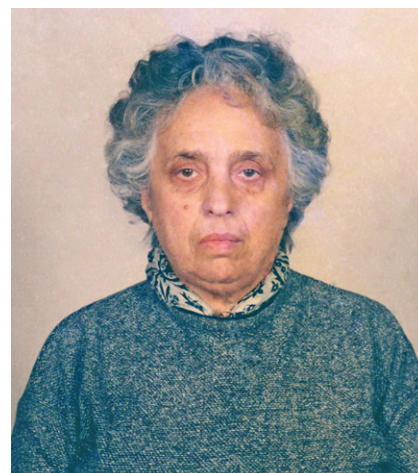




## Anniversary

# 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary of Dr Maria S. Karapetkova

**Our distinguished colleague,  
the ichthyologist Dr Maria S. Karapetkova celebrated  
her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary in 2021!**



Maria Staneva Karapetkova was born on 28 October 1931 in Sofia. In 1949, she completed her secondary education at 4th Maiden High School with excellent grades. In the same year, she entered the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski and started her education in biology. As an undergraduate student, she participated in the study group of *Vertebrate Animals* and worked on the topic *Representatives of genus Gambusia in Bulgaria* under the guidance of Professor Georgi Paspalev. In June 1953, Maria Karapetkova graduated and was immediately appointed as a junior researcher at the Ichthyological Station in the city of Varna. After the establishment of the Research Institute of Fisheries and Fish Industry (Varna) in 1954, she was employed in the Section of Ichthyology (Fig. 1). Her research was focused on marine species, mainly on the Black Sea turbot *Scophthalmus maeoticus*. She studied the age composition, growth rate, food and feeding, reproduction, mortality rate, distribution, migrations and stocks of turbot along the Bulgarian Coast with a view to the fishing industry.

In 1962, after winning a competition, Maria Karapetkova was appointed as a researcher (Fig. 2) at the Section of Hydrobiology of the Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (currently IBER-BAS) in Sofia. She worked at this institute for

almost 30 years. Along with other research topics, she continued her investigations on the Black Sea turbot and in 1980 defended her PhD thesis *Biological characteristics of the Black Sea turbot off the Bulgarian Coast of the Black Sea* (Fig. 3). In 1982, she was awarded the scientific rank of a senior researcher (corresponding to the current degree *Associate Professor*). In the following years, while doing her main academic work, she was also a member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Zoology, the Editorial Board of series *Hydrobiology*, and Secretary of Coordination Programme 14-B-39 *Scientific Ecological Bases of Environment Conservation* managed by Professor Botyo Botev (Figs. 4, 5). As a participant in many projects and contracts with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Environment and Water and other national and international institutions, she implemented the tasks related to fish. Many years after her retirement in 1991, she continued her active research, editorial, publication and expert activities.

Dr Maria Karapetkova is one of the most prominent ichthyologists in Bulgaria. Her comprehensive and long-term research on the Black Sea turbot has resulted in a number of publications and served as a basis for developing numerous programmes and strategies for sustainable use

