

A FEW PAGES FROM THE LIFE OF VITALY GIRAGOSOV (ANTI-OBITUARY)



Why “anti-obituary”? Because even though we’ll never hear his “Hi!” again, it is absurd to say or write that Vitaly Giragosov is no longer with us on this sinful Earth. The word “obituary” does not fit with him in any way – from his name meaning “vital” to all our vivid memories and thoughts about him.

Different people have different associations, different impressions, different memory, and different recollections. Anybody who was acquainted with Vitaly could tell something unique – something that arose in the dialogue with him. It did not matter whether it was the conversation on a research subject, about fish, birds, or plants, about expeditions and trips, about books read or films watched, about childhood, or adulthood, and whether the conversation was serious, or comic. Anyone would say that it is very interesting with him and never boring – you always learn something new and always look forward to talk next time. Never getting into any squabbles and gossip, he was capable of maintaining relations even with very difficult and, possibly, unpleasant persons. In any situation, he was the most reliable companion and a stronghold in everything. He had an exclusively man character, completely lacking brutality; he was a person of exceptional decency, exceptional erudition, and exceptional modesty. His research was thorough and reliable – just like he was. Not being personally acquainted with him, not knowing about his sportive past but having only read his articles, one might think that he was a pedant and a bookworm. Oh, yes, he was an avid reader and knew a lot. However, his life was full of sport, competitions, and freedom of movement from childhood. During school-time, he explored all abandoned coal heaps around his native city Stakhanov, and he bred all kinds of living creatures at his native house; during summer-time, he learned more and more about the sea life in Gelendzhik.

Seems, the childhood of this Soviet boy in many ways turned out to be similar to the childhood of the English boy Gerald Durrell on the island of Corfu (see “My Family and Other Animals”). Fate led both to become the naturalists. From the beginning, the fate directed Vitaly to the faculty of biology of the Kuban University, and gave him an opportunity to explore the Kuban and the Caucasus. Then, the fate beckoned him to enter the PhD graduate



school at IBSS and, with the PhD thesis theme of studying myctophids of the World Ocean, promised him expeditions to far seas and oceans, but he was mysteriously not allowed to any oceanic cruise. And he studied the life of myctophids based of conserved material so thoroughly, and wrote such a unique PhD thesis that the Institute of Hydrobiology where he defended his work wanted to award him (but could not do it because of bureaucracy) a doctoral degree.

He managed to travel to distant countries a little. In 2001, at the University of the Sea in Mexico, he was a unique professor and the only expert in fish reproduction. Study of oceanic myctophids' age by otoliths increments led him to get acquainted with a well-known specialist – Dr. Tomasz Linkowski, the director of the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Gdynia. In 2009, he invited Vitaly to study the collection of the Black Sea turbot otoliths on unique specialized equipment. That's all his travels to distant lands.

But he came back to the love of his youth, the most faithful one – to birds – and devoted a lot of time to studying waterfowl migratory birds in Sevastopol area. He turned out to be a unique specialist – an ornithologist this time. Over past ten years, he discovered many peculiarities in the hidden life of these birds just in the vicinity of our city. He took hundreds of great pictures and presented them in a fascinating and professional way online and on TV to countless people. He captivated people with his passion and helped them to fall in love with these free creatures.

On 20 February, 2022, he suddenly flew away from our world. Maybe too tired from many things, he left early. His soul is free now, and can be anywhere. May soar in the sky with birds or explore the ocean depths. And for all of us, it still seems that he joked and once will suddenly come in, or call, and will say that he was late.

We all miss him very much.



But you can turn on the video “Long Way of Marine Expeditions” (<https://media.marine-research.ru/items/show/1610>) and listen for ten minutes to his wonderful voice which tells, perhaps, you personally: “Why do people study the Ocean?”

*Leading researcher of IBSS aquaculture
and marine pharmacology department,
PhD*

A. N. Khanaychenko

НЕСКОЛЬКО СТРАНИЦ ИЗ ЖИЗНИ ВИТАЛИЯ ЕВГЕНЬЕВИЧА ГИРАГОСОВА (АНТИНЕКРОЛОГ)

20 февраля 2022 г. внезапно оборвалась жизнь нашего дорого друга и коллеги — Виталия Евгеньевича Гирагосова, известного специалиста в области ихтиологии и орнитологии и автора десятков научных работ.