

Preface

So much has happened in the field of animal behavior since the last edition of this book was published in 2013, providing me with more than ample cutting-edge new work not only to update and expand on the studies presented, but also to reinforce the previous editions' focus on ultimate and proximate causation, as well as the book's unique emphasis on natural selection, learning, and cultural transmission. It's my long-held feeling that the tapestry of animal behavior is created from weaving all of these components into a beautiful whole.

A completely new feature in this edition is the Cognitive Connection boxes in chapters 2–17, designed to dig deep into the importance of the cognitive underpinnings to many types of behaviors we examine. Each box focuses on a specific issue related to cognition and the particular topic covered in that chapter. Another completely new feature in this edition is the "Science at Work" boxes in each chapter. Each of these focuses on one particular study discussed in a chapter and asks *What is the research question? Why is this an important question? What approach was taken to address the research question? What was discovered?* and *What do the results mean?*

Many students taking a course in animal behavior

are interested in the course, in part, because they care about the natural world and the creatures that inhabit it. They want to make a difference, and some may even pursue careers in conservation biology. But most animal behavior textbooks barely touch on the subject of conservation biology, or they discuss it only in passing. The Conservation Connection boxes that were introduced in the third edition remain and have been updated here, giving the topic of conservation and animal behavior the space it deserves.

From the first edition of this book, my aim has been to explain underlying concepts in a way that is scientifically rigorous but, at the same time, accessible to students. Each chapter in the book provides a sound theoretical and conceptual basis upon which the empirical studies rest. The presentation of theory, sometimes in the form of mathematical models, is not meant to intimidate students but rather to illuminate the wonderful examples of animal behavior in that chapter. My goal has been to produce a book that students will actually enjoy and will recommend to their friends as a "keeper." I also hope that instructors will find this book useful in their research programs, as well as in their courses.