Section A: What Is a Community?

1. Contrasting views of communities are rooted in the individualistic and interactive hypotheses
2. The debate continues with the rivet and redundancy models
Introduction

• What is a Community?

• A community is defined as an assemblage of species living close enough together for potential interaction.

• Communities differ in their species richness, the number of species they contain, and the relative abundance of different species.
1. Contrasting views of communities are rooted in the individualistic and interactive hypotheses

- An **individualistic hypothesis** depicts a community as a chance assemblage of species found in the same area because they happen to have similar abiotic requirements.
• An interactive hypothesis depicts a community as an assemblage of closely linked species locked in by mandatory biotic interactions.
• These two very different hypotheses suggest different priorities in studying biological communities.

• In most actual cases, the composition of communities does seem to change continuously.
2. The debate continues with the rivet and redundancy models

• The **rivet model** of communities is a reincarnation of the interactive model.

• The **redundancy model** states that most species in a community are not closely associated with one another.

• No matter which model is correct, it is important to study species relationships in communities.