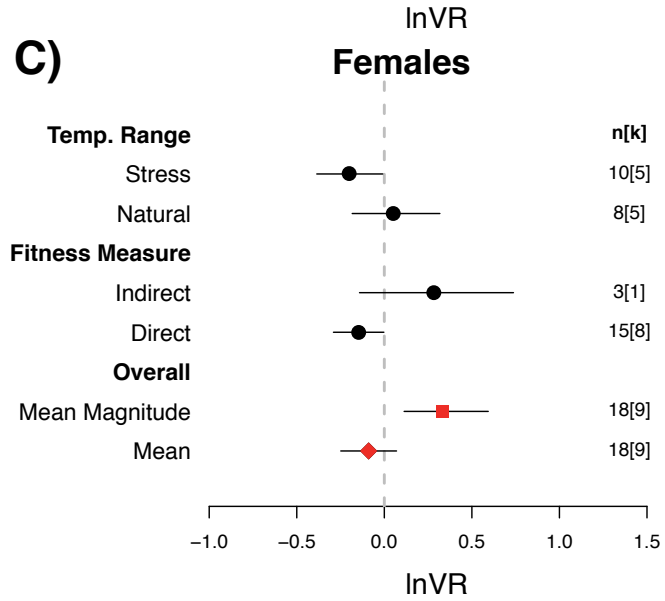
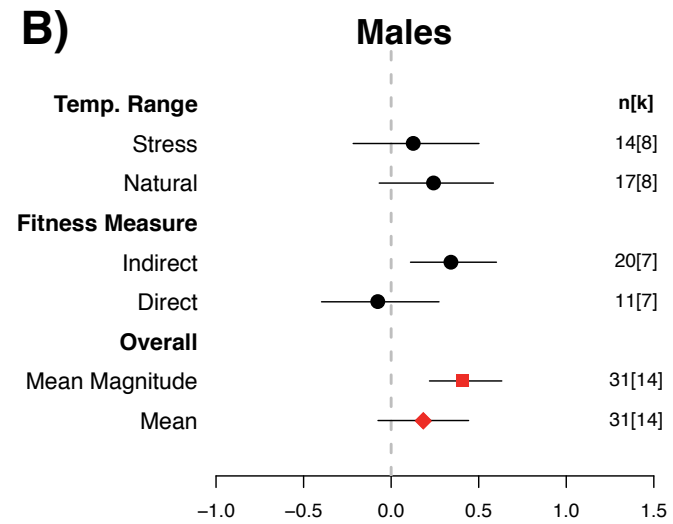
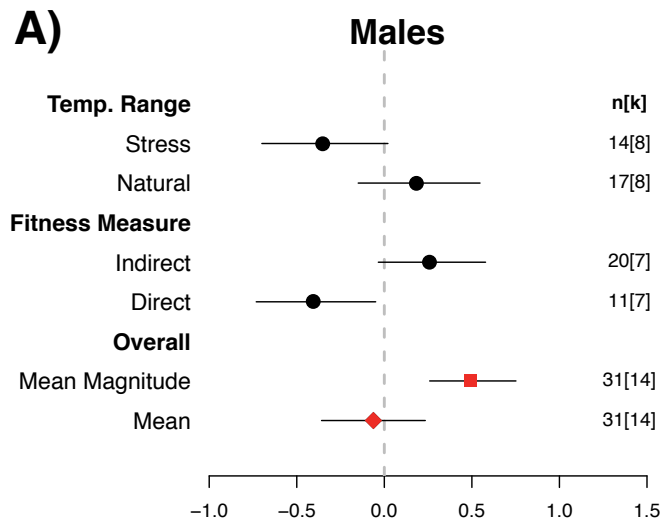


Figure 3.



**Figure 1.** A schematic outline of some of the pathways by which temperature can affect sexual selection, and ultimately population viability. Temperature can have direct effects on parameters of the ecology of sexual selection (A), such as in density or female spatiotemporal distribution (e.g. by affecting the availability of food resources), which will in turn modulate the strength of sexual selection and its likely effects on population viability. In addition, temperature can have direct effects on phenotypic traits (B), such as body size or metabolic rate, that in turn condition the ecology of sexual selection, impacting how sexual selection operates. Finally, temperature usually co-varies with other abiotic factors that can have similar direct and indirect effects on parameters in the ecology of sexual selection.

**Figure 2.** The current framework (A; text in black over grey background) focuses on the direct effects that rapid temperature changes have on populations, through its effects on the phenotype of individuals in a population and/or population structure. We suggest an extended framework (B; text in white over green background) would need to consider the feedback that such direct temperature effects can have on sexual selection processes, along with other direct effects of temperature on the ecology of sexual selection (Fig. 1). Through both these routes, rapid temperature changes can ultimately impact population viability.

