

[PDF] Honeybee Democracy

Thomas D. Seeley - pdf download free book

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Description:

From Entomologist E. O. Wilson calls honeybees ♦humanity♦s greatest friend among the insects. ♦Cornell professor and ardent beekeeper Seeley (The Wisdom of the Hive, 1995) examines how bees make decisions on where to found a new hive. Beekeepers have known for years that overcrowded hives will swarm ♦the majority of the hive♦s workers will take off with the old queen and move into a new home, while the remaining bees will rear a new queen in order to perpetuate the parental colony. How the homeless swarm of bees decides where to live, and the settling of the debates among the scout bees who have found potential homesites, forms the basis of this intriguing look at how social insects arrive at a consensus. Seeley takes the reader through the research process, discussing the findings of earlier scientists, the process of field research on bee swarms, and the understanding of what the resulting data means in the lives of the bees. Forager bees become scout bees who, after returning to the swarm, perform a ♦dance♦ to show where and how far away the potential site is. Other scouts check out these locations and join in the dance for whichever site is

preferred. This arguing over the best site eventually results in all the scouts agreeing and the whole swarm then moving to its new abode. Now if we humans could only make decisions so democratically. --Nancy Bent

Review One of *Financial Times* (FT.com)'s Books of the Year in Nonfiction Round-Up in the Science & Environment list for 2010

"Dr. Seeley is an engaging guide. His enthusiasm and admiration for honeybees is infectious. His accumulated research seems truly masterly, doing for bees what E.O. Wilson did for ants."--

Katherine Bouton, *New York Times*

"Although the details are complicated, Seeley's explanations are remarkably clear. The text is abundantly illustrated with figures that are cleverly simplified in comparison to how they might appear in scientific journals. For readers who may be less passionate about the particulars of honeybee life, Seeley also reveals parallels between the way swarms make decisions and how the human brain sorts through conflicting neuron signals to reach decisions. He also provides a few pointers on how rules of honeybee democracy may be applied to decision-making in human groups, with minimal dependence on a leader, vigorous competition among a diversity of viewpoints, and a method for determining a majority-based resolution."--**May Berenbaum, *Times Literary Supplement***

"Seeley's work--extended over years and summarized clearly and engagingly here--is a model of biological research that builds bridges to the social sciences, and to the practical arts of institutional design for humans."--**Adrian Vermeule, *New Republic's The Book***

"[S]plendid."--**John Whitfield, *Nature***

"[E]ngaging and fascinating. . . . Seeley writes with infectious enthusiasm. . . . *Honeybee Democracy* offers wonderful testament to his career of careful investigation of a remarkable natural phenomenon. The breadth and depth of the studies reported in it should inspire all students of animal behavior."--**Science**

"To illustrate bee decision making, Seeley details how swarms choose a new home. Seeley presents his material with charm, and the bees' system of house-hunting becomes surprising and awe-inspiring."--**Science News**

"In *Honeybee Democracy*, Seeley carefully narrates his many seasons of experiments using plywood next boxes that could be moved and modified at will. He discovered what bees like in a home, how scouts measure the dark interiors of these boxes and most of all, how the swarm 'votes' to decide which nest to occupy. . . . *Honeybee Democracy* is a brilliant display of science at work, with each experiment explained and illustrated."--**New Scientist**

"[I]t is a book well worth studying. Within its pages we find out about an important aspect of the life of the honeybee (with some practical implications for beekeepers), how researchers work both in the field and in the laboratory, the objective way in which the experiments are carried out but, most of all, how in the seeking of a new home bees provide us with a model of true democratic behaviour which any group could use to its advantage. Indeed, the last chapter alone, 'Swarm Starts' would make an excellent minibook for anyone who is involved in decision making no matter what position they hold."--**Beekeepers Quarterly**

"Rather than presenting a dry review of his findings, Seeley intertwines them with his thought

processes, anecdotes and generous appraisals of students and fellow scientists. His skill in writing a book with so much science in such simple language is admirable. Even a non-beekeeper can understand what he is trying to convey. The photographs are beautiful and the illustrations elegant."--**Zachary Huang, *Times Higher Education***

"The year's most enchanting science book."--***Financial Times (FT Critics Pick 2010)***

"*Honeybee Democracy*, by Thomas D. Seeley, will teach you everything you ever wanted to know about one of the world's most beneficial insects. . . . Seeley, a biologist and beekeeper, presents his excellent understanding of what makes the bees' society work for the survival of the species."--***Washington Post***

"His argument is seductive. . . . [R]eading *Honeybee Democracy* is a delightful way to spend an evening."--***National Post***

"[O]ne cannot help but be inspired by the beauty of Seeley's hypothesis-driven experimental work. The book is beautifully presented with illustrations, photographs, charts and anecdotes, and succeeds in making the whole field of investigation accessible to the non-specialist. . . . [O]ne is swept away by Thomas Seeley's enthusiasm for a subject that is clearly his passion."--**Philippine Rudolf, *British Politics and Policy***

"Seeley shares his 35-plus years of experience working with bees. He presents a very interesting treatise about his research (as well as that of other scientists) on these eusocial insects and their fast and accurate group decision making when choosing the colony's new dwelling place. This very well-written book is also beautifully illustrated, highly informative, and educational."--***Choice***

"[T]his work makes an important contribution to a growing body of literature in disciplines removed from political science or sociology (such as biology in this case). It is felt that this may help us to understand what this enigmatic term or concept 'democracy' might actually be. To finish, this book comes highly recommended to any interested in learning about a new non-human democratic typology."--**Jean-Paul Gagnon, *Journal of Democratic Theory***

"Princeton University Press is to be congratulated in producing a book that is great value for the money and beautifully produced. The author is to be congratulated in writing a book that in its content and voice will reach and satisfy both scientists and nonscientists, both bee people and those not yet bitten (or stung). *Honeybee Democracy* is both easy and enjoyable to read."--**Francis L. W. Ratnieks, *Animal Behaviour***

"Seeley writes in an engaging and entertaining style. He also manages to explain complicated facts in easily understandable prose without compromising on the scientific information, and his comparisons with human behaviour and democratic practices are telling. . . . The author aimed to bolster, 'an appreciation of these little creatures'. Mission accomplished. It's hard to not be fascinated by the, 'little six-legged beauties.'"--**Uli Ernst, *Lab Times***

"[*Honeybee Democracy* is] an exceptional combination of memoir, entomology, and political philosophy."--**Carl Zimmer, *DiscoverMagazine.com's The Loom blog***

"Reading Tom Seeley's book will give you an understanding of bees which will help your beekeeping. . . . Like all the author's books and papers, this one is worth a place in your bee library."--**Adrian Waring, *Bee Craft***

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