

Preface to the First Edition

This book is an introduction to African savannahs and their biology, concentrating on large mammal ecology, behaviour, and conservation. Although it is a book on savannahs I hope that it sets out its ideas within a general framework of ecological and behavioural ideas.

In my 40 years as an ecologist I have worked on both temperate and tropical terrestrial ecosystems. I have carried out field surveys, field experiments and built mathematical and computer models. I believe all these elements are essential for understanding Nature, and they all appear in this book. You cannot simply watch wildlife populations and communities in order to understand how they function. You have to employ field manipulations, either natural or artificial, to tease out the possibilities. You have to describe what you see not just in words but in mathematical models, to allow your less precise verbal suspicions to be tested. And savannah ecology must fit comfortably within the framework of general ecological ideas. There can be no special pleading or special mechanisms that other ecologists just don't understand. I have tried to present such an encompassing view of savannah ecology and behaviour.

African savannahs are magical places. The brightness of the light, the intensity of the colours, and the beauty and excitement of the wildlife, and of course the people. These savannahs are worth preserving for future generations and I hope, in a small way, this book will generate an interest that helps them survive.

I would like to thank all the people that have helped in my savannah work in East Africa, in particular the people at the Mpala Research Centre, in Laikipia, Kenya. Their help and insights have been invaluable during my frequent stays there. Finally my thanks to Paul Ward who, over several beers, over several nights, while running an undergraduate field course in Derbyshire reawakened my latent interest in Africa and its wildlife.

Bryan Shorrocks
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Preface to the Second Edition

Once again this book is an introduction to African savannahs and their biology, concentrating on large mammal ecology, behaviour, and conservation. However, this second edition contains new material and many updates. These include hundreds of new references, new technique boxes, updated distribution maps for the mammals and some birds, and an expanded focus on the conservation of African savannahs. Also new to the second edition is a companion website, <<http://africansavannahs.shawwebpace.ca/>>. This website contains additional information pertaining to African savannahs, including Soundscape ecology audio files and analysis, videos, the latest news on conservation efforts, new journal article citations, and an interactive blog. As BS said in the preface to the first edition, these savannahs are worth preserving for future generations and we hope, in a small way, this book will again generate an interest that helps them survive. Hopefully many of our readers will be young Africans, as the survival of African national parks and reserves will ultimately be determined by future generations of Africans.

We would like to thank all the people that have helped us in our savannah work in southern Africa and East Africa. BS is grateful to the people at the Mpala Research Centre, in Laikipia, Kenya, and the staff at Etosha National Park, Namibia. Their help and insights have been invaluable during frequent stays there. WB is especially grateful to Chris McBride, who runs a camp in Zambia, for transmitting insights related to lion behaviour. The authors also want to thank the staff at OUP, especially Lucy Nash and Ian Sherman, for their continual encouragement and help.

Bryan Shorrocks and William Bates
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