



Radziejowice, August 2016, family archive

Waldemar Mikołajczyk (1936–2021)

In tribute to Waldek



Dr Waldemar Mikołajczyk 1936–2021

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Dr Waldemar Mikołajczyk was born on January 11th, 1936 in Radziejowice and died after a sudden, acute illness on January 10th, 2021 in Warsaw.

The funeral ceremonies took place on February 5th 2021 in Radziejowice. The ashes were buried in the parish cemetery in the family grave.

Dr Waldemar Mikołajczyk was a longtime and distinguished employee of the Museum and Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He began his career there in 1957, while still a student, and continued his cooperation with the Institute after his retirement in 2001.

From the very beginning he focused his interests on dipterans. His master thesis concerned horse flies (“Review of the Polish species of the genus *Chrysozona* Meigen (Diptera, Tabanidae)”).

From 1958 Dr Mikołajczyk was a member of the newly established Research Team for Dipterans Study. It was then that he began to specialize in Mycetophilidae (Nematocera), becoming the pioneer of research on this taxon in Poland. In 1967, at the University of Warsaw, he successfully passed his PhD exams based on the dissertation “Mycetophilidae (Diptera) wybranych środowisk Białowieskiego Parku Narodowego” [“Mycetophilidae (Diptera) of some habitats in Białowieża National Park”].

Throughout the whole duration of his scientific research and after retirement Dr Mikołajczyk was simultaneously taking care of the Nematocera collection in the Institute’s Museum.

As a member of various teams for faunistic, zoocoenological and regional studies he took part in field research in such regions of Poland as Kampinos Forest, Nida Valley, Białowieża Forest, Bieszczady Mountains, Świętokrzyskie Mountains, Roztocze Upland. In his publications he reported more than 100 species of Mycetophilidae new to Polish fauna. He was also a co-author of Environmental Protection Plans for two national parks: Świętokrzyski NP and Roztoczański NP.

Dr Waldemar Mikołajczyk published several dozen scientific papers (see the list below). He also developed a key for the identification of Bibionidae (Diptera) – as a part of a publishing series – Keys for the Identification of Polish Insects. His academic achievements are aided by about 150 publications¹, including numerous reports or notes, reviews, translations and other

¹ A broader list of works related to the activities of Dr W. Mikołajczyk, containing also popular science and popularizing works, can be found in the note issued by Dipteron on the occasion of his 80th anniversary: http://www.up.poznan.pl/pte/dipteron/biuletyn/vol32/01_%20Klasa_A-Woznica_AJ_DIPTERON_32.pdf

popularizing articles published as chapters in scientific and popular publications: books, scientific journals and science magazines.

Dr Mikołajczyk always performed the tasks entrusted to him reliably and with full commitment. He did not shy away from the difficult organizational and documentation work, unrewarding for such an avid entomologist. In the 1970s, he was the head of the Centre of Faunistical Documentation which collected data about the animals' occurrence and distribution in Poland in order to develop the characteristics of Polish fauna. In the 1980s, when the Institute of Zoology was a nationwide coordinator of the research projects in zoology, Dr Mikołajczyk was in charge as a secretary of the coordinating team. His task was to coordinate nearly 100 zoologists from more than a dozen scientific institutes which carried out large faunal projects, among them such major topics as: "The structure and origin of the Polish fauna in comparison to the fauna of other areas" or "Study on Polish fauna resources and the use of them", as well as more specific projects such as "Regional diversity of the fauna of Poland" and others.

During the last few years of his employment at the Institute Dr Mikołajczyk was a member of the Exhibition Department, which prepared several major exhibitions in Warsaw and other cities. He was an excellent exhibition guide, a charming storyteller, admired and enjoyed by the audience. For many years he worked together with an educational Polish Radio station in creating programs concerning biology, ecology, zoology and entomology.

He was an active participant in scientific societies, being a founding member of the Dipterological Section of the Polish Entomological Society and its first chairman in the years 1981–1983, as well as co-founder of „Biuletyn Informacyjny”, which was transformed in 1980 into a journal „Wiadomości Entomologiczne” [Entomological News]. In 1991 Dr Mikołajczyk co-founded the Physiographic Society and from the very beginning served as its secretary and as editor-in-chief of the journal „Nowy Pamiętnik Fizjograficzny” [New Physiographic Memoir]. He was also associated with „Fragmenta Faunistica” throughout his entire professional career as a reader, author, editor and reviewer, as well as an advisor of the team and a well-wisher of the journal.

In the memory of all who knew him, and especially in the memory of his friends and colleagues Waldek, as we called him, will remain primarily as a generous, wise and very polite man, friendly and kind to everyone, always eager to help, a great companion in field research, brilliant and witty (he always knew how to ease tensions between people with a skilful joke), willing to share his knowledge and experience. At the same time Waldek was a very modest and unassuming person, he avoided honours and decorations.

He was the most polite, kind, thoughtful and helpful person we have ever met. His passing marks the end of a good era... We miss him very much.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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