



IGOR ANDRIIVYCH AKIMOV
(19.07.1937–7.04.2021)

It is with great sadness that we announce that Igor Andriyovych Akimov passed away peacefully at home at the age of 83 years.

The death of Professor, Doctor of Sciences and Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Igor Akimov is a major blow to the zoological community in Ukraine, to the international communities of parasitologists, acarologists and entomologists, and to his colleagues and friends in the Institute and Academy. He was the Director of the I. I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine from 1987 to the very end of his life. Being a zoologist with a wide range of expertise, including in fundamental and applied acarology, evolutionary and functional morphology, ecology and evolutionary biology, he generously created scientific ideas giving ceaseless impulses to the scientific projects he ran as a leader.

Igor Akimov was a member of the Bureau of General Biology of the NAS of Ukraine, head of the Scientific Council for the Problems of Nature Conservation and Nature Reserves at the BGB NASU, and Deputy Chairman of the National Commission of the Red Data Book of Ukraine. For many years, he was President of the Ukrainian Scientific Society, Vice President of the Ukrainian Entomological Society, and head of the Kyiv Society for Nature Conservation, Editor-in-Chief of the journal “Zoodiversity” (former “Vestnik Zoologii”), member of many scientific councils and societies. He participated in many organizing committees and commissions in the National Academy of Sciences and international organizations. His competence, wide scope of thought and sharp mind were always of great use for contestations requiring non-trivial solutions.

Igor A. Akimov was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, on July 19, 1937 to his loving parents Andriy Kuzmich Akimov and Lyudmila Yosypivna Akimova, both schoolteachers. Already as a child he adored the endlessly exciting, colourful and diverse world of nature. This interest brought him to the zoological workshop of the Republican Station of Young Naturalists, which determined his destiny forever. In 1954, while in 9th form at school, he attended the All-Union Exhibition of National Economy Achievements and was awarded the Exhibition Medal. In 1955 he graduated from the 25th School and started his studies in biology at Taras Shevchenko National University, where he started his scientific career and took on his first roles of responsibility and team management. As a master’s student, he was assigned to be head of an expedition carried out with a team of doctoral students

and assistant professors; during this field trip he collected entomological and acarological material ectoparasitic on birds.

This work was followed by a doctoral fellowship under the supervision of Oleksandr P. Kryshchal, when as a young scientist Igor lived and worked in a well-equipped ecological lab in Kaniv Nature Reserve. In 1963–1966 he worked at the Laboratory of Arachno-Entomology at Kyiv University in a team of talented young scientists such as Volodymyr G. Dolin, Leonid I. Frantsevich, Galyna I. Shcherbak, Svitlana V. Kononova, Volodymyr M. Loskot and many others.

After completing and defending his PhD thesis in 1965, Igor Akimov started his career at the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 1966, with new and wide perspectives in studies of the animal world and new responsibilities: for two years he was Scientific Secretary of the Institute and a member of the Specialized Council for scientific degrees at the Institute. He was a persistent initiator in establishing, in 1968, the Laboratory of Acarology at the Institute, which soon became a hotspot for developing new research directions. In 1978, the lab was raised to the Department of Acarology, which has become a world-renowned centre for acarological studies. In 1979 he defended his highest scientific degree of Doctor of Sciences.

Igor A. Akimov authored almost 250 publications, including 7 monographs on the biological features of mites and ticks of medical and economic importance. He was a pioneer in ecological and physiological studies of the evolution of the acaroid mite organ systems as the basis for prediction of their pest importance and control.

Perhaps his highest scientific achievement is the scientific school he established as a supervisor or advisor for 25 Doctors of Philosophy and one Doctor of Sciences, who readily solved various scientific tasks and problems.

Igor Akimov made numerous collecting trips throughout the former USSR, including in Central Asia, Trans-Baikalian and Far East Russia, the Ukraine and abroad: to South-East Asia and across the Indian Ocean on the scientific ship “Academician Vernadsky” in 1981, which collected an extremely important scientific material for the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

Throughout most of his life, Igor Akimov taught in and collaborated with several universities as an invited lecturer, supervisor and curator of scientific work, influencing the high quality of courses, directing the interests of young specialists towards actual problems of environmental and biodiversity studies, and recommending the most prospective directions for their studies.

For 34 years, since June 16, 1987, Igor A. Akimov served as the Director and Scientific Supervisor of the I. I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology.

He considered his support of comprehensive zoological studies at the Institute to be his most important task as Director, and always supported talented and competitive scientists in both classical and modern zoological studies as well as in nature conservation.

Being a leader in the all-institutional scientific projects for the monitoring and rational use of nature, the Red Data Book of Ukraine, the study of biodiversity, and conservation and nature reserves, he proposed many important ideas for the inclusion of many former military territories formerly or territoried of other special use on the list of protected areas. He initiated the inclusion of the scientific zoological collections of the Institute into the National Heritage of Ukraine and supported, since 2000, paleoentomological studies based on amber inclusions as a new perspective direction, which has become world-renowned.

Due to his tireless working, outstanding achievements and high expertise and experience in science management, Igor Akimov became a renowned expert in fundamental and applied acarology, zooparasitology, evolutionary and functional morphology, ecology and evolutionary studies of animals, as well as in nature conservation and zoology in general.

His expertise and knowledge are irreplaceable, but his legacy will stay with his colleagues and students forever.