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The Mediterranean Basin, California, Chile, the western Cape of South Africa and southern Australia share a mediterranean climate characterised by cool wet winters and hot dry summers. These five regions have differing patterns of human settlement but similarities in natural vegetation and some faunal assemblages. This unique documentation of the introduced floras and faunas in these five regions of mediterranean climate both increases our understanding of the ecology of biological invasions, and points the way to more effective management of the biota of these regions.

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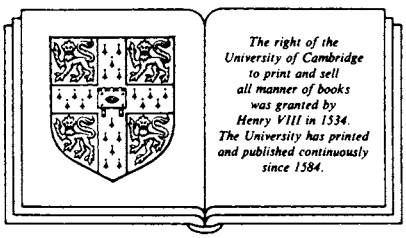

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Preface

The idea for this volume originated in 1983 at the first meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the program on the Ecology of Biological Invasions. At that time, the program had been only recently launched by the Scientific Committee On Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) as a major new initiative. Because at least half the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee were from regions of mediterranean climate and had interacted in the earlier SCOPE program on the Ecological Effects of Fire, the idea of a book on biogeographical aspects of invasions in mediterranean regions was agreed to as an attractive one. Now, almost six years later, that idea is a reality.

An association of mediterranean ecologists is also now a reality. The grouping is formalised as the International Society of Mediterranean Ecologists (ISOMED), the society being a member body of the International Union of Biological Sciences. If its previous publication record is any indication, mediterranean ecology as a discipline is destined to be an especially productive subdiscipline of botany, zoology and biogeography. We hope that publication of this volume adds to the already impressive publication lists on the subjects of mediterranean ecology and of biological invasions. Both topics have received considerable stimulus because of the interest and enthusiasm of our colleague Dr Harold A. Mooney. It is to him as Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee that we dedicate this book and in doing so we thank him for his wise counsel, his support and his continuing friendship over the years.

Many other colleagues and friends also deserve our thanks. To our fellow members of the Scientific Advisory Committee – James Drake, Fred Kruger, Marcel Rejmanek, José Sarukhan and Mark Williamson – we express our gratitude for their support. We thank all authors of the chapters that follow for their patience and forbearance. Martin Walters and, more recently, Alan Crowden at Cambridge University Press shared our earlier vision and helped make it a

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reality. So too did Peter Raven in the early days of the book. Throughout the life of the book Tricia Kaye helped in many ways, especially with advice on word processing. All these colleagues and many others have helped us produce this book, which because of its international authorship has required editorial skills greater than usual. But the challenge to us as editors is trivial compared to the challenge to all biological scientists to better understand the invasion process as it is worked out by many plants and animals in regions of mediterranean climate. If this book helps others to meet that challenge in their scientific research then it will have served its purpose as well as meeting our aims in creating a book from the original idea voiced by Hal Mooney in Paris in 1983.

R. H. Groves & F. di Castri
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