

## *In memoriam*

# 100 Years since the Birth of Nikolay Boev (1922-1985)

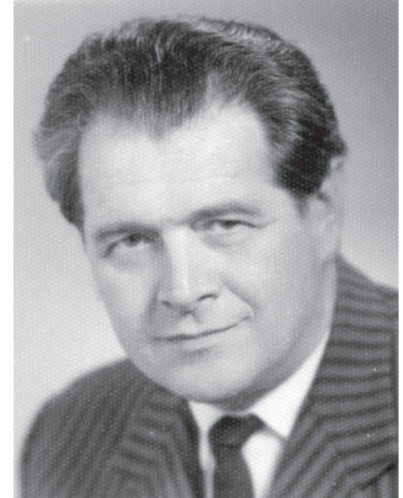


Fig. 1. Nikolay Boev in 1962.

The famous Bulgarian ornithologist and conservationist Nikolay Krumov Boev (Fig. 1) was born on May 8, 1922, in Aytos, Burgas Region. His father, Krum Boev (1880–1961), was a bookseller and publisher of the newspaper *Nov Aytos*. His mother, Zlatka Boeva (1889–1978), was a teacher of French and Russian in the junior high school and high school in the town. Nikolay completed his primary and lower secondary education in Aytos. From an early age, he showed great interest in animals. He made his first systematic observations on birds in Aytos and prepared a collection of insects numbering several hundred species. He completed his high school education at the First Men's High School in Varna in 1941. During this period, his interest in studying animals increased. As he wrote about himself, he had been studying zoology since he was a student. In high school and later at the Sofia University, zoology and birds in particular, remained his main interest. As a student, he raised some more common species of birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals at home. Only 9-years old, he got and eagerly read the book by Edward Klein (KLEIN 1909) – the most complete work on birds in that time in Bulgaria, containing data on all 314 bird species known until then. The animal world and zoology, loved since childhood, kept his interest as a high school student when he already knew almost all Bulgarian bird spe-

cies. He regularly followed catalogues of various bookstores and publishing houses and obtained a number of valuable zoological publications about birds and mammals. The zoologist Ivan Vassilev was his biology teacher, which may have had some positive impact on the completion of his interests.

Nikolay Boev wrote his first article *Cursed Birds* (BOEV 1942) in 1941, as a student at the age of 18. He sent it to the authoritative magazine *Priroda* (*Nature*) of Konstantin Hristovich and, while in the army, his article was published. His second article (in two parts) was published in the same journal (BOEV 1944a, b). At the insistence of his mother, Nikolay left for Varna, where as a student he began collecting folk names of animals to compile the future *Bulgarian Zoological Dictionary* – a necessity and his youthful dream, which remained unfulfilled until end of his life, although he published a questionnaire on the subject (ZAIMOV & BOEV 1954). As a topographer-photographer in 1941–1943 in Shumen, Boev collected fossils from the Shumen Plateau and read a number of works by Italian, French, German, Russian and English naturalists as well as by some Bulgarian biologists as Prof. Stefan Konsulov, Prof. Asen Zlatarov and others. While in the army, he was sent from Shumen to Sofia for a short time. He spent his vacations at the Royal Museum of Natural History, where almost every Saturday and Sun-

day he tried to use his available books to identify birds and mammals arranged in the showcases. There, he personally met Tsar Boris III – a connoisseur of birds, which were one of his hobbies (NOWAK 2005). Even as a soldier, Boev was in intensive correspondence with one of the leading ornithologists in the world at that time – the Italian Edgardo Moltoni, who sent him all his scientific publications (now kept at the Library of the National Museum of Natural History). After 1944, Boev's contacts with E. Moltoni were impossible and his dreams of continuing his education in Italy were shattered forever (NOWAK 2005).

