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Resource Partitioning in Ecological Communities

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Abstract

To understand resource partitioning, essentially a community phenomenon, we require a holistic theory that draws upon models at the individual and population level. Yet some investigators are still content mainly to document differences between species, a procedure of only limited interest. Therefore, it may be useful to conclude with a list of questions appropriate for studies of resource partitioning, questions this article has related to the theory in a preliminary way.

- 1) What is the mechanism of competition? What is the relative importance of predation? Are differences likely to be caused by pressures toward reproductive isolation?
- 2) Are niches (utilizations) regularly spaced along a single dimension?
- 3) How many dimensions are important, and is there a tendency for more

dimensions to be added as species number increases?

4) Is dimensional separation complementary?

5) Which dimensions are utilized, how do they rank in importance, and why? How do particular dimensions change in rank as species number increases?

6) What is the relation of dimensional separation to difference in phenotypic indicators? To what extent does the functional relation of phenotype to resource characteristics constrain partitioning?

7) What is the distance between mean position of niches, what is the niche standard deviation, and what is the ratio of the two? What is the niche shape?



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