

Volume Preface

This book introduces the series *Advances in Environmental Microbiology* by presenting a broad perspective regarding the diversity of microbial life that exists on our planet. Although we often identify Earth as the planet of humans, this planet does not belong to just ourselves, and the planet's metabolic balance mostly is ruled by its microorganisms. And so, I use the word *our* in reference to all of the world's species. Humans are only one part of the biofilm that has developed on our wet, rocky world. The first two chapters of this book present theoretical perspectives that help to understand a species niche and habitat. Chapter three addresses the fossil record of microorganisms. The subsequent chapters in this volume then introduce microbial life that currently exists within various terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

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Cincinnati, OH

Christon J. Hurst



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