

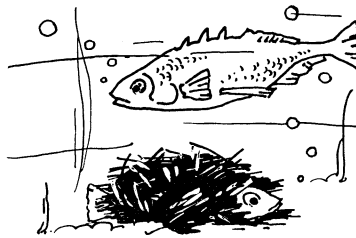
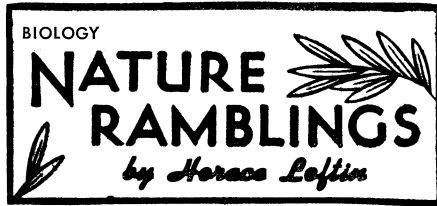
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**Home Is a Castle**

► THE DESIRE for a home, a little corner of one's own, seems a basic urge in much of the animal kingdom. Creatures from fish and reptiles to man have developed strong feelings for their "territory," that area which is theirs alone to live in.

The size of an animal's territory generally depends on how strong the individual is and how large an area he can successfully defend. Weak animals that cannot maintain territories large enough to give them ample food and protection are the ones first eliminated in the struggle for existence.

Among the fish, the male stickleback is a good example of a stalwart defender of his "home." This fish is armed with sharp spines that he uses to good effect when another comes too close to his nest. Battles between sticklebacks can result in death to the loser.

Incidentally, it is papa stickleback who builds the nest and cares for the eggs and young. After egg-laying, the female loses interest in domestic affairs and, knocking the rear of the nest out, swims away forever.

The little Anolis lizard is another home lover. The male defends a restricted area, in which he maintains a harem of females.

Any male approaching his domain is driven away, but females are corralled and added to his collection. Within the old sultan's territory, each female maintains her own small private area.

Birds are strongly territorial, and even the smallest wren can drive away a larger bird that comes too close to home. Most experts now think that bird singing is a means of proclaiming "rights" to territory.

During fall and winter, both male and female mockingbirds have their own separate territories. But with the coming of the breeding season, the female abandons her private property to live in that of her mate.

Among the mammals, the howler monkeys exemplify the home lover. These powerfully voiced monkeys live in family groups, or clans, consisting of an adult male, several females and the young. Close guard is kept over the territory by fighting and vocalizing. Howling duels of rival clans in adjacent territories can be heard more than a mile away through the jungle.

Science News Letter, March 24, 1956

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**Questions**

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