

Power in the Wild: The Subtle and Not-So-Subtle Ways Animals Strive for Control over Others

Lee Alan Dugatkin

University of Chicago Press (Apr 5, 2022)

Hardcover \$25.00 (208pp)

978-0-226-81594-7

In *Power in the Wild*, animal behaviorist Lee Alan Dugatkin examines the evolution of social behavior, with a focus on struggles for power within animal societies. From ants to cuttlefish to wolves, this entertaining book surveys various species' strategies for maintaining control.

"Animals are always looking for the chance to force others to relinquish their power," Dugatkin writes. This might take the form of threat displays, fights over quality territory, or the reproductive suppression of subordinates. Raven groups have complex politics and force rivals into retreat, while fairy wrens punish helpers who don't pull their weight. Working together, on the other hand, can consolidate power: dolphins and chimpanzees form coalitions, and ants build supercolonies.

Each chapter selects an example and bounces between species as varied as hermit crabs and caribou to trace those tactics across the animal kingdom. The spotted hyenas at Kenya's Masai Mara Reserve are a prime case study: individuals are identified by fur pattern, and GPS data is supplemented by following them in Land Rovers. Hyenas are matriarchal; the most powerful females reproduce earlier and give their pups priority access to kills.

Dugatkin's snappy prose enlivens his evolutionary explanations, as of a discussion of how new technology aids in data collection. He is deliberate about highlighting the work of women researchers.

Power in the Wild is a charming tour through the wonderful, sometimes bizarre realities of animal behavior.

REBECCA FOSTER (March / April 2022)

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