

IS HOMOSEXUALITY “AGAINST NATURE?” Tuesday, April 3, 2007

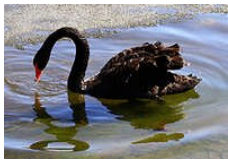
In November, 2006 a natural history museum exhibit opened in Oslo, Norway that features 51 species of animals that routinely exhibit homosexual behavior. It's called “Against Nature?” According to the project coordinator of the exhibition, Petter Bockman, homosexuality has been observed in 1,500 species and the phenomenon has been described in detail for 500 of them.

Scientists rarely discuss this topic. Many people who oppose homosexuality often refer to the behavior as “unnatural” and will even say, “You don't see animals doing that!” to prove their point. It turns out they are wrong.

Scientists tend not to discuss it because it doesn't appear to benefit the cause of continuing the species, the driving force assumed to underlie most behaviors and traits in living things. Yet, scientists may need to reconsider their slant on this. Furthering the species may not always be the ultimate goal.

Many animals — especially humans — engage in sexual activities much more than is needed for reproduction. Some scientists will offer other explanations including the one about homosexual behavior occurring for purposes of dominance, but some experts in the field just think it's about sexual pleasure — pure and simple.

There are also scientists who hold the position that there may be some evolutionary benefits, such as alliances and protection among animals of the same sex — best friends who “hook up,” if you'll pardon the anthropomorphism.



Then there are interesting “couples” like the black swans. About 25% of these birds are raised by male-male “parents.” Male couples sometimes mate with a female just to have a baby swan. Once she lays the egg, they chase her away, hatch the egg themselves and raise their baby swan.

Then there are the animals that just don't follow the “he and she” model. Some species have both male and female sex organs. And, many sea life species have no real “sex life.” They just squirt their eggs or semen into the sea — on the chance that it connects with the complementary part that also happens to be floating around in those same waters just then.

Animal homosexuality is poorly understood and many educators shy away from teaching it — fearing that assumptions will be made about them. Others do not want to encounter the response of prejudiced and reactive people.

Why did I write about homosexual animals? To illuminate the lack of scientific basis for the argument that a homosexual way of life cannot be accepted among humans because it is against the “laws of nature.” Fifteen hundred species (not individual organisms) can't all be “deviant” — whatever that word means — and after all, they are a part of “nature.”