

Acknowledgement

Life becomes beautiful when we have people around you to encourage and motivate every point of time. During this wonderful journey I have been benefited and got support from large number of people. Hence it is important and my pleasure to acknowledge such people for their contribution.

First of all, I am highly grateful and expressing my sincere gratitude to my guide and Head of the Department Prof. Dolly Kumar, who right from choosing the topic to the last stage of completion, rendered every possible assistance and supervised the work. Without her continuous guidance, constructive criticism and valuable discussion this thesis would have remained a dream.

I would like to express my deep sense of thankfulness to Prof. P. C. Mankodi, Ex-Head, Department of Zoology for providing me departmental facilities for the research work during his tenure.

I sincerely thank Prof. Kauresh Vachhrajani for allowing me to use the facility of a stereomicroscope and Ms. Barkha Purohit for helping to use the facility.

I am extremely thankful to Prof. B Suresh for his valuable suggestions and support and I sincerely thank Prof. Pragna Parikh for her affection and support.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Shashikant Sharma for making my thesis into the final shape.

I very much appreciate the help and support given by the Forest Department, Godhra Division and Archaeological Survey of India (Vadodara Circle) in collecting information regarding the study area.

The presence of my labmates Ms. Archana Yadav, Ms. Mamta Deb, Ms. Rupa Sule, Mr. Hardik Purohit and Ms. Harshita Sharma, made the entire period of research work full of fun and enthusiasm. I would like to thank them for all their help and support and special

thanks to Ms. Archana Yadav for accompanying me during my field visits. I extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Anaal Engineer for her help and support. I am also thankful to my senior Dr. Suchi Gandhi for her valuable suggestions.

I thank all the members of the non-teaching staff of the Department of Zoology for their help and cooperation.

I extend my gratitude to Mr. Sunil Kumar for teaching me formatting of the thesis.

My special thanks to my husband, Mr. Sunil K S Pillai for his inspiration, and for joining me to the field visits. I would not have completed this work without his constant support and encouragement.

I thank my naughty son, Thejas Pillai for giving me time to study and complete my academic journey delightfully and smoothly. Patience of my son and tolerating my absence from home on holidays need a special mention.

I am always indebted to all the members of my family for their whole-hearted support and prayers without whom I would not have completed this wonderful journey.

I am always greatly obliged to God, The Almighty, for his kindness, generosity and the blessings showered upon me for the completion of this thesis.

Last but not the least, I express my sincere thankfulness to all those, who have helped me directly or indirectly towards this accomplishment.

Lakshmi S Pillai