

CNAS Public Lecture Series

November 10, Tuesday, 7:30-8:45

Sex & Evolution, speaker: Dr. John Heywood, Department of Biology

“Birds do it, bees do it. Even educated fleas do it.” But why? Sex feels perfectly natural to us, but when we take a look at the details it turns out to be a very bizarre and seemingly inefficient way of reproducing. And sex is certainly not the only game in town; many types of living organisms can make exact clones of themselves by various types of asexual reproduction, and some do so exclusively. Nonetheless, most animals and a strong majority of plants are sexual, so there must be some benefit to sex that is quite general. I will spend about half of my talk convincing you that sex is bizarre, and the second half exploring some of the current hypotheses for the evolutionary origin and subsequent maintenance of sex in higher plants and animals. Come get some sex education of a totally different kind!

