

PublisherInfo		
PublisherName	:	BioMed Central
PublisherLocation	:	London
PublisherImprintName	:	BioMed Central

Eaten by Daddy

ArticleInfo		
ArticleID	:	4065
ArticleDOI	:	10.1186/gb-spotlight-20010426-02
ArticleCitationID	:	spotlight-20010426-02
ArticleSequenceNumber	:	136
ArticleCategory	:	Research news
ArticleFirstPage	:	1
ArticleLastPage	:	2
ArticleHistory	:	RegistrationDate : 2001-04-26 OnlineDate : 2001-04-26
ArticleCopyright	:	BioMed Central Ltd2001
ArticleGrants	:	
ArticleContext	:	130592211

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There is no genetic evidence for **filial cannibalism**, in which parents eat their own offspring. In the April 24 [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), DeWoody *et al.* document filial cannibalism in fish in nature (*Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2001, **98**:591-596). The authors captured male fish, of the tessellated darter and two sunfish species, and examined the cannibalized contents of the stomachs of nest-guarding males by polymorphic microsatellite marker analysis. They found that 10 out of 11 cannibalistic males contained offspring that they had sired. The authors suggest that a father fish may eat his own young to gain a source of food energy, thereby avoiding the need to leave the nest to forage, which would expose his progeny to predation risks.

References

1. The evolution of filial cannibalism and female mate choice strategies as resolutions to sexual conflict in fishes.
2. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, [<http://www.pnas.org>]