**Key variable codes for Tables:**

Seb: Study sites from 1 to 8 (in Blocks variable)

H1, H2 H3, H4: Habitats (1,2,3,4) (in Habitats variable)

arth: Arthrocnemum macrostachyum (in Species variable)

hal: *Halocnemum strobilaceum* (in Species variable)

lyg: *Lygeum spartum* (in Species variable)

N: with nurse shrub (in Neighbouring variable)

O: open bare soil (in Neighbouring variable)

Wet: Wet arid climate

Dry: Dry arid climate