ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, I would like to thank the Almighty for giving me strength and ability for encarving my career to accomplish this work. I am also thankful to God for blessing me with parents who encouraged me and patiently put up with my work. My Mother who always stood by me like a backbone and My Father, who supported me for carrying out my research work.

I warmly thank my Guiding teacher Dr. G. S. Padate, In-charge Head, Department of Zoology, The M. S. University of Baroda, for her guidance, support and productive criticism throughout the research period.

I thank Prof. A. V. Ramachandran (Ex-Head Department of Zoology) and all the teachers and the non teaching staff for their valuable support during my study period. Along with I also thank them for providing me with all the laboratory facilities.

I am also thankful to UGC, Delhi for providing UGC Research Fellowship under RFSMS scheme under which the work was carried out.

I delightfully thank Dr. Maina Padhyya and Dr. M. V. Asnani for critically going through my thesis and for giving vital suggestions.

I express my genuine gratitude to Dr. B. M. Parasharya and Dr. Nishit Dharaiya for providing me with important literature.

I also thank my senior researchers Dr. Sapna Surendranath, Dr. Arpita Guha and Dr. Bhavna Bharucha for their important words of wisdom.

I am also thankful to my younger brother and sister who have helped me frequently.

Thanks would look much smaller for a person like my "best friend" Sonal Deshkar who gave support in my favorable and unfavorable times. She proved to be a God send gift to me and the phrase "a friend in need is a friend indeed" aptly implies to her. Niraj Joshi who
is one of my best friends whom I would like to acknowledge for his never ending support and for sparing his precious time for providing me with excellent pictures for my thesis. I take an opportunity to thank Sudip bhaiya for all the mischievous moments which created a stress free atmosphere throughout. Dr. Raktim Mukherjee, Dr. Shiva and Yash didi have also provided helping hands from time to time. I take this opportunity to thank my juniors Nirjara Gandhi and Chandni Patel who went through all the scrupulous proof reading and corrections of this thesis. I would like to thank my colleagues Pratyush, Dishant, Pranav, Gowri, Reena, Priyanka, Prem, Darshiee, Kiran, Ansar, Ravi, Menaka and Dipak. I thank Sunny, Mayur, Palak and all the M. Sc. Students for all the joyous moments spent with them.

I also thank Dr. Bindoo Bhatt, and Mr. Janak Joshi who provided me with GIS map of Vadodara city and Sanjey Patel who prepared map of Vadodara district as per my requirements.

I am also thankful to the director of the Postal Training Centre and Unit officer of the Model Farm who gave me permission to conduct my surveys for two years of data collection. Further, I thank the Vadodara Urban Development Authority (VUDA) and Vadodara Municipal Seva Sadan (VMSS) for providing me secondary data of Vadodara city.

I am grateful to Kartik Upadhyay and Manoj Thakkar for providing me excellent photographs.

Finally, I thank all my family members and my friends who gave me strength to carry out this work.

Jagruti Y. Rathod