

Preface

This is a book on the concept of natural selection, the chief cause of evolutionary change, first introduced and explained in detail by Charles Darwin, in 1859, in his *Origin of Species*. It is, if anything, a cause even more cherished and highlighted by professional evolutionists today. I have just retired after fifty-five years of teaching philosophy, with much of my effort devoted to issues arising from the biological sciences, especially the work of Charles Darwin in both a historical and a philosophical context. Along the way, I have written or edited many books, also often directed to Darwinian themes. Truly, my greatest joy is when I can bring together my role as an educator and as a scholar. To be included in this series on biology, edited by Kostas Kampourakis, makes me feel incredibly pleased and tremendously honored. The intent of the series is to produce books uncompromising in scholarship, and yet, with no condescension, readable and comprehensible by all who want to learn about the topics under discussion. Looking at earlier contributions to the series, I know that I have high standards to emulate.

Apart from my deepest thanks to my editor, above all I want to thank my students, recent and long in the past, graduate and undergraduate, young and old, male and female, clever and those falling into the category that, euphemistically, educators refer to as "late developers." I cannot say it was always fun – anyone who says that a logic class is a bundle of laughs is a liar – but it was always worthwhile, and we on both sides of the classroom realized that. Closer to home, I cannot thank my wife Lizzie enough for her love and support. And no acknowledgments would be complete without mention of my calm terriers,

Scruffy McCruff and Duncan Donut. They are ever ready to make me down tools and go for a walk. They show that humans are but a very small part of the story.

My dedication is to two dear friends of very long standing. Thank you, natural selection, for producing people such as these.