Vladimir E. Sokolov: 1928–98

Vladimir E. Sokolov, an FFI Vice-President, died in Moscow on 19 April 1998 at the age of 70. He was an outstanding zoologist, the leader of Russian Mammalogy, famous for his organization of science and the nature conservation movement at the international level,

He was member of the Presidium of Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Head of the General Biology Department of RAS, Director of the A. N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of RAS and Head of the Laboratory of the Higher Vertebrates Morphology and Ecology of the same Institute. He was also Head of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology and General Ecology, Biological Faculty, Moscow State University.

He was born in Moscow, Russia, on 1 February 1928 to the family of a Professor of Zoology. His career as mammalogist started upon graduation from the Moscow Fur Institute. He obtained his Candidate degree in 1953, and his Doctorate in 1964. In 1957 he was appointed senior lecturer in Mammalian Biology and Systematics, conducting research on mammal skin which remained a lifelong interest (see V. E. Sokolov, *Mammal Skin*, California Press, 1982). In 1967 he was appointed Director of the Severtsov Institute of Evolutionary Morphology and Ecology of Animals (now the Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of RAS). In this position he was active in establishing international scientific relationships in the fields of zoology and ecology.

V. Sokolov was Vice-President of the International Union of the Biological Sciences, Vice-President of the International Man and the Biosphere Programme, a member of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and Scientific leader of the Russian–Mongolian Biological Expedition.

He was organizer of numerous zoological expeditions all over the Soviet Union and elsewhere, including in Bolivia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mongolia, Peru and Vietnam. In 1974 he initiated and chaired the first Theriological (Mammalogical) Congress in Moscow, a year before the Russian Theriological Society was founded under his presidency.

V. Sokolov's dedication to research and dissemination of knowledge was exemplified in many ways: radiobiology (South Urals, Chernobyl 1986), ethology, systematics of mammals (he described several new species, for example *Sicista kluchorica*, *S. kazbegica*, *S. armenica* and *Stylodipus sungorus*). One species of rodent was named after him – *Cricetulus sokolovi*. He was one of the first authors to write about the concept of biosphere reserves and was instigator for many projects for endangered mammalian species conservation, notably Przewalski's wild horse.

Being deeply interested in the history of science he started a serial publication, the *History of Russian Theriology*; the first volume covering the early period was published in 1993.

He left behind a school of his own, and more than 800 individual and joint works including about 30 monographs.

V. Sokolov's contribution was recognized both nationally and internationally. He was awarded the Severtsov Prize of the USSR Academy of Science, the Purkinje Medal, (CSSR), the Karpinsky Prize (Germany), USSR State Prizes (1985 and 1991), and other scientific and state awards. Many foreign research institutions and societies awarded him membership, including those in India, Peru and Poland. In 1990 he became Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Science.

Beyond his academic life, he took an interest in safari hunting, sport and the arts – specifically, the representation of animals in art– and he collected works of animal painters. We recognize Professor Sokolov as a scientist, teacher, editor, conservationist and organizer of science. He will be missed, but the legacy he left behind will live on and be developed by his students and colleagues.

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