

Professor Nikola Margaritov, DSc 1932–2018

Our colleague, the outstanding Bulgarian zoologist and fish parasitologist Professor Nikola Margaritov, a long-time lecturer and head of the Department of Hydrobiology at the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, deceased on January 12, 2018 in Sofia!

Nikola Mihailov Margaritov (for his friends – just Margo) was born on August 1, 1932 in the village of Vetren, Stara Zagora Region, in a family of teachers. He received his primary education there and continued in the secondary school in the town of Kazanlak where he graduated in 1950. In the same year, he registered as a biology student at the Sofia University. He obtained a degree in zoology and hydrobiology in 1955 by defending a diploma thesis on helminth parasites of freshwater fish in Bulgaria. Since the autumn of the same year, he was appointed as a junior researcher at the Fisheries Institute in Varna. In 1962, Margaritov moved to the branch of the same institute in Plovdiv, where he extended his research in the field of fish farming and freshwater fish parasitology. Since 1961, after winning a competition, he began teaching at the Department of Hydrobiology and Ichthyology at the Faculty of Biology, University of Sofia, where he had worked during his entire research career. He was promoted as an associate professor of hydrobiology and ichthyology in 1977. In the department, he carried out research on fish parasites and fish diseases as well as on fish biology, feeding and farming, which had an intense development in Bulgaria during the years after the World War II. In this period, N. Margaritov authored, together with the lecturer Georgi Zashev, the first Bulgarian textbook on fish diseases (1966). In 1988, he defended his DSc thesis *Parasites of the Intensive and Industrially Farmed Freshwater Fishes in Bulgaria*. In the same year (1988), he was elected as a professor of fish parasitology. Since 1984 until his retirement in 2000, Professor N. Margaritov was the Head of the Department of Hydrobiology and Ichthyology at the University of Sofia and a member of the Council of the Faculty of Biology. He has been supervisor of numerous MSc and PhD students, including PhD students from Greece and Vietnam. He was for many years Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Annual Book of Sofia University – Book 3 – Zoology and Ecology*, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Biology, member of several scientific and expert councils at the Sofia University, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Agriculture, Bulgarian Hunting and Fisheries Union and others.

Professor N. Margaritov left us a significant scientific heritage – over 100 scientific publications and contributions in the field of ichthyoparasitology, ichthyopathology and fish farming. In his articles, including some of them in co-authorship with Bulgarian and foreign researchers, he has recorded over 120 species of parasites (protozoan and helminth parasites), unknown until then for the parasite fauna of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. He co-authored *Handbook of Parasites of Vertebrate Animals in Black Sea and the Sea of Azov* (1975) and the detailed *Catalog of Protozoan Parasites on Fish in Bulgaria* (2004) containing information on the diversity, hosts and distribution of 127 protozoan species found in 73 fish species in the country. He has diagnosed and described a number of fish diseases in natural and farming conditions in Bulgaria. His contributions and excellence in the field of fish breeding and fish diseases were highly appreciated and he was a consultant for farmers from all over the country. Professor N. Margaritov has received many national awards and awards from the Sofia University, Bulgarian Hunting and Fisheries Union, Freshwater Fish-farming Institute in Plovdiv and others, for his fruitful long-term activity as a university lecturer and renowned researcher.

With the death of Professor Nikola Margaritov, the Bulgarian scientific community lost an active university lecturer and researcher, an excellent specialist and consultant in the field of ichthyology and ichthyopathology, a good colleague and a person who left bright memories to his colleagues and numerous students!

