

Willis, Frank N. Jr. Fighting in pigeons relative to available space. Psychonomic Science, 1966, Vol. 4 (9) p. 316.

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In this study a decrease in available space was accompanied by higher rates of fighting in pigeons as it did in studies with rats, mice, and chaffinches. This generalization was most clearly supported by the data on the final fighting response. In the largest cage territories were established and fighting tended to cease at an earlier time. The bird who was dominated remained quiet in a particular corner of the cage while the dominant bird paced throughout most of the space.

Results based upon number of attacks and response latency did not provide unqualified support for the generalization relating fighting and space. Attacks were least frequent and latencies longest not in the largest cage, but in the next size smaller. This cage (B) differed from the others in that the surrounding areas of the lab were much more visible

from the cage. When placed in this cage birds tended to walk around looking outside the cage rather than at each other. It would appear that a meaningful generalization concerning fighting and space should specify the visual properties of the space.

Factors other than the properties of the space appear to effect fighting in a restricted space. There was some evidence that the age of the birds and the patterns of behavior prior to fighting were important. On the other hand, size which was mentioned as important in the fighting of mice by Clark<sup>1</sup> was not found to be related to fighting in pigeons.

Finally generalizations based upon studies such as the present one may have application only to situations new to the animals since the relative rate of fighting for the birds in this study was quite different from that in the home loft.

1. Clark, L.D. Experimental studies of the behavior of an aggressive predatory mouse. In E.L. Bliss (ed) Roots of Behaviour. N.Y.: Harper, 1966. pp 179-186.

