

RECENT ADVANCES IN ECOLOGY AND SYSTEMATICS OF SPONGES

Edited by

María-Jesús Uriz and Klaus Rützler



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FOREWORD

This book is an outcome of the VIII International Sponge Workshop held at the Centre for Advanced Studies of Blanes (CSIC), Spain, from June 26 to 29, 1992. The Blanes workshop was the latest in a series of informal meetings that have been taking place in Europe every year since 1983. That was when a group of enthusiastic sponge scientists came together for a week at the Sherking Island Marine Station in Ireland to combine taxonomic, biological, and ecological discussions with fieldwork. The experience proved so fruitful and enjoyable that the event became an annual one. The present volume is dedicated to Shirley Stone, who, along with Rob van Soest and Nicole Boury-Esnault, proposed and helped organize that first European Workshop.

The atmosphere at each meeting since then has crackled with the exchange of ideas on topics ranging from current developments in the systematics, ecology, and biology of sponges to issues that need to be addressed in future research. Beyond the three books that cover workshop proceedings, these exchanges have given rise to many important studies and collaborations, such as the second attempt (after that of BOROJEVIC *et al.*, 1968) to standardize sponge terminology, the results of which are to be published shortly (Boury-Esnault and Rützler, eds., in preparation).

Although past workshops have been attended primarily by European scientists, researchers working in other locations have expressed an interest in participating. Already the locale of the research has expanded beyond European waters to the Caribbean, even the Pacific, as reflected in the following pages. And our American colleagues have kindly offered to host the next workshop in Florida. It is encouraging to reflect back on all the contributions that have been made to sponge research in the past decade, thanks in part to our workshops.

The present volume is the most recent of these contributions. It is being published under the gracious sponsorship of Josep Maria Gili, director of *Scientia Marina*. His help and that of Joan Lambea in the final stages of production are greatly appreciated. Thanks also go to Venka V. Macintyre, Kathleen Smith, and Maria Bardají for their editorial assistance. Financial support for both the publication costs and workshop activities has been provided in part by grants DGICYT PB89-0081 and DGICYT MAR91-0528 of the Spanish Marine Resources and Aquaculture Program, and MAST II PL91-004 of the Marine Sciences and Technologies Program of the European Community. We are indeed grateful for this support.

We all look forward to another decade of productive meetings.

M. J. URIZ and KLAUS RÜTZLER

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