In 1943, Boev began his studies in natural history at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. At the beginning of his studies, he wrote “...but the bombing started and we barely spent the first semester. For the entire second semester, we were relaxed. During that time, I wrote an extensive letter to Pavel Patev and sent him a list of 30 new species of birds for our fauna according to literature and my research from the collection of birds in the museum. Throughout this second semester, I was observing the birds of the town of Aytos, reading special literature...”. In his extensive reply, P. Patev, then director of the Sofia Zoo and the only Bulgarian ornithologist in that time, confirmed his research regarding the composition of our birds, thanked him and included these species in the prepared manuscript of “Birds in Bulgaria”. Of the 315 bird species reported in this monograph, the 30 species added by N. Boev (as a soldier) make up almost 1/10 of the composition. Patev also sent him ornithological rings and Nikolay ringed a hundred swallows (Fig. 2). Later, Patev included in his monograph (PATEV 1950) data from Boev's *List of 30 new species of birds for our country*, which is the first serious scientific contribution of Boev in the study of Bulgarian avifauna, although it remained personally unpublished.

As a student, Boev showed in-depth knowledge and excellent success in most disciplines. Almost all of his professors, prominent Bulgarian naturalists Georgi Paspalev, Nikolay Stoyanov, Daki Yordanov, Pencho Drenski, Alexander Valkanov, Petar Bakalov, admired Nikolay's knowledge. During these years, at the request of his colleagues, Nikolay often wrote slogans and painted posters, billboards and wall-newspapers, and thus actively participated in various student events. His university mate Dr. K. Kostov recalled: “Kolyo [N. Boev], from an early age, had this natural gift of painting very well. These were excellent drawings for his age”. During this period, whenever possible, the young Nikolay gained knowledge from his teachers and older colleagues in the capital. In addition, he has already published a number of articles on topics of interest to

До Царскитѣ Научни Институти  
София — Двореца

**БЮЛЕТИНЪ**  
за опръстенена птица

Гр. (село) Айтосъ Околия Айтосъ  
 Дата на опръстеняването 12 юли 1944  
 Мѣстность Ръчало  
 Име на опръстенената птица Угреден мартин / Delichon urbicum  
 Съ какъвъ пръстенъ и № 33441 D и 33440 D  
 Опръстенена (1) Млада въ гніздо  
 (2) Хваната възрастна Да  
 Извършил опръстеняването Николай Костовъ / Костовъ, Никола  
 Подпись: Николай Костовъ

Fig. 2. Bulletin of the Bulgarian Ringing Centre of ringed bird by Nikolay Boev on July 12, 1944, Aytos, Common house martin (*Delichon urbicum*).

him. As a student, he published 20 popular science articles and, by the age of 25, he had over 40 articles in a dozen metropolitan magazines and newspapers.

Prof. A. Valkanov, Director of the Black Sea Biological Station (now Varna Aquarium), in a letter to Academician Ivan Buresh dated June 7, 1947, wrote: “Nikolay Boev is one of the best and most reliable students of natural sciences who have passed through our university for the last twenty-five years. In terms of his literacy and knowledge, I place him without hesitation in the ranks of our few already fully formed zoologists. The foundation that elevates him especially high in my eyes and is a sure guarantee of his success and progress in science, is his crystal clear love for the zoology to which he devoted himself, a love that holds him very high above the selfish attitude towards science.” On June 14, 1947, Prof. G. Paspalev wrote to I. Buresch: “...During his study years, Mr. Boev showed a special interest in zoological disciplines in general but especially in those affecting vertebrates, and especially birds and mammals. Thanks to this interest, he has a lot of knowledge about these vertebrates, which goes beyond what is given in the university course. He... is working on his diploma work under my supervision and I have the impression that he has the necessary data for scientific studies.” Konstantin Hristovich, owner and editor of the magazine *Priroda*, praised Boev's qualities as a zoologist to Dr. Buresch of June 15, 1947: “... I know him as a young man with good knowledge of the bird and mammal fauna in our country. I find the articles published by him in the journal *Priroda*, edited by me, very successful and worthy of encouragement.” With such recommendations from the Bulgarian most prominent naturalists, Boev started working at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Twenty years later, during his habilitation, Acad. I. Buresch



