

Preface

THIS BOOK IS THE OUTCOME OF 25 YEARS OF GOOD INTENTIONS. It is the much evolved spawn of a popular undergraduate course in animal communication first developed with Robert Capranica at Cornell University in 1970. In 1972, Bradbury moved to Rockefeller University and efforts to write a book for the Cornell course were shelved while pursuing field work in exotic locations. The two current authors began teaching a much expanded version of the original course at UCSD in 1986, and it too became a reasonable success (in one quarter attracting 220 students). Several years later, some of the former Cornell students, now established researchers and teachers, encouraged us to take up again the task of writing an appropriate text. Bob Capranica was planning to retire and fishing looked a lot better to him than writing this book, so we were stuck doing it ourselves if at all. With insufficient trepidation, we set to work. It has proved a Herculean task. So much had changed in the ensuing years that the original manuscripts were little more than springboards. The book took on a frightening scope, and it probably reflects hubris or dementia (or both) to have agreed to write it. On the other hand, it is just that scope that our UCSD undergraduates seem to like: it is the only time they ever get to use physics, chemistry, algebra, physiology, economics, and evolutionary biology all in one course. And for the same reasons, it is a fun course to teach (once you get the lectures written).

This text has more material than anyone (including us) can teach in one term. We actually teach all three parts and most topics in a 10-week quarter, but our lectures cover only a fraction of the text's depth. Our course is aimed at upper division undergraduate students; however, we have tried to include enough material (using boxes) to make the book suitable for graduate courses as well. Each of the three parts of the book could be used as the basis for a more focused and in-depth course, or one could combine any two of them into a course. Whether aimed at undergraduate or graduate students, we be-