Acknowledgements

O Mother Saraswati, I bow my head before you as a mark of respect, everyday. The knowledge of the Vedas, Vedangas and Vedantas is imbibed in you. You are the beholder of ultimate knowledge. Offering my Ph.D. Thesis, I submit myself before you, uttering the mantra, ‘Ong Oing Shree Shree Saraswattoi Namo Namoh’.

I still remember that occasion, when I was only three years old; my father took me in front of Maa Saraswati, gave me a slate and chalk and asked me to write A, B, C…and my name etc. Today I finished my Ph.D. thesis and writing acknowledgements. It’s a long journey, and my father is always just beside me keeping his hand on my shoulder to give all the support what a father can give to his dearest son to see him on the top of the world. My mother’s unconditional love, care and prayers are always with me. She always wanted to see me to achieve the apex of education; and I am proud that I am still climbing the apex because of her love and wishes. My parents were first and the last to believe that I can achieve my dreams. I don’t like to thank my maa and baba by means of just few words. Today I bow down in front of them for everything.
I offer my sincerest gratitude to my Ph.D. supervisor The Odysseus Dr. K. Sankar. Whatever I learnt in the field and in WII, is because of him. His support throughout my research period was unimaginable. Only because of his inspirations, suggestions and care I won the battle of troy (finishing Ph.D. thesis). I am always thankful to him for reviewing my thesis and papers, giving me an opportunity to in tiger re-introduction program, for all logistical help in field and his trust on me for leopard collaring. Special thanks to Krithika and Shanti Maam for their best wishes for my Ph.D. work and leopard project.

I don’t have a second thought rather than statistics to express my gratefulness to my other Ph.D. Supervisor The Peleus Sh. Qamar Qureshi. My words and numericals fail whenever I try to express my gratitude to him. He was always there just behind me as my father. Beyond this project, hours taking calculation, thesis writing... I can say he loves me a lot and there is no standard error in it. Rarely there exists such relation with only an upper confidence limit. Thanks to Neeta Maam for her love and care in many occasions in Sariska.

I owe my heartiest gratitude to other project investigator The Zeus Dr. Y. V. Jhala. Since the first day in Wildlife Institute of India, I got his encouragement and support throughout. Though I was a complete stranger to him and didn’t have any correspondence, I got his assistance in laying the initial foundation of my research career. I am always thankful to him for giving me opportunity to work in All India Tiger Monitoring
Project and teaching me camera trapping, line transect walk, sign survey and other field and analytical techniques.

I am grateful to Sh. P. R. Sinha (Director, WII) for his support and encouragement for the ‘Ecology of leopard’ project. I am equally thankful to Dr. V. B. Mathur (Dean, FWS, WII) for his extended support in field and in WII.

I sincerely thank Sh. R. N. Mehrotra (PCCF, Rajasthan) and Sh. P. S. Somasekhar (CCF, Wildlife, Rajasthan) for giving permission to work in Sariska. I am really grateful to them for their support and trust on me in leopard collaring and tiger monitoring. I am thankful to Sh. Rajesh Gupta (Ex DCF, Sariska TR), Sh. Sunayan Sharma (Ex DCF, Sariska TR) and Sh. V. Praveen (Ex DCF, Sariska TR) for their extended support and faith on me for tiger monitoring. I am thankful to all the Range Officers specially Sh. Arvind Jha, Sh. Daulat Singh Saktawat, Sh. Vidyadhar Singh, Sh. Udairam and Sh. Rajesh Phagna for their support and hospitality during my field work.

I would like to thank the entire Sariska Forest Department staff for their constant help and support during my stay in Sariska. They made my work full of fun and enjoyment. Special thanks to Sh. Ramkaran, Sh. Heeralal, Sh. Ramprasad, Sh. Popsingh, Sh. Sualal, Sh. Jyoti, Sh. Jaypal, Sh. Gajanan for helping me operating camera traps and tracking leopards and tigers. Thanks to Sh. Motilal, Sh. Phoolsingh, Sh. Suraj and Sh. Udaybhan for letting me inside Sariska TR any time of the day and keeping me in touch with all the forest chowkis through wireless network.
I am grateful, from the bottom of my heart, to my dedicated field assistants Jairam and Ramesh (not the Forest Minister) and my driver Omi. I enjoyed every day in Sariska with them with lots of fun and learning. Special thanks to Jairam for operating camera traps and tracking leopard even in my absence. Many thanks to Omi and Ramesh for making me a qualified driver. Thanks to Chhotelal and Khagesh for helping me tracking leopard and tiger and accompanying me in field many times. I am thankful to the villagers of Haripura, Kundalka and Umri for their help and hospitality in field in many ways like transportation of bait cage or tracking leopards.

In WII, I am highly grateful to Dr. Parag Nigam for his suggestions, advise and joyful company in field and WII. I am thankful to Dr. S. P. Goyal, Dr. G. S. Rawat, Dr. K. Ramesh, Sh. Suresh, Dr. K. Vasudevan, Sh. G. S. Bharadawaj and Dr. S. A. Hussain for their valuable suggestions in Sariska.

I would like to acknowledge the staff of WII library: Sh. Verma and Sh. Rana for providing all facilities in library. Computer and GIS staff: Sh. Rajesh Thapa, Sh. Sukumar, Sh. Manoj Agarwal, Sh. Panna Lal, Sh. Veerappan for all the support they provided throughout my research work. Special Thanks to Sh. Virendra Sharma for reviewing my thesis for DTP check. Finance Section staff: Sh. Dubey, Sh. Kharak Singh and Sh. Naveen for their timely support for forest advance or TA/DA. A special thanks to Mr. Vinod Thakur for helping me in WII laboratory and field. I am very thankful to Gyanesh bhaiya and Kishan bhaiya for their immense help in official work.
I am thankful to all the co-researchers who accompanied me in Sariska. Shilpi’s care and co-operation, Bongo’s love and support and Pooja’s love and herbal intellect made my life easier in Sariska. I am equally thankful to Priyanka, Zaara, Tanushree, Sal, Akshaya, Lieneka and Nivea for many help in Sariska. They all made my days full of fun and entertainment.

All my WII friends, Shazia, Parabita, Sheena, Indro, Sitendu, Sabuj, Shamina, Prakash, Divya, Abhishek, Vivek da, Bopanna, Kamlesh, Gajju Bhai, Anirudda da are heartily acknowledged. Thanks to all for their cheerful company and academic support. I am highly grateful to Swati for all help in GIS and preparing maps. Special mention for Sutirtho (Chhana), who helped me in all the analysis.

I would like to express my love and regards to my dear Seniors Santanu Da, Kausik Da and Tapo da for providing all support and care in my research and personal life. They are always beside me like my elder brothers. Actually no words are sufficient for them. Though, Thanks Santa Da (Guru) for all GIS helps. Kausik Da (Moturam) for papers and analysis and Tapo da (Chang) for lovely food and analysis.

I would be doing injustice to myself if I forget to convey my gratitude to my juniors Abesh, Angshuman, Sudip, Devmalya and Samhita. They were always with me....love u all.

My heartiest love for my brother SUBU, for his constant comedy and inspiration; my Dadu, my Thakuma, ShipuMa and JoyPapa for their love and care for me, which are always my confidence.
Special Thanks to my Laptop- Whiskey, a Toshiba L30.

And, a little Humming Bird, Rishu

I thank them all and the others who genuinely offered wish help. I appreciate everyone whom I have thanklessly missed to remember and have contributed towards completion of the work.

Krishnendu Mondal