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The adaptive significance of phasic colony cycles in army ants

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## Highlights

- The colonies of many army ants undergo stereotypical behavioral and reproductive cycles.
- While the proximate factors regulating these cycles have been studied in some detail, their adaptive significance is unknown.
- Using a modeling approach we find that the shape of the relationship between foraging costs and the number of larvae that have to be fed ultimately determines whether ant colonies should be cyclic or not.

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