

Mixed-Species Groups of Animals

Behavior, Community Structure, and Conservation

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Mixed-Species Groups of Animals: Behavior, Community Structure, and Conservation highlights a spectacular and accessible example of the complexity of species interactions. The work first surveys the diversity of spatial associations among animals, then concentrates on moving groups. The authors review the major theories that have been developed to explain the presence of mixed-species groups, particularly those focused on how they increase foraging efficiency and decrease predation. Finally, they explore the intricacies of species interactions, such as communication, which explain species roles in groups, and discuss what implications these social systems have for conservation.

Mixed-species groups of animals are found in a wide range of animals, including invertebrates, fish, mammals, and birds, and in different habitats, both terrestrial and aquatic, throughout the world. While the material on this compelling subject has previously been scattered through the primary literature, this general, cross-taxa introduction summarizes what kinds of groups are found, and the benefits and costs to participants. The description of these complex communities will fascinate anyone interested in ecology and animal behavior, while highlighting gaps in the current state of our knowledge to guide the next generation of researchers.

Key Features

- Functions as a single resource for readers on mixed-species groups, serving as a foundation for future research in this field
- Begins with an empirical summary of the distribution of mixed-species groups, and reviews how the theories explaining their adaptive benefits are supported by the evidence
- Includes many aspects of mixed-group behavior not previously or easily accessible (e.g., foraging, communication, collective decision making, dominance, social roles of species, leadership, and relationship to conservation)



Cover image: An illustration of a mixed-species bird flock in the Western Ghats mountains of India. By Rangu Narayan.



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