

## Human family dynamics explained through the lens of bird evolution

Humans often rear their children with help from family and friends. But why would such a strategy evolve? What could we possibly get out of rearing somebody else's child? Now, scientists believe that they've unraveled this mystery — at least when it comes to birds.

Though cooperative breeding is a seemingly odd behavior, studies suggest that it occurs in approximately 9 percent of bird species. In this type of child rearing, three or more birds will contribute to caring for the young in a nest, providing both food and protection.

When a bird decides to become a helper, it loses out on reproducing during that season. But it's not the case that they're purposefully giving up reproduction to help — they usually wind up helping because there are no breeding territories left for them.

**Read the full, original story: [Birds offer insight into the evolution of extended families](#)**