*Fig. 3. Excursion with friends (left to right): Russian zoologist Yuriy Gorelov, Nikolay Boev, the Russian Count Nikita Lobanov-Rostovsky and the mineralogist Svyatoslav Petrusenko on excursion at the town of Samokov, July 2, 1950.*

noted: “He impressed (as a student) all his professors with his great curiosity. Very early on, he got in touch with the then director of the Sofia Zoo, ornithologist Pavel Patev. They both appeared at that time 30 years ago (i.e. 15–16 years old) as the only ornithologists in Bulgaria. ... Nikolay Boev proved to be a great book lover very early on. He regularly visited all bookstores and antiques in Sofia and with his last coins (as a student and later) bought science books. In a short time, he amassed a large and rich library, which today can honour every ornithological institute.” At the beginning of June 1947, N. Boev completed his semester studies at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics and graduated in 1949.

On August 1, 1947, Boev was appointed as a laboratory assistant at the Natural History Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (now the National Museum of Natural History) and, since June 1, 1949, as an assistant at the Zoo at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. On March 1, 1950, he was appointed a junior researcher at the Zoological Institute with a Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The Zoo was transferred from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to the Sofia Municipality and, since December 1951, Boev was appointed at the Zoo again. In 1963, he returned to work at the Zoological Institute with Museum, where he worked until 1968. His entire career was spent at institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. As a laboratory assistant at the museum, N. Boev arranged the collections of birds, eggs and nests scattered and damaged by the bombing and helped Dr. Neno Atanasov to arrange the collections of mammals,

Dr. Buresh for reptiles and amphibians, and Dr. Pencho Drenski for the fish. He also assisted in the acquisition of the scientific literature by the library of the institute.

As early as 1949, he contributed immensely to the enrichment of the Sofia Zoo, which became very impoverished in terms of species and specimens after the war. He also co-authored the first guidebook of the Sofia Zoo (TULESHKOV et al. 1953).

From the first years of his scientific career, N. Boev has been a zealous defender of nature. As a young nature lover, he used every opportunity for nature excursions (Fig. 3). He became a member of the Union for the Protection of Native Nature. Since May 1951, N. Boev has been the Secretary of the Union for Nature Protection. Later, he was a member of the Commission for Nature Protection at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences until its transformation in 1967. Many of his scientific publications were aimed at the conservation of bird populations in Bulgaria (BOEV 1959, BOEV 1965, 1968). On his initiative, the exhibition “Nature Protection in England” was organised with the assistance of the British Embassy in Bulgaria at the Natural History Museum. In exchange, next year the exhibition “Nature Protection in Bulgaria” was shown in London. He participates in the work of the commission for drafting the text of the Nature Protection Act. Boev is the initiator of the publication and co-author of the first textbook in Bulgaria on nature protection (TOSHKOV et al. 1964). The active popularisation of nature conservation ideas made him one of our most prominent popularisers of natural science and conservation knowledge.

His twelve years of activity at the Sofia Zoo was to improve the existing premises for animals and expand the exhibition area with new buildings. He also contributed in activities to determine regular seasonal rations for animals and special rations for young animals, pregnant females, etc., in the acquisition of new exhibits from the local fauna, acquisition of new specimens through exchange with foreign zoos and zoo companies. He also implemented daily monitoring of the exhibits from his entrusted sector in the zoo – birds, production of scientifically correct texts with information about animals, research, and studied special literature on the construction of zoos or individual sectors and cages for specific species. All these activities, carried out with the skill of a competent specialist, were extremely important for the very impoverished zoo in terms of species and specimens after the war. Boev was also a consultant for the projects and co-designer of the zoos in Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Blagoevgrad, Gabrovo, Varna, etc., as well as for the new Sofia Zoo. The most interesting episodes from the “zoo” period of his were described in the book *Birds Love Too* (BOEV 1967).

As a young researcher at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Boev headed the Bulgarian Ornithological Centre, was responsible for the management of Mandre Lake (now Mandra Dam), was involved in activities with educating children, prepared texts for all animal cages, corresponded with hunting parties, zoos on various issues of animal husbandry, etc. During these years, he took the opportunity to get acquainted with the activities and arrangement of zoos in the former East and West Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Helsinki, Stockholm, London, Amsterdam, Prague, Bratislava, Ostrava, Warsaw, Wrocław, Bucharest, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkov, the two zoos in Paris, the Herpetological House in Naples and others. All this made him one of the best specialists in zoo and museum work.

