

## In memoriam of Juraj Holčík

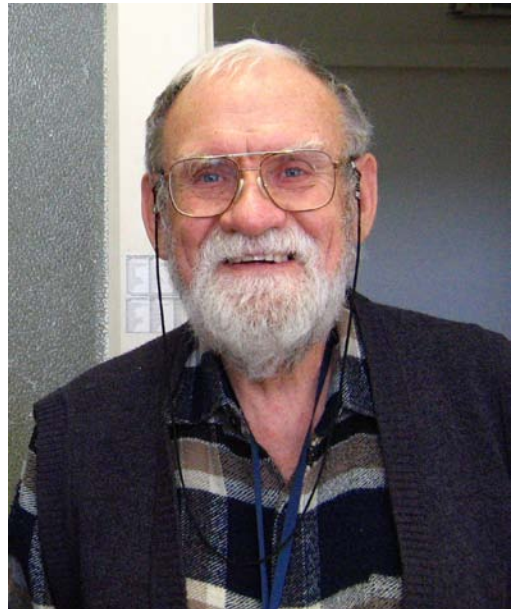
On 16 May 2010 Dr Juraj Holčík died after a long illness. He was a long-standing member of the Czechoslovak Zoological Society and Czech Zoological Society. He was a well-known Slovak ichthyologist of European importance. He was born on 18th October 1934 in Trnava. Juraj attended the grammar school in Banská Bystrica and later the secondary school in Bratislava. From 1953–1956 he studied at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Comenius University in Bratislava where he graduated after six semesters. Professor Pavel Koniar persuaded him to study ichthyology at the Biological Faculty of Charles University in Prague from 1956–1958, where he studied under Ota Oliva, a well known Czech ichthyologist, who importantly influenced Juraj's scientific career. The study of fish and ichthyology became his life time passion. After graduation in 1958 he worked at the Regional Museum in Trnava and at the Laboratory of Fishery in Bratislava (1958–1962). In 1961 he became a postgraduate student at the Zoological Institute of Charles University in Prague (1961–1965). In 1966 he obtained the degree of CSc. on the basis of his work on the dynamics of fish populations in the Klíčava Water Reservoir. From 1966–1968 he worked as a researcher and curator of collections of lower vertebrates in the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava, 1968–1990 in the Laboratory of Fishery and Hydrobiology and 1990–2004 in the Institute of Zoology, Slovak Academy of Sciences.

During his scientific life Juraj Holčík studied a wide range of problems dealing with ichthyology and fish, including population dynamics, production and growth of fish in standing and flowing water, their ecology, taxonomy, introductions, acclimatization, zoogeography and protection of the gene pool. In addition, he was interested also in limnology and ecosozology (i.e. conservation biology and restoration ecology).

He was a very diligent researcher and devoted all his time to working on fish and associated problems. He was also a good popularizer of science. He is the author of numerous original scientific papers, monographs and popular scientific publications, and his bibliography includes more than 400 articles. He is the author or co-author of 57 books and chapters in books. His greatest work is *The Eurasian Huchen (Hucho hucho) – Largest Salmon of the World* (1988).

He described six new species of fish and initiated the writing of the series of publications – *Freshwater Fishes of Europe*, to which he contributed several chapters or was the co-author.

The river Danube (Dunaj) was his passion, especially the threats to this river and its fish, about which he published many important articles. He played a very active part in the fight to preserve the Danube Delta below Bratislava





Left, Juraj Holčík lecturing at the Third European Ichthyological Congress held in Warszawa in 1979. Right, Juraj Holčík (on right) measuring fish in the Danube River inundation region in the eighties of the 20th century (all photos from the archives of the Institute of Zoology, Bratislava).

and was very critical of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydropower project. Dr. Holčík participated in a series of scientific expeditions and trips abroad (Cuba, Iran, Ghana, Canada), worked abroad as an expert for FAO and kept in contact with many ichthyologists throughout the world.

Dr Holčík was a member of numerous scientific societies, such as the Czech and Czechoslovak Zoological Society, Slovak Zoological Society and European Ichthyological Society, and was a member of editorial boards of several scientific journals. He was also a very good organizer and one of his most important achievements was his shared role in the establishment of the Institute of Zoology and Ecosozology in Bratislava (now the Institute of Zoology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences) in 1990 of which he was the first director (1990–1994).

Juraj Holčík was very active also in public life. After 1989 he was elected to the House of Nations of the Federal Assembly where he served as chairman of the Environmental Committee.

In 1996 Juraj Holčík received the Award for Conservation Merit of the World Wildlife Fund for his work in the field of environmental protection. He also took over the organization of the WWF from Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth. Juraj Holčík had very warm relationships with Czech zoology, Czech zoologists and ichthyologists, which was undoubtedly affected by his friendship with Ota Oliva.

Juraj Holčík was a passionate debater and contributed to various meetings, conferences and congresses, and expressed his opinions not only on his own subjects, ichthyology and zoology, but also on various aspects of biology and science in general.

All his colleagues will remember Juraj Holčík forever as a good man and friend.

*Miroslav Švátora, Ladislav Pekárik & Ján Koščo*

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