

# Preface

Compiling a book on Australian crickets has been more difficult than we realised at the start. With more than 400 species described, we soon discovered that there were many more undescribed ones than we ever imagined. We actually were happiest when we identified a species with a described name. This just highlights the need for such a guide. The authors hope it will stimulate an interest in this fascinating and somewhat confusing group of insects. Users will discover that not all crickets are easy to find. Singing (calling) males are usually difficult to locate because besides being secretive and rather uncommon, they can be ventriloquial and frustratingly difficult to locate. Once the singer has been discovered, skill is required to capture the insect. We discuss various techniques that will aid in collecting crickets but, be assured, they do not always work, even for the experts. Crickets can be found during the day as well as after dark. Once collected, the

cricket can be isolated and induced to produce its song in captivity. Methods of making and analysing recordings are discussed as well as techniques to use for building a collection of crickets. Links to the 'cricket section' of the Australian Faunal Directory and the Orthoptera Species file can aid with learning where the cricket fits in within the scheme of Australian and international classifications. We briefly discuss the importance of crickets in culture, especially in Asian countries where there is interest in keeping live crickets for the songs they produce and the use of crickets in the sport of cricket fighting. However, with the increasing use of the internet and growing population, both of these cultural pursuits are in decline.

We hope that we can kindle an interest and understanding of the origins and extent of the Australian cricket fauna from the smallest species (nemobiines, p. 320) to the largest (podoscirtines, p. 124).