

Preface

The fusion of identification guide and biological text, the hallmark of *A Student's Guide to the Seashore*, has been widely acclaimed since the publication of the first edition in 1989 and over the past 20 years we have been greatly encouraged by the support and encouragement received from users of the *Guide*. It was therefore a pleasure to accept the invitation from Cambridge University Press to prepare a third edition.

The publication of a third edition has given us the opportunity to review the list of species included in the light of our field experience and that of colleagues. Additional species have been added, some of which are introduced species in the sense that they have now become established in Britain and north-west Europe, bringing the total coverage to over 650 species. At the same time, the biological information on individual species has been updated on the basis of the latest research and expanded wherever possible and this, together with the extended bibliography of primary sources of data, will encourage wider lines of enquiry and help those readers who wish to investigate further this fascinating habitat. One of the most significant changes since the publication of the earlier editions has been in taxonomy following the increased use of molecular techniques and there is no doubt that important advances in our understanding of taxonomic relationships will continue to be made through the application of molecular phylogeny. Taxonomy and systematics are at the heart of ecology and when considering changes in taxon names we have erred on the side of caution; where there is ongoing research and debate on the status of particular species and groups of species, we have drawn attention to this. Taxonomic change can be confusing to the reader and where changes in species names have been made we have included for ease of reference the widely used former names.

The design and layout of the book follows that of previous editions and is described in detail following the Introduction. The Illustrated Guide to the Plants and Animals of the Shore, which is designed to help those readers who are unable initially to assign an organism to its phylum or class, has been extensively reorganized and is now more user-friendly and easier to navigate. The inclusion of colour plates makes the identification of those organisms for which black and white drawings will always fail to convey key diagnostic features, that much easier and more reliable. We have also taken the opportunity to illustrate aspects of the biology of some species in colour.

As in previous editions, colleagues have been generous in giving guidance and advice. Dr Joanne Porter helped us unravel the bryozoan genus *Alcyonidium*; Dr Graham Oliver gave advice on aspects of bivalve taxonomy; Dr Robert Brownlow was a source of much helpful discussion; Mr Keith Wilson provided specimens of *Eriocheir sinensis* from the Thames estuary; and Mr Gareth Owen provided a steady supply of fresh specimens where additional drawings were needed. Ms Gwen Jenkins and Mr Anthony Pugh gave invaluable professional advice on all aspects of

photo-imaging, and Ms Catherine Flack and Ms Joanna Endell-Cooper, Cambridge University Press, guided us sympathetically through the final stages of preparation and design. We are also grateful to staff of the Hugh Owen Library, Aberystwyth University, the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth and the Natural History Museum, London. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to cite individually in the text all the references used and, once again, we wish to record our indebtedness to those whose research has contributed to the 'wonders of the shore' and made this edition possible.

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