

own tendencies. Territory is not purely spatial, it is also very much a social phenomenon. In fact, territoriality is about the location of societies in space. Territories help animals to structure and organize their societies. The animal territory is a defined area of land or water or air, depending on the species, which a single creature or more often group of creatures occupy. However, in general they only defend the territory from other members of their own species. Naturally any animal will take evasive or challenging action should a predator cross the boundary, but this is basic survival and not territorial behaviour at all. In fact, modern territorial theory does not so much stress the process of defence as the characteristic of exclusivity, and so a territory is now usually thought of as an area exclusively occupied by an individual or group of a particular species. In fact in the animal world few serious fights about territory ever actually take place – it seems the owner of a territory has such a strong psychological advantage that mere display is enough to deter the would-be intruder. A natural result of such a system is that territorial species spread themselves out in space rather than all congregating together. This is a natural force acting in favour of the species as a whole, although of course not necessarily in the interests of any one individual. It enhances the species' chance of survival and prosperity by maximizing the use of the food supply.

The next rather hard lesson for us squeamish humans is that animal territoriality is also about the survival of the fittest. Not all territories are equally attractive or desirable, and the general rule is that the strongest win the best territories. This can be an entirely sexist affair, where usually the males compete for territories and then females compete for the desirable males. Such an arrangement is again in favour of the species as a whole, whilst being rather hard on at least some less fortunate individuals. The strongest males reproduce with the most desirable females, and thus the lineage of the species is given its best chance of perfection. It must be remembered for completeness that not all species work this way – the hyena, for example, lives in a matriarchal society in which males find themselves in solitary isolation and at the bottom of the pecking order, bullied even by the young of high-ranking females. Whatever the territorial variation any one species has devised for itself, the fact remains that it is the territory that is at the heart of this Darwinian system. We see from this that territory is not some trivial luxury but one of the most basic components of natural law. Space and place have massive roles to play, not just in human life but also in the life of the multitude of territorial species that share the world with us.

However, the territory is a remarkable device going well beyond the provision of simple space. Ardrey first advanced the argument that territory serves as a mechanism for supplying the three great needs of