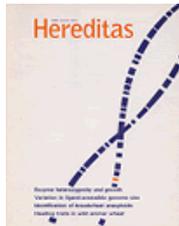


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DNA fingerprinting reveals multiple paternity in families of Great and Blue Tits (*Parus major* and *P. caeruleus*)

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ABSTRACT

Paternity of nestlings in the great tit (*Parus major*) and blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*) was studied using DNA fingerprinting. Multiple paternity was found in five out of ten great tit families and two out of seven blue tit families. Among the great and blue tit families 7 out of 47 (15 %) and 3 out of 51 (6 %) of the nestlings, respectively, were the result of extra-pair matings. Thus, extra-pair fertilization was proven not only in the blue tit but also in the great tit, a species regarded to be strictly monogamous. In no case was the whole brood sired by an extra-pair male and no case of intraspecific brood parasitism was detected.

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