In 1951–1953, as an employee of the zoo, Boev worked on three research topics: *An Essay on Birds in the Sofia Region*, *The state of marsh waterfowl and measures to increase it* and *Birds of Dobrudzha*. The most fruitful period for him as a field ornithologist was the decade 1955–1965, when he reported four new species for the Bulgarian ornithofauna (BOEV 1957a), studied with colleagues the composition and distribution of birds in Thrace (BOEV et al. 1964), published many new data on a number of little-known species (BOEV & SIMONOV 1967, BOEV 1968). In 1962, the most complete bird fauna of its time in Bulgaria appeared, containing a lot of data from personal observations of a total of 325 species of birds and illustrated by him with black-and-white line drawings (BOEV 1962a); for it, he made 141 original line and 22 watercolour illustrations (Fig. 4). In

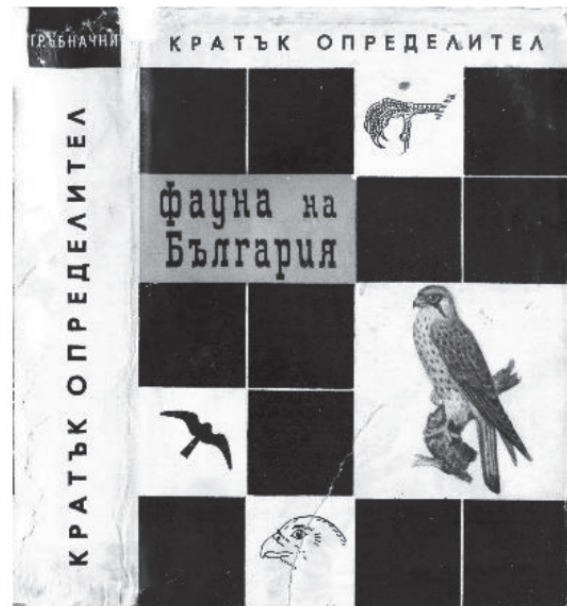


Fig. 4. First cover of the book *Fauna of Bulgaria. Short Identification Guide*.

1962, Boev published also his data on the summer distribution of 16 species of birds in Bulgaria, announcing the nesting in the country of some of them (BOEV 1962b). In the next year, he published his extensive study (BOEV 1963) on the distribution and biology of the Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) in Bulgaria.

Boev fought to end the “smoke stage” (“gunpowder stage”) of the development of Bulgarian ornithology (i.e. shooting of birds as scientific proofs). To establish observations, he preferred to use a telescope and binoculars rather than shooting the “evidence” specimens as the case has been for decades in many countries in Europe.

In 1962, N. Boev led a group of English ornithologists during their 45-day trip around the country to make ornithological observations. The famous ornithologist Guy Mountfort, the world-famous photographer-animalist Eric Hosking and other prominent authorities were among them. Subsequently, Mountfort wrote a book, most of which revealed the splendour of the Bulgarian nature (MOUNTFORT 1962). Appreciated by English ornithologists, Boev was personally invited by the Secretary of the International Ornithological Congress in Oxford, Nikolaas Tinbergen (Nobel Laureate, 1973) to participate in it. The strengthening of scientific contacts between Bulgarian and British ornithologists experienced a new impetus 15 years later, with the appointment of N. Boev as the supervisor of the English ornithologist John A. Roberts by the State Committee for Science and Technical Progress at the Council of Ministers. For several years, Roberts pub-



Fig. 5. Nikolay Boev at his office at the Commission for Nature Protection, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia (c. 1969).

lished a number of works with new data on the Bulgarian avifauna in renowned British journals.

