Acknowledgements

Biodiversity informatics is a passion for me. During my 15+ years of professional career in this field, I was on look out for friend, philosopher, and mentor who would guide me in my pursuit to contribute to this much essential yet neglected discipline. Dr. S. Krishnan in true sense mentored not only during the course of this work, but also guided me to achieve excellence that is today recognized at national and international level. I thank him for the excellent guidance, encouragement and support that he has extended to transform me from young amateur worker to well recognized mature researcher. I owe him a lot for the freedom of work and expression as well as for the most fruitful association I had with him as my guide and senior colleague.

I am thankful to Dr. S. Sivaram, Director, National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune for encouraging and supporting activities in the field of biodiversity informatics. NCL is known for undertaking work in unconventional disciplines of science and technology beyond boundaries. Dr. Sivaram lived with that reputation of NCL, and supported biodiversity informatics amidst odds, and stiff resistance from individuals and institutions who thought biodiversity informatics is not our area of work.

What I am today is a result of immense contributions of many institutions and individuals. Some of these contributions were noticeable, while many were invisible, yet significant ones. At this juncture, I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude towards each one of them. During my 15+ years of professional career, which I began at the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa followed by Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, and currently, at the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune several colleagues at all these laboratories ensured that improve intellectually during every possible interaction, and research experience with them. At NIO, Goa it was Dr. D. Chandramohan, Dr. Baban Ingole, Dr. T. G. Jagtap, Dr. C. T. Achuthankutty, Dr. Usha and Dr. Subhash Goswami, Mr. Arvind Ghosh, Mr. Albert Gouveia and Dr. Ehrlich Desa were responsible to bring in much required confidence that I could plan, and implement R&D programs independently. At CCMB, it was my colleague Dr. Yogendra Sharma not only boosted my morale both intellectually, and psychologically, probably at a moment when, I was being almost rejected by the mainstream bioinformatics community for not practicing conventional
bioinformatics. It was Yogendra who encouraged me to write correspondence in “Nature”, and also apply for “Fulbright Fellowship” which not only opened up new and unexplored word of biodiversity informatics, but at the same time made me to realize that my conviction to work in the field of “biodiversity informatics” was not only a right decision, but ahead of our time.

During my Fulbright experience at the US Geological Survey, Reston, VA, USA, Dr. Anne Frondorf opened a gateway for me by introducing me to several US colleagues, and each discussion with them led me to believe that I am not only progressing on right track, but also working ahead of others. Ms. Gladys Cotter, Associate Chief Biologists, and her colleagues at US NBII provided an experience of how to plan big, and implement with ease.

While I was cris-crossing continents as expert on various national, and international agencies; Mr. Nandkumar Dahibhate, my colleague at NCL, not only ensured that my group work with same vigor and dedication, but also shoulder lots of my personal planning burden. His support over past 7 years, and critical advice at crucial junctures, is something that I would continue to cherish all the time. He is not only a perfect example of a man with discipline, but also the rare individual with uncommon quality of service to community of friends and close ones without any expectation. I owe him a lot!

Success that is attributed to me are not of mine alone, but its contributions of several colleagues and students who worked with me. At NIO, Goa my colleagues Mr. Devanand Kavlekar and Mr. Vishwanath Kulkarni not only shared work space with me but to certain degree contributed to my ambition to work in marine biodiversity informatics. At NCL, Pune my colleagues Mr. Manegsh Deshapande, Mr. Siddharth Paralikar assisted me to the best of their ability. I would always cherish my intellectual, philosophical, and motivational conversations with my buddy Dr. M. Karthikeyan. Encouragement that I received from Mr. G. Prabhakaran, and Mr. D. B. Pradhan needs special mention. I enjoyed working with most of the members of group. Notable amongst them are Dr. Aparna Watve, Mr. Nilesh Rane, Mr. Jitendra Gaikwad, Dr. Swapna Prabhu, Ms. Manisha Londhe, Ms. Vaishali Jadhav, Ms. Asavari Navlakhe, Dr. Aniruddha Khadkikar, Ms. Abhilasha Sen, Ms. Rashmi Rajhansa, Mr. Chandan Badapanda, Ms. Prajakta Tembe, Ms. Varunjeet Kaur, Mr. Gurushant Upase, Mr. Vitthal Kudal, Mr. Shriram Dawkhar, Mr. Santosh Gaikwad,
Ms. Priya Gaikwad, Ms. Bhagyashree Kumbhalkar, Mr. Aditya Kakodkar. I thank each one of them, and those to who I might have forgotten to mention here.

I wish to place on record appreciation that I received from Prof. Madhav Gadgil for my efforts in biodiversity informatics. Several of my colleagues and friends viz., Dr. Prashant Naik, Dr. Urmila Kulkarni-Kale, Ms. Shubhada Nagarkar, Mr. Sanjay Londhe were always source of encouragement during this whole process.

During my 15+ years of professional career, I came across many young boys and girls, with diverse ambitions, work style and high degree of attitude. Many of them contributed to my success indirectly, and to this dissertation directly. However, Mr. Jitendra Gaikwad provided me immense opportunity to shape a career. He is not only teachable, flexible to changes, with high degree of ambition, but also inclusive in his nature. Apart from assigned duties at my lab, he became very close member of my family, and thus contributed significantly in sharing some of my personal assignments, so that I could have time enough to devote to this work. I wish him all the very bests in future.

My parents came to Pune from remote village in Vidharba region of Maharashtra in 1960’s. They did not had an opportunity to learn much, but they imbibed great dream for their kids, to see them progressing. Had it not been my parents who are great dreamers, but also GOD gifted with uncommon strength to stand for right things against all odds, I would not have been shaped as a scientist. They worked to ensure that we progress. I would always cherish their love, care, and passion to see their kids progressing.

My father-in-law Late Principal Maruti Salwe, was teacher by heart, who succeeded amidst adverse situations. Had he been alive, he would have been extremely happy to share his joy on this occasion. In more than one sense he was my philosophical father with whom I got very little time to exchange/share views. He was always very proud of his son-in-law, and today would have been overjoyed with great sense of pride. I must also mention the support and words of encouragement that I received from my mother-in-law all along. I am thankful to numerous relatives who offered unconditional support to me during adverse situations.

My wife and best companion ever, Pradnya is a great dreamer, and has always encouraged me to move forward in life. I cannot explain in word painstaking efforts she has taken to ensure that I work beyond commoners in order to achieve my and her dreams. During last 11 years of our married life, she stood by me at every highs and
lows that came our way. She believed in my abilities to succeed. I would continue to cherish our companionship and friendship all the time.

Both Pradnya and I thank GOD to have blessed us with wonderful and loving daughter Maitri, whose love and caring nature, as well oozing confidence is source of our energy. I am confident that our daughter to carry forward our legacy from the point where we cease to perform, and would achieve unthinkable heights of success.

May GOD give me, and my family the strength and wisdom to continue working the field of biodiversity informatics, and achieve greater heights of success in all spheres of life, benefiting to the society, mankind and all living being!

Vishwas Chavan
September 25, 2007