Inbreeding Encyclopedia Article

Inbreeding

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Inbreeding

Inbreeding occurs when closely related individuals mate with one another. Inbreeding may happen in a small population or due to other isolating factors; the consequence is that little new genetic information is added to the **gene pool**. Thus recessive, deleterious alleles become more plentiful and evident in the population. Manifestations of inbreeding are known as *inbreeding depression*.A general loss of fitness often results and may cause high infant **mortality**, and lower birth weights, **fecundity**, and longevity. Inbreeding depression is a major concern when attempting to protect small populations from **extinction**.