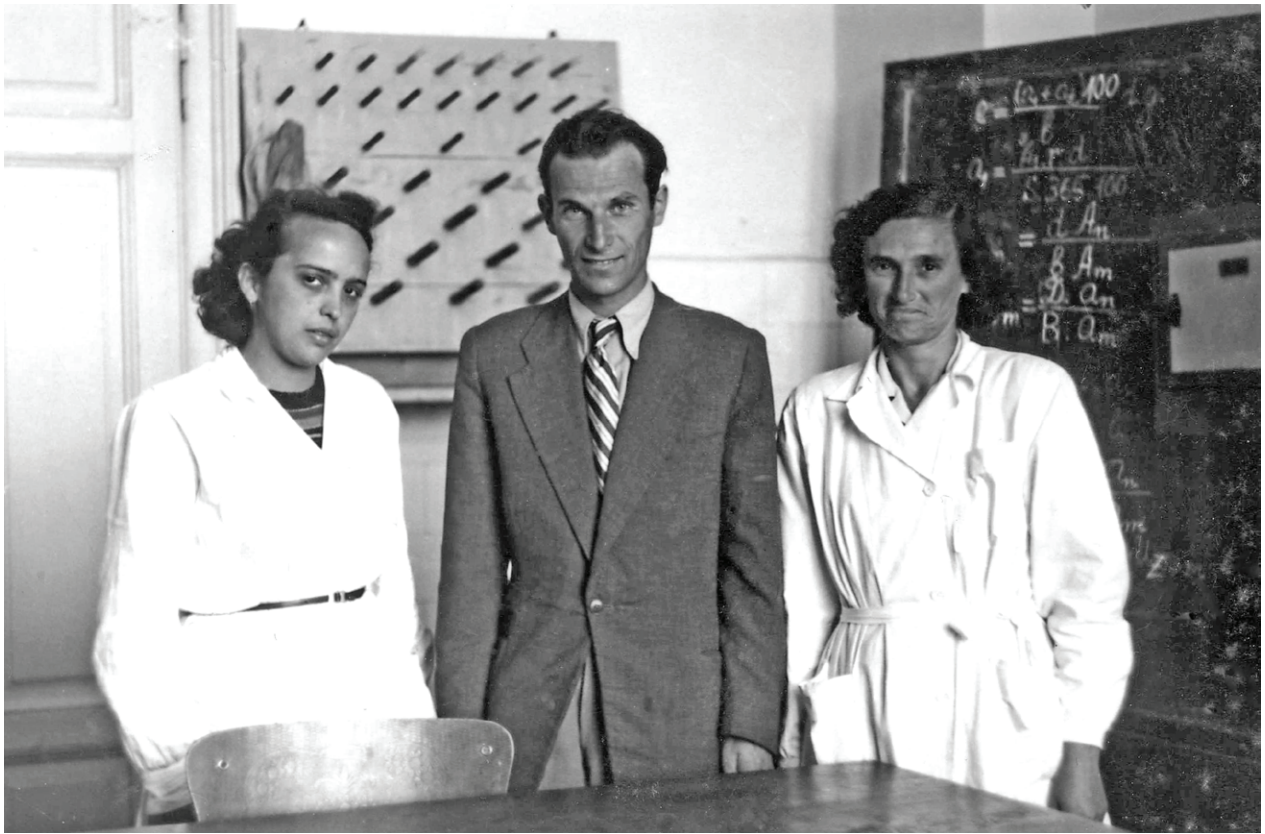


Fig. 1. Maria Karapetkova (on the left) as a junior researcher at the Research Institute for Fisheries and Fish Industry (Varna), with her colleagues, the Russian zoologist Dr Kiril Martino and the Bulgarian malacologist Dr Veska Kaneva-Abadjieva (1956).



Fig. 2. Maria Karapetkova in the early morning after successful fishing with gill nets in the backwaters of the Rositsa River, Beliya Bryag Site (1970s).

and conservation of this species in the Black Sea. Significant part of her research was devoted to the ichthyofauna of the Bulgarian rivers, in particular, the Black Sea rivers and the Danube tributaries. She conducted extended faunistic, taxonomic, biological and ecological studies on fish in Kamchia, Romotamo, Veleka and other rivers flowing to the Black Sea. She studied the ichthyofauna of the rivers Vit, Yantra, Rusenski Lom and most of the other Danube tributaries, the results being summarised in several publications and in the book *Limnology of the Bulgarian Danube tributaries* edited by Professor Boris Russev (1994). Her studies on the ichthyofauna covered some mountain regions as well, e.g. Rhodope Mountains (Trigradsko-Yagodinski Region, Smolyan and Chairski Ezera lakes), Rila and Pirin Mountains. In co-authorship with Dr Bogomil Marinov, Karapetkova described a new cyprinid species from Dolno Kremensko Ezero Lake in Pirin Mountain identified as *Telestes souffia* (published as *Leuciscus souffia*) (1991). Together with another collaborator – Dr Draga Janković (Fig. 6), Dr Karapetkova made the first

review of the introductions and spread of the invasive alien fish *Pseudorasbora parva* in former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria (1992). The results of her studies have contributed significantly to the assessment of the status of fish populations and the development and implementation of appropriate conservation and fisheries management measures in Bulgaria.

Another important part of her research is related to the use of fish as bioindicators. In 1975–1980, she was involved in the project *Influence of pesticides on ecosystems*, under which she determined the organochlorine pesticide accumulation in fish that belonged to various trophic levels, e.g. in *Barbus barbus* and *Aspius aspius* from the Bulgarian section of the Danube River. Later, she studied the content of heavy metals in some fish species such as *B. barbus* and *Abramis brama* from the Danube River. In the frame of the French-Bulgarian project *Observatoire de Montagne de Moussala – OM 2* (1993–1998), Dr Karapetkova, as a member of the Bulgarian team, conducted studies on the accumulation of toxic elements and heavy metals in bioindicator fish species as *Phoxinus phoxinus*, *Cottus gobio*

and *Salmo trutta fario* in rivers and lakes in the Rila Mountain. The results were published in the volumes of the project book series.

