The idea for this book was spawned about 10 years ago, after each of us had studied social biology of crustaceans for several years. We had independently explored the growing but scattered literature in this area and noticed the curiously low profile of crustaceans in the literature on sexual and social evolution, which draws primarily from insects and vertebrates. Taking inspiration from our own observations, from the many crustacean stories published in the literature, and from the fascinating lore of field biologists revealed around the bar at conferences, we became convinced that these amazing creatures have much to offer the general student of social and sexual evolution.

Perhaps inevitably, these realizations led us to the idea for this book.

As is often true, after the excitement around the idea's birth, a long time passed before it took concrete form. The turning point was in June 2003, when we organized a symposium on behavioral ecology and sociobiology of Crustacea at the annual meeting of the Crustacean Society. The symposium was a great success—at least in our eyes—and uncovered a strong sense of excitement and ferment in the field. The enthusiasm shown by contributors and attendants at the symposium, and by colleagues we subsequently discussed it with, finally
convinced us that the time was ripe for this book and overcame our initial apprehension (subsequently confirmed!) at the prospective work load of editing it. Many of the symposium participants eagerly agreed to contribute to the book, and we are delighted to see how their enthusiasm has borne fruit here. To round out the subject matter, we invited contributions from a few other colleagues who could not make it to the symposium.

In editing this book, we were fortunate to begin with a strong foundation. The important book *Sexual Biology of Crustaceans* (edited by R.T. Bauer and J.T. Martin, 1991) was published more than 15 years ago now, and we are pleased that some of its contributors have also joined us in the present volume. Many contributions in *Sexual Biology of Crustaceans* remain required reading for any student of crustacean sexual and social behavior today—we hope that our book will be seen as a worthy successor.

The contributors to the present volume span a broad range of fields—from neurobiology and genetics to field behavior and ecology—and hail from around the world. They include young researchers beginning their careers as well as distinguished senior scientists who pioneered study of crustacean social and sexual biology and who can provide comprehensive reviews of influential career-long research programs. It is thanks largely to the efforts of this dedicated group of researchers that crustaceans increasingly claim their deserved place in the general literature on evolutionary ecology.

Necessarily, the present book includes only a sample of what is known about crustacean sexual and social biology. We strived to include contributions that capture the broad range of problems and topics being studied and to provide a concise overview of the most exciting and important recent research on crustacean evolutionary ecology. But we are well aware that such a book cannot be complete, and we hope that readers will be enticed to hunt for the gems present in the more specialized crustacean literature, for which these chapters should provide an entrée. One valuable function of a collection like this is that it illuminates not only what we know but, equally important, the holes in our current understanding. We hope that making these holes visible will stimulate the next generation to explore them. Finally, a major goal in assembling the book was to foster integration—among the disparate topics.
covered herein, with other animal taxa, and with the larger field of evolutionary ecology. To this end, we urged all contributors to reach beyond their own specialties to seek parallels and contrasts between their own work and what is known about other animals. We hope that the finished product will illustrate the value of crustaceans as model organisms for addressing a variety of problems in evolutionary ecology, reveal some of the exciting opportunities awaiting a new generation of students, and inspire them to embrace the research that will produce the next book like this one.