In 1963, at the initiative of Prof. G. Paspalev, Boev was invited to give lectures on zoogeography and a special course in ornithology at the Faculty of Biology at the Sofia University, which he did for five years. Lectures on ornithology had not been taught until then in Bulgaria. This was the first special course at the Sofia University. At the invitation of the Central Research Institute of Forestry, Boev studied the avifauna in the area of Iskar Dam and in protective forest belts in South Dobrudzha. He was a member of the Supreme Hunting Council at the Ministry of Forestry; with his participation, he contributed a lot to the establishment of the right attitude towards the management and protection of the game resources. Boev is credited with ending the anachronistic shameful practice of organised hunters in the Bulgarian Hunting and Fishing Union to report on their activities to exterminate “harmful game” by presenting the cut legs of eagles, hawks and falcons, the termination of hunting waterfowl with bait birds, etc. Boev participated in the drafting of the new Law on Nature Protection and the regulations for its implementation. At the same time (1963-1965), as a curator of the museum, he prepared a plan for “Gradual modern reorganization”, introduced a new type of exhibition in biogroups and “small model dioramas”, conducted an inventory and significantly contributed to enriching museum collections with new preparations. He continued his work on compiling the *Bulgarian Zoological Dictionary*, which he intended to use for the preparation of the Bulgarian zoological nomenclature. By 1968, he had already collected over 2,000 Bulgarian folk names of birds (av. 6 names per species) and many more for other animals.

Boev’s scientific interests in zoology were not limited to birds. He had valuable scientific contribu-

tions in the study of mammals in Bulgaria. As early as 1951, he announced (in coauthorship with I. Buresh) the steppe polecat (*Mustela eversmanii*) discovered in Dobrudzha as a new species for the Bulgarian fauna. To this day, his article on the past spread and extinction of the beaver (*Castor fiber*) in Bulgaria has been considered a model. Jointly with Lyubomir Tsvetkov, they published (CVETKOV & BOEV 1966, TSVETKOV & BOEV 1978) their study on the spread and extinction of the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) in Bulgaria. His long-term research on the state of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) in Bulgaria was published more than a decade after his death (BOEV 1997a, b).

After a scientific competition in 1970, N. Boev was appointed as a senior researcher at the Commission for Nature Protection at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In this commission, chaired by Prof. G. Paspalev, Boev served as Scientific Secretary (Fig. 5). Subsequently, he became the head of the Section “Protected Natural Areas and Protected Genetic Fund”. There, his activity was mostly related to the study and organisation of protected natural areas (national parks, reserves, protected areas and natural monuments) as well as specific measures for the conservation of rare and endangered species.

In 1976–1977, Nikolay Boev worked on several scientific topics – acclimatization of wild mammals and birds, extinction of rare bird and mammal species, methods for research and protection of reserves and other protected territories, protected animal species, conservation research of Razgrad District, etc. At that time, he was also a member of the scientific councils of the state publishing companies Nauka i Izkustvo, Zemizdat, Narodna Prosveta and Varna. Being on this position, he proposed for publication in Bulgarian dozens of interesting popular books on natural sciences and nature conservation by famous



Fig. 6. Nikolay Boev with colleagues: Laslo Layne (left), and Adamon Vinokurov (right) at the 18th International Ornithological Congress, Moscow, August 19, 1982. Photo: Alexander Abuladze.

foreign authors such as Jean Dorst, Bernhard Gzimek, Joy Adamson, Maxim Zverev, Gerald Durrell, Nikolaas Tinbergen, Julius Komarek, Rachel Carson, Jane Goodall, Evgeniy Spangenberg, Lawrence Milne and others. All these books were published with prefaces (or afterwords), under his scientific editorship or his translations. Boev was also a longtime member of the editorial boards of the former large-circulation popular science magazines, with which several generations grew up: *Bodra Smyana*, *Kosmos*, *Nauka i Tehnika za Mladezhata*, *Priroda i Znanie*, *Lov i Ribolov*, *Zashtita na Prirodadata*, *Turist*, *Sofia*, *Balgarski Kurorti*, *Nasha Rodina* as well as the newspapers *Septemvriyche*, *Echo* and the daily *Vecherni Novini*. Due to his established name as a popularizer of science and a competent researcher, N. Boev was attracted as a co-author of the two major national general academic encyclopedias, which were published in his time in Bulgaria. He wrote the articles on the vertebrate animals of section *Zoology* for the 5-volume *Short Bulgarian Encyclopedia* (1963–1969) and for the single-volume *Encyclopedia A-Z* (1972).