Dr Karapetkova authored a large number of scientific publications, including book chapters in *Fishes of the Black Sea (Bulgarian Coast)* (1963); *Red Data Book of People's Republic of Bulgaria, Vol. 2. Animals* (1985); *The Freshwater Fishes of Europe: Clupeidae, Anguillidae, Vol. 2* (1991); *Bulgaria's Biological Diversity: Conservation Status and Needs Assessment* (1998); *Biodiversity of the Srebarna Biosphere Reserve* (1998) and *Geography of Bulgaria* (2002). One of her most emblematic books is *Fishes of Bulgaria*, co-authored with the late Professor Mladen Zivkov and illustrated by the outstanding artist-animalist Georgi Pchelarov; the first edition of the book was published in 1995 and re-published several times, with an updated edition in 2006 (Fig. 7). Furthermore, Dr Karapetkova published numerous popular articles, e.g., she authored over 60 articles on fish in *Encyclopaedia Bulgaria*, Vols. I–VII (1977–1996). She presented her research results at a number of conferences and symposia in Bulgaria and abroad: Third European



Fig. 3. Maria Karapetkova at her office with a drawing of the Black Sea turbot.



*Fig. 4. Maria Karapetkova at a joint meeting of the Department of Hydrobiology and Ichthyology, Faculty of Biology, Sofia University (BF-SU) and the Department of Hydrobiology, Institute of Zoology, BAS (IZ-BAS) (1988). Front row: Professor Nikola Margaritov, head of the Department of Hydrobiology and Ichthyology (BF-SU) (on the left) and Professor Boris Russev, head of the Department of Hydrobiology (IZ-BAS) (on the right).*



*Fig. 5. Maria Karapetkova at the meeting of the Institute of Zoology – BAS. First row: Professor Botyu Botev, Corresponding Member of BAS and director of the institute (on the left). Second row (from left to right): Professor Mladen Zivkov, Professor Venelin Beshovski and Professor Valentin Lavchiev.*



Fig. 6. Maria Karapetkova (on the right) with the eminent Serbian ichthyologist Draga Janković of the Siniša Stanković Institute for Biological Research, Belgrade, at the 24<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Society of Limnology, Munich, 12–19 August 1989.

Ichthyological Congress, Warsaw, Poland (1979); conferences of the International Association of Danube Research (IAD) (Novi Sad 1979, Varna 1990, Kiev 1991); International Symposium *Game and the Environment*, Accompanying Scientific Event to the World Hunting Exhibition EXPO'81, Plovdiv, Bulgaria (1981); 24th Congress of the International Society of Limnology, Munich (1989) (Fig. 6); and International Symposium OM2 *Observation de l'Environnement de Montagne en Europe*, Borovets, Bulgaria (1997).

Dr Maria Karapetkova was a tutor of three MSc graduates with the Biological Faculty of the Sofia University. She has had extensive expert activities. She peer-reviewed many scientific papers, PhD and DSc theses as well as research projects with the National Science Fund of Bulgaria (in total,

34 between 1996 and 2006). She was an active member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Naturalists' Society. She participated in many expert committees on the fish and fishery issues appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgarian Union of Hunters and Anglers, Fishery Company – Burgas, Municipality of Burgas, etc.

Dr Maria Karapetkova's expertise and scientific contributions in the area of ichthyology are highly valued in Bulgaria and abroad and she is much respected as a person by her colleagues. On behalf of the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Science, her colleagues and friends, we congratulate Dr Maria Karapetkova with her 90th birthday anniversary and wish her health, happiness and longevity!



Fig. 7. The book *Fishes of Bulgaria* by Maria Karapetkova and Mladen Zivkov and illustrated by Georgi Pchelarov. Gea-Libris Publishers. Left: First edition (1995). Right: Third (updated) edition (2006).

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**Acknowledgements:** The author is grateful to Maria Karapetkova, Gergana Karavelova, Zdravko Hubenov and Hristina Kalcheva for their help to collect the bibliography.

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