

## PREFACE

There is no comprehensive work in any language encompassing the area of our knowledge that can be defined as Economic Malacology. In fact the subject is just beginning to be recognized as a discipline in its own right. The mission of the present work is to bring together its widely scattered literature, which goes all the way from typewritten, mimeographed, or ditted official reports to publications in obscure foreign journals. It has taken over ten years of searching, examining, evaluating, digesting, collating, and editing to bring this work to its present status. During this process many essentially unimportant or irrelevant papers were encountered, particularly in the area of snail control. In nearly every case these were not included in the bibliography because either they made little in the way of an original contribution or they contained information not relevant to the general problem of the economics of terrestrial gastropods. To this extent, the bibliography is a selected bibliography. And, in a broader sense, the subject of economic malacology embraces the problems presented by the freshwater snails. Such problems and the literature that treats of them, however, are vast indeed—so vast that it is completely impractical to consider them here, except for an occasional reference. Also, the problems and their solutions vary so much between the two groups of snails that there is little in the way of common applicability or of comparative value. Further, because many of the problems involving freshwater snails have a distinct medical flavor, far greater attention has been given to them—witness, for example, the vast literature concerning the snail hosts of the schistosomiasis.

Because the original sources of information will not be available to the greater segment of the readers, the essence of the contributions, in each case, has been incorporated in the text in so far as it has been practicable to do so. Some authors quoted or referred to in this work may be judged as not being truly qualified to make sound reports. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that the inclusion of certain of

these works was for the completeness of the record; inclusion is not an indorsement. Where it is believed that a given author is in error, this is pointed out. But under no circumstances was any reference excluded simply on the basis of its being at variance with the conclusions set forth in this book.

The pertinent information in the literature has been combined with considerable field data which I collected in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Supplemental information has been obtained from many correspondents who have had firsthand experience with terrestrial snail problems. Throughout this book, credit is given on the spot where credit is due; and sincere efforts have been made not to imply by omission that originality rested with me, even though I may have independently arrived at the same conclusion. The reader therefore can trace back to the original source almost any item of information.

No matter how hard one tries, inevitable errors, omissions, and misinterpretations will creep into any work of this size. These are as regrettable as they are unavoidable. Certainly every effort has been made to keep them to a minimum. New contributions in the field of economic malacology are continuing to appear in the literature just often enough that it has not been possible to keep pace with them right up to the last minute. As a compromise, reference to recent, pertinent works is made only in the bibliography. It has been a temptation to prolong the editing of the manuscript in the expectation that all points of difficulty would be removed. But it is much more realistic and practical to get all of this information as soon as possible into the hands of those who need it and have been asking for it for years. Hence, with a good measure of apprehension and with a full awareness of the shortcomings involved, this work is being released in the fond hope, not that it will serve the needs perfectly, but that it will serve them well.

During the years that it has taken to produce this work, there has accumulated a vast indebtedness in a multitude of ways; and the task of attempting to indicate here anything approaching the gratitude that is felt, seems overwhelming and irrevocably foredoomed to inadequacy.

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