In 1973–1976, N. Boev was again invited to teach at the Faculty of Biology of the Sofia University, this time the course *Ecological Fundamentals of Nature Conservation* and thenafter another special course, *Natural History Collections and Museum Work*. In addition, he worked (1979–1980) on his parts on 16 species for the *Red-Data Book of the People's Republic of Bulgaria* (BOTEV & PESHEV 1985).

In the early 80's, Boev has already collected a huge amount of data on three other favorite topics,

on which he intended to publish his summary results. These were *Toponymy as a relative biogeographical indicator and in support of nature protection*, *Towards the history of nature protection in our country during the First and Second Bulgarian state and the Ottoman yoke* and *Materials for the study of the existence of the Aurochs (*Bos primigenius*) in our country*. The aurochs has attracted his attention since his first years as a young researcher but the data collected by him have been published only in 2018. In 1981, he planned to publish his books *Acclimatization of Wild Mammals and Birds* and *Animals and Toponymy*. He also worked hard on *Biographies of 100 Animals* conceived in two volumes (for the species used by man). He planned to publish a second revised and supplemented edition of the part for birds of *Fauna of Bulgaria - a short guide* as well as his popular book *Animal parental cares* (in two parts). He failed to publish these interesting works. He retired on June 1, 1982 and died on November 12, 1985, working on proofreadings for his latest book *Decorative Birds*.

Nikolay Boev has been a delegate from Bulgaria to several dozens of scientific congresses, symposia, conferences and conferences abroad. As an ornithologist, he was a delegate to the international ornithological congresses in Helsinki, Oxford and Moscow (Fig. 6), ornithological conferences in Prague and Sankt Peterburg, the congress on hunting studies in Moscow, etc. During a working trip to France, Boev presented a report on the conservation of wildlife in Bulgaria to audience of more than 300 naturalists in the Great Hall of the Natural History Museum in Paris. In this way, he

acquainted the French scientific community with the state of the Bulgarian nature protection, of which they had no idea in the west until then.

In 1970, in his popular science articles, N. Boev first mentioned the West Black Sea migratory route with the name *Via Pontica*, which is today an established term in research on seasonal migration of birds. His book on the grey partridge (BOEV & KONSTANTINOV 1954) was published in an abbreviated translation in Russian in the magazine *Hunting and Hunting Farming* and in Croatian in the magazine *Lovac*. His book *Children's Primer for Plants and Animals* has undergone five editions, and the book *Land beyond the Ocean* translated by him and A. Georgiev had three editions. However, the most significant of his popular books, *Decorative Birds*, was published posthumously (BOEV, 1986). He noted about his popular science articles: "... I do not keep an accurate list of them, nor do I have them at all, and often some of them do not bear my name and others or are unsigned." The number of such popular articles written by N. Boev exceeds 350.

Nikolay Boev is the initiator of the publication of the Red Data Book of the Republic of Bulgaria in two volumes, its co-author and one of its editors-in-chief. Boev also dreamed of publishing a modern three-volume "Birds of Bulgaria" from the monographic series *Fauna of Bulgaria*; although by 1967 he had done much to prepare it, this edition appeared after more than two decades. Well known by his scientific activity and great contributions in the field of popularization of nature conservation, Boev is often considered the founder of the modern nature protection in Bulgaria. About him, the authoritative British ornithological magazine *The Ibis* wrote: "[Boev] is the father of modern ornithology and conservation in Bulgaria. It was a privilege to know him" (ROBERTS 1986).