**Figure 3.** Meta-analytic means for a temperature treatment difference of 7.5 degrees Celsius across MLMA and MLMR models for the log variance ratio (lnVR) and the log coefficient of variation ratio (lnCVR) for males and females.  $n$  = total number of effect sizes, whereas  $k$  = the total number of studies. Mean estimates and 95% credible/confidence intervals are provided. Subset analyses exploring the impact of various moderators on lnVR and lnCVR are provided ('circles'), along with the overall meta-analytic mean ('red diamond') and the mean magnitude of log variance ratio differences between treatments ('red square').

### **Box 1- Temperature, sexual selection and rapid environmental change**

From an eco-evolutionary point of view, a rapid environmental change results in a mismatch between an organism's optimal and current environment, potentially leading to population decline and extinction. Whether a population is able to withstand such environmental changes and avoid extinction will depend essentially on whether it is capable of adapting quickly enough to track these changes (Parmesan 2006; Hoffmann & Sgro 2011; Kingsolver & Buckley 2017; Martinez-Padilla *et al.* 2017). Most studies that try to predict the consequences of rapid environmental change for natural populations focus on studying the direct effects of, for example, temperature shifts on certain phenotypic and life-history traits that are likely to be causally influenced by temperature, and then examine how these changes affect population viability. Above we have reviewed how these effects can also affect the strength and opportunity of sexual selection through a variety of pathways (Figure 1). In doing so, the initial effects of a sustained temperature shift can feedback to impact a much wider diversity of phenotypic traits irrespective of whether they are under the direct causal influence of temperature. Furthermore, temperature can affect the capacity of individuals in a population/species to purge deleterious mutations and fix beneficial alleles (Lorch *et al.* 2003; Radwan 2004; Whitlock & Agrawal 2009; Jarzebowska & Radwan 2010; Lumley *et al.* 2015), adapt against environmental stress (Lorch *et al.* 2003; Plesnar-Bielak *et al.* 2012b; Martinez-Ruiz & Knell 2017; Parrett & Knell 2018), and generate sexual conflict (Berger *et al.* 2016). Therefore, sexual selection has great potential to influence the fate of populations/species facing directional environmental changes (Candolin & Heuschele 2008), such as for example those imposed by global warming. In particular, recent evidence has shown that strong sexual selection can help buffer against warming temperatures, with experimental populations facing rising temperatures having higher fecundity and offspring survival when under a strong sexual selection regime (Parrett & Knell 2018). This means that any effects of temperature on sexual selection and/or sexual conflict are likely to feedback and impact a wide range of phenotypic traits linked with population extinction (Figure 2).

### **Box 2- Temperature and sexual conflict**

Sexual conflict has received much attention in recent years (Rice 1996; Holland & Rice 1999; Wigby & Chapman 2004), and is currently recognized as a key mechanism shaping male/female adaptations and life-history traits (Bonduriansky *et al.* 2008). Importantly,

sexual conflict can also decrease male and female fitness by displacing the sexes off their respective evolutionary optima (i.e. gender load; (Rice & Chippindale 2002), and via male adaptations that harm females (i.e. male harm; e.g. (Pitnick & Garcia-Gonzalez 2002)). Sexual selection will frequently favour males that outcompete each other by means of traits that harm females and reduce their fitness (Parker 2006). Such male harm is a widespread consequence (and cause) of sexual conflict that not only impacts female fitness, but can have pronounced repercussions for female productivity and the population as a whole, reducing population growth and even leading to local extinction (Le Galliard *et al.* 2005; Rankin & Kokko 2006; Rankin *et al.* 2011; Berger *et al.* 2016).

Despite impressive advances in the field of sexual conflict, we are still far from being able to explain the overwhelming diversity of adaptations to deal with sexual conflict, and particularly for male harm, or the net consequences that such adaptations have for population viability. The apparently arbitrary nature of the co-evolutionary trajectories that often result from strong sexual conflict has been sometimes interpreted to mean that ecology occupies a rear seat in such processes, or is altogether irrelevant (Coyne & Orr 2004; Arbuthnott *et al.* 2014). This, however, seems highly unlikely given that sexual conflict critically depends on the intensity of male-male competition, and sexual selection is profoundly affected by ecological factors. In fact, there is good evidence to show that the opportunity of sexual conflict does depend on the ecological context (Arbuthnott *et al.* 2014; Perry *et al.* 2017; De Lisle *et al.* 2018; Gomez-Llano *et al.* 2018; Perry & Rowe 2018). In particular, three recent studies suggest that temperature can modulate sexual conflict. First, Berger *et al.* showed that gender load via intralocus sexual conflict is reduced in a natural population of *C. maculatus* beetles subject to a stressful thermal environment ((Berger *et al.* 2014); see also (Martinossi-Allibert *et al.* 2018b)). This is in line with theoretical expectations that intralocus sexual conflict will decrease in novel environments, for example due to concordant (in both sexes) natural selection of previously neutral alleles (Long *et al.* 2012). Second, Perry *et al.* showed that different ecological parameters, among them being temperature, contributed to explain inter-population differences in a sexually antagonistic arms-race in natural populations of water striders (*Gerris incognitus* (Perry *et al.* 2017)). This can be due to, for example, inter-population differences in ecological forces acting on mating system variation and ensuing sexual conflict (Perry & Rowe 2018). Finally, García-Roa *et al.*

