

Darwin famously described special difficulties in explaining social evolution in insects. More than a century later, the evolution of sociality – defined broadly as cooperative group living – remains one of the most intriguing problems in biology. Providing a unique perspective on the study of social evolution, this volume synthesizes the features of animal social life across the principle taxonomic groups in which sociality has evolved. The chapters explore sociality in a range of species, from ants to primates, highlighting key natural and life history data and providing a comparative view across animal societies. In establishing a single framework for a common, trait-based approach towards social synthesis, this volume will enable students and investigators new to the field to systematically compare taxonomic groups and reinvigorate comparative approaches to studying animal social evolution.

"... an excellent resource for all students of social evolution, including practised hands and those yet to take the stage ... bringing together such a rich synthesis of information and insight."

Andrew Bourke, University of East Anglia, UK

"By synthesizing current knowledge of the distribution of social behaviour and its correlates in different groups, [the book] lays the foundation for attempts to build a general framework capable of explaining the diversity of animal societies."

Tim Clutton-Brock, University of Cambridge, UK

"This excellent volume ... [allows] readers to gain invaluable, perhaps unprecedented insights from chapters outside their taxonomic comfort zone."

Mark Elgar, University of Melbourne, Australia

"... a fabulous compilation ... clearly and carefully written by leaders in their fields. This book is a must-read for anyone who wants to know where the theories are rooted, or anyone who simply wants to enjoy the marvellous stories of animal social behavior."

Joan Strassmann, Washington University in St Louis, USA

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