In the chronology of Bulgarian ornithology, Nikolay Boev is the third ornithologist in the country after Georgi Hristovich and Pavel Patev; the latter was called by him "my teacher". Boev's scientific work consists of 50 scientific papers, 4 textbooks, 29 popular science books and about 650 popular science and journalistic articles. Some of his popular science books (BOEV 1957b, 1958b) have been translated into foreign languages and published abroad – three editions in Germany, one each in Turkey and Czechoslovakia. His popular articles are mainly on zoology and conservation and some have been translated and published abroad in English, French, Italian, German, Czech and other languages. From his books, at an earlier stage N. Boev himself defined as more interesting *Birds' Migrations* (BOEV 1957c) and *Our Useful Birds* (BOEV 1958c).

For many years, N. Boev has been a supporter of the idea of establishment of a Bulgarian society for the



ПАЗИ ПРИРОДАТА!

Fig. 7. The emblem of the People's Union for the Protection of Native Nature, created by Nikolay Boev in 1949, later transformed in the emblem of the Bulgarian nature protection.

study and conservation of birds. This idea was implemented through the establishment of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (1988). It is interesting that as a graduate (1941) he wrote the first publication in Bulgaria (*Cursed Birds*) about the birds that disappeared in historical times and it was illustrated with eight drawings by him (BOEV 1942).

Boev's contributions in the field of nature protection are, in many respects, fundamental. He was a convinced, steadfast and sworn conservationist throughout his conscious life. As secretary of the Union for the Protection of Native Nature in 1949, he created the emblem (Fig. 7) of the union – the profile image of the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), which later became the well-known symbol of Bulgarian conservation. In 1964, he published in coauthorship the first in Bulgaria textbook *Protection of native nature*. He took an active part in the work of the commission for drafting the text of the Nature Protection Act and the Regulations for its implementation (1966). At the same time (1965-1974), he tried to oppose the damage to the unique nature at the mouth of the Batova River by the construction of the Albena Resort. In 1975-1981, he actively promoted the idea of publishing a national Red Data Book of endangered animals and plants in Bulgaria and participated in its preparation (BOTEV & PESHEV 1985) as a co-author and co-editor. In the 1970s, he widely popularized his idea for the establishment of the Institute of Ecology and Nature Pro-



Fig. 8. Galapagos fur seal *Arctocephalus galapagoensis*. Drawing by Nilolay Boev.

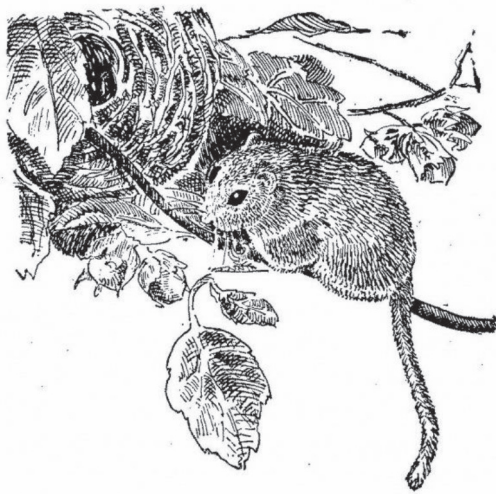


Fig. 9. Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Drawing by Nikolay Boev.

tection in Bulgaria. This was eventually implemented within the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences through the establishment of the Institute of Ecology, latter on reorganised by merging with other academic units into Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research. The above-mentioned Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds has proven to be the most influential Bulgarian public conservation organization over the past 34 years.

Boev was well aware that in order to achieve the high pioneering goals in nature conservation at that time, it was extremely important to increase nature protection education among the public. He published over 750 printed works, the main part of which (almost 700) being popular science articles in dozens of magazines. It can be said that he sowed the idea of conservation in all its aspects, and to his last breath, indignant and winged by the failures and successes of conservation, he steadily followed his path. A significant part

of his scientific works are in the field of the protection of the natural environment. The topics of some of his publications were:

- Improving the nesting opportunities of waterfowl
- Nature protection and natural history museums
- Contemporary views on the protection of our animal gene pool
- The status of the wolf in Bulgaria
- Problems of conservation of our rare bird gene pool
- The feathered game in Bulgaria is its study and conservation
- Red list of the birds in Bulgaria

Along with his fruitful publishing activity, N. Boev also developed an active lecturing programme. He was invited many times as a lecturer in the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, in the Great Hall of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, in dozens of community centres, schools, hunting clubs and natural history museums across the country. These lectures (or “tales”, as he often called them) spread “live” curious facts about nature and the need to protect it. One of the results achieved, mainly due to this activity, was the cessation of the practice of Bulgarian hunters annually reporting, for revalidation of their hunting membership cards, to present severed legs of birds of prey as proof that they have “contributed” in the conservation of useful game. Another similar result was the cessation of the “smoke stage” in the development of Bulgarian ornithology. The presentation of the skin of a killed bird was until then considered a reliable identification of the species in the place.

