

Preface

Ecology: principles and applications provides a clear and up-to-date introduction to ecology for students studying at A level, AS level or first-year undergraduate level. We outline the principles of ecology and show how relevant applications follow from these principles. The chapters follow a sequence of ascending scale beginning with individual organisms and proceeding through communities and ecosystems to global considerations of biogeography, co-evolution and conservation. Human ecology and applied topics are considered throughout the text wherever appropriate and a wealth of examples are drawn from all five kingdoms and around the world.

Each chapter contains a summary and suggestions for further reading. Most chapters also include extra, somewhat peripheral, material, presented as boxed text. These boxes may contain a particular case history, an historical perspective, a worked example of a quantitative concept or the outline of a controversial theory. Sometimes they contain material that is more advanced than the main text.

Key terms are printed in bold throughout the text and are defined in a glossary at the back of the book. Apart from the suggestions for further reading contained in each chapter, there is also an extensive bibliography at the end of the book which allows particular aspects of ecology to be pursued in more detail.

Our appreciation and thanks are due to several people for their help and encouragement. We are especially grateful to Stephen Tomkins whose encouragement was most welcome and much needed. Particular thanks go to Stephen and to Myra Black, both of whom provided valuable comments on the entire typescript, and to Francis Gilbert and Neil Ingram who, with Stephen and Myra, helped us when we were planning the book. Tony Seddon, Lucy Purkis and Lucy Harbron of Cambridge University Press proved to be helpful and understanding editors throughout the book's long gestation.