

FOREWORD

Cape Cod juts eastward over the continental shelf as the flexed arm of Massachusetts, partly sheltered on its southern side by Monomoy, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and the Elizabeth Islands. The Cape, islands, eastern shores of the state bordering the Cape, Cape Cod Bay, Nantucket Sound, Vineyard Sound, and Buzzards Bay constitute the Cape Cod Region. Glacial in origin, the Region is dotted by myriad small embayments and estuaries, and the clean tidal waters of the North Atlantic wash its shores --- a diverse ecologic setting accounting for the richness of the local marine biota, and for establishment of the Marine Biological Laboratory here in 1888.

On September 1, 1962, the Marine Biological Laboratory inaugurated the Systematics-Ecology Program and embarked on a basic, year-round, long-term program of research and training in marine systematics and ecology. The Program has as one of its major objectives the gradual extension, in a broad sense and at a high level of excellence, of systematic and ecologic knowledge of organisms in the estuarine and marine waters and bottoms of the Cape Cod Region.

Early in the life of the Program we realized the lack of and recognized the urgent necessity for illustrated, referenced, indexed sets of keys and check lists of the commoner plants and animals of the Region for use by non-systematists in the Woods Hole scientific community and neighboring areas. A start on this task was provided in 1960 when Dr. Ralph I. Smith and others of the MBL Invertebrate Zoology Course staff assembled a small loose-leaf collection of keys then existing in the laboratory instructions of that course. These early keys had evolved over a period of years, and the authorship of some could not be determined.

It was a happy occasion for us when Ralph Smith agreed to compile and edit this present publication. He arrived in Woods Hole early in the summer of 1963, worked indefatigably with us during that summer, then returned to Berkeley where he continued his labors, somehow sandwiched among his many duties at the University. Now, some ten months later, the manuscript is ready for publication. We extend to Ralph our hearty thanks! A most sincere word of appreciation is also due collaborators without whose excellent cooperation and zeal the manuscript would never have been completed, and Mrs. San Lineaweaver for her patient and careful typing and correcting of the master copy. The preparation of this publication was made possible by support of the Ford Foundation to the Systematics Division of the Systematics-Ecology Program; it is a pleasure to acknowledge this aid.

The first edition of the Invertebrate Keys is a beginning. We welcome suggestions, and look forward to producing revised editions as the invertebrates of the Region become better known. We are also planning to produce similar keys to other organisms of the Woods Hole Region as this becomes possible.

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