

prey-predator relationship, since it does not involve the death of the other species concerned. They are exploited, but in exchange for the exploitation we feed and care for them. It is a biased symbiosis because we are in control of the situation and our animal partners usually have little or no choice in the matter.

The most ancient symbiont in our history is undoubtedly the dog. We cannot be certain exactly when our ancestors first began to domesticate this valuable animal, but it appears to be at least ten thousand years ago. The story is a fascinating one. The wild, wolf-like ancestors of the domestic dog must have been serious competitors with our hunting forebears. Both were co-operative pack-hunters of large prey and, at first, little love can have been lost between them. But the wild dogs possessed certain special refinements that our own hunters lacked. They were particularly adept at herding and driving prey during hunting man. oeuvres and could carry this out at high speed. They also had more delicate senses of smell and hearing. If these attributes could be exploited in exchange for a share in the kill, then the bargain was a good one. Somehow-we do not know exactly how-this came about and an interspecific bond was forged. It is probable that it began as a result of young puppies being brought in to the tribal home base to be fattened as food. The value of these creatures as alert nocturnal watch-dogs would have scored a mark in their favour at an early stage. Those that were allowed to live in a now tamed condition and permitted to accompany the males on their hunting trips would soon show their paces in assisting to track down the prey. Having been hand-reared, the dogs would consider themselves to be members of the naked-ape pack and would cooperate instinctively with their adopted leaders. Selective breeding over a number of generations would soon weed out the trouble-makers and a new, improved stock of increasingly restrained and controllable domestic hunting dogs would arise.

It has been suggested that it was this progression in the dog relationship that made possible the earliest forms of ungulate prey domestication. The goats, sheep and reindeer were under some degree of control before 191