Wednesday 20 May 2015
Kl. 6.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.
Kungl. Vetenskapsakademien
Lilla Frescativägen 4A, Stockholm

KUNGL. VETENSKAPS-AKADEMIEN
THE ROYAL SWEDISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Collective intelligence in honey bees:
How a swarm chooses its home

Open lecture by Prof Thomas D. Seeley, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA

Host: The Academy's class for biosciences


Photo: Cornell University


Photo: Denis Anderson, CSIRO

Abstract

With the right organization, a group can overcome the cognitive limitations of its members and achieve a high collective IQ. To understand how to endow groups with collective intelligence, it is useful to examine natural systems that have evolved this ability. An excellent example is a swarm of honey bees solving the life-or-death problem of choosing a new home. A bee swarm accomplishes this through a process that was discovered in Germany in the 1940s, and that has been analyzed more deeply in recent years. It includes collective fact-finding, open sharing of information, vigorous debating, and fair voting by the 300-500 bees in a swarm that function as nest-site scouts.

Thomas D. Seeley is the Horace White Professor in Biology at Cornell University. His research focuses on collective intelligence in animal groups, especially honey bee colonies. In recognition of his scientific work, he has received the Alexander von Humboldt Distinguished U.S. Scientist Award and has been elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The lecture is free of charge and open to the public. Registration is not needed. For more information please visit kva.se/seeley

For Twitter and Instagram: #kva #seeley

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