

have been practised for at least, ten thousand years and, in certain cases, probably much longer. Goats, sheep and reindeer appear to have been the earliest prey species dealt with in this way. Then, with the development of settled agricultural communities, pigs and cattle, including Asiatic buffalo and yak, were added to the list. We have evidence that, in the case of cattle, several distinct breeds had already been developed four thousand years ago. Whereas the goats, sheep and reindeer were transformed directly from hunted prey to herded prey, it is thought that the pigs and cattle began their close association with our species as crop-robbers. As soon as cultivated crops were available, they moved in to take advantage of this rich new food supply, only to be taken over by the early farmers and brought under domestic control themselves.

The only small mammalian prey species to undergo prolonged domestication was the rabbit, but this was apparently a much later development. Amongst the birds, important prey species domesticated thousands of years ago were the chicken, the goose and the duck, with later minor additions of the pheasant, guinea fowl, quail and turkey. The only prey fish with a long history of domestication are the Roman eel, the carp and the goldfish. The latter, however, soon became ornamental rather than gastronomic. The domestication of these fish is limited to the last two thousand years and has played only a small role in the general story of our organised predation.

The second category in our list of inter-specific relationships is that of the symbiont. Symbiosis is defined as the association of two different species to their mutual benefit. Many examples of this are known from the animal world, the most famous being the partnership between the tick birds and certain large ungulates such as the rhinoceros, giraffe and buffalo. The birds eat the skin parasites of the ungulates, helping to keep the bigger animals healthy and clean, while the latter provide the birds with a valuable source of food.

Where we ourselves are one of the members of a symbiotic pair, the mutual benefit tends to become biased rather heavily in our favour, but it is nevertheless a separate category, distinct from the more severe