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This introductory undergraduate textbook provides a concise, clear and affordable overview of parasite biology for students and non-specialists, to equip them for approaching more technical and detailed literature. Using examples from all groups of animal parasites, the text considers the various stages of a parasite's life cycle from finding hosts to surviving within the host. The significance of damage caused by parasites and approaches to control are discussed, giving the book a well-rounded approach for those new to the subject or revising key points. A key feature of the book is its comparative rather than systematic approach. Suitable for all introductory parasitology courses in biology, zoology and human and veterinary medicine.

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An Introduction to Parasitology

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Preface

Modern parasitology embraces an enormous range of biological disciplines from the molecular to the global, and this is reflected in its literature. In general, parasitological books fall into two major categories. There are the large, comprehensive textbooks that aim to cover the whole subject and there are specialised volumes that consider a single group, species or disease in considerable depth, providing up-to-date, definitive information for the specialist. Examples of both are included in the reading list at the end of this book.

The present volume does not attempt to emulate either of these, rather it offers a short, hopefully comprehensible, introduction to aspects of parasitology which will equip the reader with the concepts and vocabulary needed to appreciate the more specialised literature. Towards this end technical terms have been emboldened in the text and defined in a glossary at the end.

The biggest difficulty has been deciding what to include. The choice of the material covered has had to be a personal one and inevitably many topics have been omitted. The danger of any such selection process is that one will succeed in satisfying none of one's readership. I hope this is not the case and I extend my apologies to those of my colleagues whose favourite parasites are not included or whose work has apparently been ignored. No slight was intended and space was at a premium.

My thanks are due to the colleagues who have generously allowed me to use their photographs and with whom I have discussed parts of the text, but all errors are of course mine. Finally I must thank my family for their tolerance during the preparation of the manuscript and I dedicate it to them.