Apart from being a scientist (zoologist and environmentalist), Nikolay Boev, as it turns out, also has merits in the field of fine arts. He was one of the first scientific illustrators in Bulgaria. He provided illustrations for the monograph of the famous ornithologist Pavel Patev *Birds in Bulgaria* (1950) published as the second book in the then newly created monographic series *Fauna of Bulgaria*. To illustrate this book, Patev invited N. Boev, after giving up his own black and white line drawings. At the time of writing the manuscript (1947–1949), many zoologists knew the artistic talent of N. Boev and Pavel Patev turned to him with a request to illustrate his book. As a result, *Birds of Bulgaria*, which appeared after the death of P. Patev (March 22, 1950), published 277 black and white stroke drawings by N. Boev, some of them redrawn originals from publications on birds by Giacinto Martorelli and Kurt Floericke but the main part were original drawings by Boev.

Since 1951, N. Boev illustrated most of his popular books (Fig. 8). Hundreds of line illustrations appear



Fig. 10. Eminent British ornithologist Colin James Harrison. Caricature by Nikolay Boev. December 29, 1955.

in his books *Bird Flight* (1957c) – 32 drawings; *Animal Parental Cares – Part I* (1957b) – 34; *Useful Birds for Agriculture and Forestry* (1957d) – 125; *Galapagos* – 32 and many more. He often painted illustrations (Fig. 9) for his popular science articles.

Along with many preserved original drawings in the personal archive of N. Boev, several dozens of caricatures of a number of world-renowned scientists today, mostly ornithologists from around the world, had been preserved. Among them are the caricatures of many ornithologists as Andzej Lewandowski (Poland), Antony J. Erskine (Canada), Bengt Sjögen (Sweden), Chandler Robbins (USA), Colin James Harrison (United Kingdom; Fig. 10), Francisco J. Purroy (Spain), Hans Srotte Moller (Denmark), Laurent Yeatman (France), Salim Ali (India) and Vladimir Flint (Russia).

In the 1970s, he undertook a purposeful systematic popularization of his idea for the establishment of a dolphinarium in Bulgaria, which led to its realization with the construction of the Varna Dolphinarium in 1984. In 1979–1981, he was often seconded to Kotel, where he worked as a scientific consultant on the construction of the exposition of the new Natural History Museum, opened for visitors on October 5, 1981.

As the son of a bookseller and publisher, N. Boev has been an avid bibliophile since his childhood. As a student, he had a good idea of our and some foreign publishers, bookstores, library series, booksellers, etc. He was used to visit all Sofia bookstores for “Soviet literature” as well as a few for other foreign books (East German, Czech, Polish); he regularly replenished his colossal personal library, which by 1985 exceeded 14,000 volumes (excluding magazines). He knew all the booksellers of antique books in Sofia – he

was their regular customer and they periodically informed him about the acquisition of rare antique books he was looking for. His fellow ornithologists abroad also contributed to the replenishment of his library. His suitcases were full of books on every working trip abroad. Boev donated many books to the library of the former Scientific-Coordination Centre for Protection and Restoration of the Environment (the predecessor of the Institute of Ecology) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Hundreds of books and many full anniversaries of specialized journals from this library are now deposited in the library of the National Museum of Natural History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

It would not be an exaggeration to conclude that the work of Nikolay Boev in Bulgarian science in many respects built the solid foundation of the Bulgarian ornithology, zoology in general, and nature conservation, which in his time raised Bulgaria to the forefront among the Balkan countries and the countries in the Southeastern Europe.

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