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FOREWORD

The thesis treats the taxonomic and distributional aspect of the biting midges belonging to the genus Culicoides Latreille, family Ceratopogonidae, order Diptera, in the State of West Bengal, India. The study was started in 1979, at the Post-graduate deptt. of Zoology of Darjeeling Government College and since September 1980, following transfer of the author of the thesis, it was shifted to the Zoology Deptt., Presidency College, Calcutta, and was carried out there till completion. A total of 79 species of Culicoides was studied of which 18 were described in the thesis as new to science. The previously known species were re-examined, opinions available on them in literature or by correspondence with the experts were checked and their present status as due was shown in the thesis alongwith additional distribution data where necessary. Also described in the thesis were the keys to identification of the species of different groups and subgenera into which the described species of Culicoides of West Bengal now could be accommodated. The subgeneric and Group-level features were reviewed in the thesis carefully combining the available data both from literature and from conclusions made in course of the present study. Species synonymisation, subgeneric interchange and proposition of new species-groups were found necessary in several instances and those

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were incorporated in the thesis as necessary. A systematic table showing the valid species of Gulicoides of the State of West Bengal, India, was also provided in the thesis.

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