

Side and color preferences in Palestine sunbirds (*Nectarinia osea*)

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The color of food can serve as a cue for specific nutrients or antioxidant content, and therefore assessment based on food color can be a valuable foraging strategy. Red is often considered to be the most preferred flower color for birds and therefore, bird pollination is often associated with red-colored flowers. However, Palestine sunbirds (*Nectarinia osea*), small nectarivorous birds, in east Mediterranean areas are also likely to have encountered, and may even prefer, yellow-colored flowers, for example, of the Tree Tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*, Solanaceae).

Here, I examined food color preferences in captive Palestine sunbirds. I addressed the question whether the sunbirds had a preference to feed from red or yellow feeders when given simultaneously with the same amount and type of food. Therefore, I may indirectly test the hypothesis that Palestine sunbirds prefer red food sources. Side preferences were also tested to determine whether feeder location was more important than feeder color.

In the side preference tests when using two white feeders, each in different side of the cage, there were no significant preference differences across all birds among the right and left sides of the cage. In the color preference tests, there were no significant preference differences across all birds among the red and yellow feeders. However, regardless of its color, individual sunbirds tended to choose their main feeder by its side location. This finding may suggest that the location of flowering plants may be more important than their color. Location bear further information like how comfortable is it to feed and how much time and energy should be spent while finding a suitable food source. These considerations may be more important to the forager than a particular color of a flower, which may not necessarily reflect the amount, type or quality of the food.



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