Foreword

This volume is a result of research done by the editors, together with a select group of students, during the summer of 1967 at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology on Coconut Island, Oahu, Hawaii. In an effort to extend the influence of the University of Hawaii as an institution striving for excellence, members of the Institute conceived a unique program which made maximum use of limited laboratory facilities in the tropical environs of Hawaii, and, at the same time, made a contribution to graduate education in marine biology. A departure was made from the usual pattern of traditional courses and directed research. Informal group-research training was initiated with the guidance of outstanding scholars, each of whom had a different approach to some aspect of coelenterate biology. Through the foresight and generous support of the National Science Foundation, this program came to fruition.

The program was modest; the atmosphere was scholarly, dynamic, and creative. It was the first exposure for many of the students to a complex coral reef community. New techniques and approaches were introduced which allowed the students to trace biochemical pathways, elucidate vital processes, and explain ecological relationships in a variety of coelenterates. The instructor-student relationship was highly conducive to the production of ideas that evolved into fruitful research.

Most of the research described in this volume was accomplished during a 12-week period. Interests developed and nurtured during that summer have persisted, and we now know that this endeavor has strongly influenced and given direction to many of the participants. This volume stands as testimony that we can make significant contributions to graduate training by exposing our students to a rich tropical biota, and, at the same time, advance our own knowledge of a particular discipline.

It was my distinct privilege to have been associated with the biologists whose concerted efforts produced this book. It is my hope that their work may serve as an example of a unique and rewarding approach to graduate education.

Philip Helfrich July 1, 1971