



In memoriam

Lyubomir Petkov Tsvetkov, a prominent Bulgarian hydrobiologist, D.Sc. in biology, and an associate professor of the Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, died on 16 December 1999.

Lyubomir Tsvetkov was born on 9 July 1920 in Pomorie. In 1949 he graduated at the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Sofia University with a master's degree in biology. His love of the sea inspired his career at the Marine Biological Station in Varna as an assistant. After that he worked as a researcher at the Ichthyological Station in Varna. His first steps in science were directed to the study of the biological production of coastal lakes and of the biological production of fishponds as well.

In 1953 he was appointed to the Institute of Zoology where he continued his study. His creative tendencies were clear from the very beginning. With the help of quantitative methods he began his study on the benthos production of continental water bodies in Bulgaria, with a special emphasis on the meiobenthos. A new method for registering the meiobenthos quantity, developed by him, was adopted and used in Bulgaria as well as in other countries. He established the important role of meiobenthos in the feed web of other hydrobionts and fishes. He proposed a classification of the coastal lakes on the basis of chironomid fauna.

His professional interests extended further to encompass the fauna and biological peculiarities of groundwater. He studied ostracods, bathynellids and isopods. He found many species unknown to the Bulgarian fauna until then, 15 of which newly discovered.

Dr. Tsvetkov studied the problems of pollution and self-purification of groundwater in different regions of Bulgaria. Based on his research, conclusions can be made about groundwater regions and categories, about the use and the preservation of groundwater from different pollutants. This has led to laying the foundations of a new science - stygobiology, as a branch of hydrobiology.

Dr. Tsvetkov's profound knowledge was reflected in his later scientific generalizations related to the zoogeographical and the paleo-zoogeographical characteristics of stygobiontic crustaceans in Bulgaria. He developed the geochronology of the emergence of thalassophreatic crustaceans on the Balkan Peninsula. The highest point of his research was his PhD thesis, successfully defended in 1980, in which he presented his hypothesis about the evolution of life in groundwater and in particular the evolution of subterranean fauna.

Dr. Tsvetkov's academic work consists of 46 scientific publications in Bulgarian and foreign journals. He is the author of 6 scientific and popular books, a travel book on the scientific expedition in the Pacific with the Russian research ship "Vityaz", etc. He wrote over 50 popular articles about the life in groundwater, about marine biological production and biological resources, preservation of nature, etc.

From 1974 to 1988 Dr. L. Tsvetkov was the head of the Section of Hydrobiology in the Institute of Zoology and an active member of the Institute Scientific

Council. He was an expert at the Bulgarian Oceanographic Committee and at different publishing houses.

Dr. L. Tsvetkov was an inspired and highly motivated researcher, an enthusiastic protector of living nature. With his death the Bulgarian science has lost a much respected and worthy scientist with significant and lasting contributions to zoology, hydrobiology and stygobiology.

*Editorial Board
of Acta zoologica bulgarica*