manipulated sexual conflict levels in *D. melanogaster* and showed that the resulting increase in female harm levels (with increasing sexual conflict) decreases sharply in both colder (21°C) and hotter (29°C) social environments to those to which the population had adapted (García-Roa et al. unpublished). In this species, therefore, temperature shifts are likely modulators of male harm mechanisms (e.g. production of sperm and/or toxic components in the ejaculate), which is perhaps to be expected whenever male harm adaptations are expressed in a sub-optimal environment.

More generally, these studies show that temperature does indeed have the potential to modulate sexual conflict, pinpoint some of the main ways in which this may happen, and generally suggest that the negative impact of sexual conflict on population viability, due both to gender load and female harm, may be ameliorated when populations face rapid temperature changes (e.g. global warming), which would ultimately increase the ability of populations to avoid extinction.

### **Box 3- Processes involved in sexual selection responses to temperature**

Transversal to the links we have described so far is the question of what type of responses (adaptive and non-adaptive) may result from temperature shifts in the environment. Adaptive population-level responses in the face of environmental change can ensue via both natural selection (including sexual selection), by exploiting existing genetic variation, and via phenotypic plasticity, by exploiting the ability of individuals to adjust their development/behaviour to the environment and/or by revealing cryptic genetic variation that can later be the target of selection, via genetic assimilation (West-Eberhard 2003; Snell-Rood *et al.* 2010; Gilbert *et al.* 2015). Phenotypic plasticity, whether adaptive or maladaptive, is likely to be of particular importance in understanding temperature-mediated effects on sexual selection for the obvious reason that development is critically affected by environmental temperature in most species, and particularly so in ectotherms. For example, meta-analyses have identified strong effects of temperature during development on suites of traits, such as growth rate, physiology, performance and morphology, with these effects having long-lasting consequences on traits and moulding underlying physiology (Seebacher *et al.* 2014; Noble *et al.* 2017b). Behavioural plasticity, including paternal effects, might also be very important because it is a way in which parents can buffer the developmental

temperature of their offspring, mitigating the consequences of environmental temperature shifts (Du & Shine 2015).

Similarly, temperature is perhaps also particularly likely to impact sexual selection via intergenerational and transgenerational effects, both because temperature is frequently a cue of many other environmental changes (e.g. food availability, onset of reproductive/breeding period etc.) and because temperature affects a host of physiological mechanisms that may spill over to the next/s generation/s via paternal effects or the transmission of epigenetic marks. Paternal germline epigenetic changes that are environmentally triggered are increasingly recognised as modulators of sperm function (Stuppia *et al.* 2015; Jenkins *et al.* 2017) but also, remarkably, as sources of variance in offspring phenotype (Miller *et al.* 2010; Stuppia *et al.* 2015; Jenkins *et al.* 2017; Wang *et al.* 2017; Donkin & Barres 2018). In *Caenorhabditis elegans*, for instance, it has been documented that temperature variation induces multigenerational inheritance of gene expression through both oocytes and sperm (Klosin *et al.* 2017). Demonstrating such long-lasting epigenetic memory of parental temperature experiences and at the same time unravelling the underlying mechanisms is challenging and has been seldom achieved (Klosin *et al.* 2017), but there are reasons to suspect that temperature-induced transmission of epigenetic marks affecting sperm and offspring phenotypes may be common (Evans *et al.*, unpublished). Whether these cross-generational effects stemming from paternal experiences are driven by epigenetic mechanisms or are mediated by other factors (e.g. direct or female-moderated paternal effects arising from variation in the non-sperm fraction of the ejaculate (Garcia-Gonzalez & Simmons 2007)) is not known, but any intergenerational or transgenerational effect has the capacity to significantly alter the economics of sexual interactions (Dowling *et al.* 2014; Zajitschek *et al.* 2018), leading to unknown but presumably significant effects on sexual selection. We anticipate that investigations on the transmission of parental temperature environments across generations, and on their effects on sexual selection, will yield important insight.