ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God, the source and seat of all wisdom, I offer praise and humbly acknowledge the blessings through which He has strengthened me to take up and complete this study.

I wish to express my profound gratitude and sincere thanks to my research guide Dr. John George M., Associate professor (Retd.) C/o P.G. Dept. of Zoology, Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla (Formerly Scientist, Bombay Natural History Society, Ecological Research Station, Bharatpur) for his valuable guidance, constant encouragement and constructive criticism throughout the period of my research work. His enthusiasm and personal help in my research work during the period helped me to successfully complete the work.

I express my thanks to Principal Dr. Babu Paul and former Principals Rev. Fr. Jose Kavungal and Dr. N.D. Inasu, the management, Former head of Department Dr. P.R. Varghese, Mr. Jain J. Therattil, my colleague in department of Zoology and other associates of St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth for their valuable help and constant encouragement.

I am greatly indebted to Principal, Dr. K. Jacob, former Principals Prof. Kurien John, Dr. Alex Mathew, the management, members of the staff and the HOD and members of Department of Zoology, Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla. I also thank the Principal, the management, the members of the staff of the Department of Zoology, and Dr. Annie Kurian K., Department of Mathematics of Mar Thoma College for Women, Perumbavoor for their support and co-operation in the course of my research.
I gratefully acknowledge the University Grants Commission for selecting me as a teacher fellow under the Faculty Development Programme (FDP) and providing me the financial support during the research work.

I owe very much to my student Mr. Sandeep Das K., Research fellow, KFRI, Thrissur and Vivek Chandran A., FCI, Thrissur, and Ornithologists Dr. Jayson E.A., Research Co-ordinator, KFRI, Peechi; Dr. Nammer P.O., Head Department of Wildlife Sciences, KAU, Thrissur; Dr. Sugathan R., Research Director of Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Thattekkad; Dr. Azeez P.A., the Director of SACON, Coimbatore; Suresh K., Research Fellow, KFRI, Thrissur and amateur bird watchers Sri. P.K. Ravindran, Srinivasan P.P., Praveen E.S., Thrissur, and Dr. Sreekumar and Dr. Prasanth Narayanan of Kottayam Natural Society for their timely advice and support for completing this research.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Raju Thomas K., Assistant Professor in Zoology, Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla for his genuine interest in my work and readiness to help. His editing skills and thoughtful observations have been of encouraging help to me for completing this research work. He was a great help to me in identifying the fish fauna of kole wetlands.

I thank Dr. Sasidharan, Scientist, KFRI, Peechi, Dr. Sunil and Dr. Byju E.C., Associate Professors, Department of Botany, S.N.M. College, Malankara and Prof. Jacob Abraham, former HOD of Botany, St. Thomas college, Thrissur for helping me in the identification of plants of the kole wetlands.

I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Sunanda C. Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pookode, Wayanad and Dr. Joyce Jose, Assistant Professor in Zoology, St. Thomas college, Thrissur for helping me in statistical analysis.
I express my thanks to Prof. Thomas Kadambatt, HOD, Retd. the department of English, St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth and Mrs. Deepa K.M., Research Scholar, for their valuable suggestions and help during the study period.

I wish to thank the librarians of KFRI, Peechi; Kerala Agricultural University, Mannuthy; M.G. University, Kottayam and University of Calicut, Malappuram for helping me to findout apt references for my thesis from their collection books and resources.

The supports received from my father, Francis; my wife Jancy Tomy; my daughter Stephey Maria and my son Francis Antony need to be specially mentioned. My wife assisted me in collecting the data of plants, fishes, soil and water. This thesis would never have been a reality had it not been for the tolerance and whole hearted support and encouragements of my wife. I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

It gives me much pleasure to record my thanks to all the farmers who allowed me to work in their fields and all the farm labourers who enthusiastically answered all my questions on cultivation and rice-fish culture, and it was really a great help throughout the period of my research.

I would like to thank late Raju P.R., St. Joseph Communication, Kuriachira, Educare, Thrissur, for giving arrangements for the documentation, formatting and the neat binding of the thesis.

There are many who are not mentioned here but have rendered great help for the execution of this work, I express my gratefulness to all of them.

Tomy Francis