**Professor Stefan Niesiołowski – entomologist, hydrobiologist
and politician**

JACEK SICIŃSKI

Department of Invertebrate Zoology and Hydrobiology, University of Łódź,
Banacha 12/16, 90-237 Łódź, Poland, e-mail: sicinski@biol.uni.lodz.pl

Prof. dr hab. Stefan Niesiołowski – professor of biological sciences, zoologist and entomologist, was born in 1944. A keen naturalist since he was young, he completed his biological studies at the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences of the University of Łódź in 1966. In the same year he embarked on his scientific career as an assistant in the Department of General Zoology (currently the Department of Invertebrate Zoology and Hydrobiology), which became his place of work as a researcher and academic teacher for decades.

A talented natural historian, he devoted himself to the study of entomology. The taxonomy and morphology, biology and ecology of aquatic immature stages (larvae and pupae) of black flies became his main research field in the early stages of his scientific career (NIESIOŁOWSKI 1969b, 1978a, b, c, 1980a, b, c, d and 1982a, b, c). He was awarded his doctorate in the natural sciences in 1979 following the defence of his PhD dissertation (*Meszki (Simuliidae, Diptera) rzek Widawki i Grabia*) [*Black flies (Simuliidae, Diptera) of the Rivers Widawka and Grabia, Poland*] on the black flies of two rivers and its tributaries in central Poland. The diversity and ecology, distribution and life cycles of members of this nematoceran family were the main questions addressed in this monograph, published in a series of papers over 30 years ago at the beginning of the 1980s. The black fly ecology of lotic habitats from the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, Tatra Mountains as well as the Western Carpathians makes up a significant part of his scientific achievements. His studies have therefore had a significant influence on knowledge of the Simuliidae of the lowland rivers and springs as well as the upland and mountain streams of Poland. His research into black flies continued over the ensuing years (NIESIOŁOWSKI 1987b, 1997), culminating in a monograph, a volume in the series *Freshwater Fauna of Poland* (NIESIOŁOWSKI & BOKŁAK 2001).

Fig. Professor Stefan Niesiołowski.

At the same time, at the beginning of the 1980s, he initiated and established for the next twenty-five years intensive and successful studies on another dipteran family, not recognized in Poland – the dance flies (Empididae). His interest focused on both aquatic genera (*Hemerodromia*, *Wiedemannia* and *Chelifera* – NIESIOŁOWSKI 1986c, 1987a, 1988 and 1992a, WAGNER & NIESIOŁOWSKI 1987 and KRYSIK & NIESIOŁOWSKI 2004) and species with larvae that develop in soil, for example his extensive studies on species from the genus *Hilara* (NIESIOŁOWSKI 1983, 1986a, b). His habilitation thesis published in

1990 (*Morfologia, biologia i występowanie w Polsce wodnych Empididae (Diptera, Brachycera)* [*Morphology, biology and distribution in Poland of aquatic Empididae (Diptera, Brachycera)*] (NIESIOŁOWSKI 1990) contains numerous and extensive descriptions with identification keys of genera and species of aquatic dance flies. His review of the Empididae aquatica (NIESIOŁOWSKI 1992 b) and two other important taxonomic monographs on the genera *Hilara* (NIESIOŁOWSKI & KRYSIAK 1996) and *Empis* (NIESIOŁOWSKI 2006) as well as fundamental work on the morphology, natural history, ecology and zoogeography of two empidid subfamilies Hemerodromiinae and Clinocerinae (NIESIOŁOWSKI 2005) are among the most prominent of Prof. Niesiołowski's achievements with regard to the Empididae.

His entomological interests and extensive studies were not limited to these two dipteran families. In cooperation with Prof. Rüdiger Wagner from the Limnologische Flußstation in Schlitz (Germany), he published two papers (WAGNER & NIESIOŁOWSKI 1986, 1997) on two other dipteran families, the Psychodidae and the Thaumaleidae, as a result of a research programme carried out in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains. Co-authored descriptions with diagrams and data on the abundance and distribution of larvae of different dipteran families (NIESIOŁOWSKI & SICIŃSKI 1982) were later effects of this programme, carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Stefan Niesiołowski described a dozen or so dipteran species new to science and published dozens of original scientific papers, taxonomic revisions and monographs on the taxonomy, biology and ecology of these two insect families. He became an eminent expert – mainly in Poland and one of the few in Europe – in the taxonomy, biology and ecology of black flies (Simuliidae) and dance flies (Empididae). His academic achievements in zoology consist of over 50 original papers (including 5 monographs on the taxonomy, morphology and biology of the Dipteran families he studied) and many articles on different animal groups and on nature protection. He took an active part in the life of scientific societies, including the Polish Entomological Society and the Polish Hydrobiological Society. He was awarded a professorship in the biological sciences in 2005.

In the years 1969-1974, as a member of the democratic opposition, Stefan Niesiołowski was a political prisoner of the communist regime in Poland. In free Poland he has been a member of parliament since 1989; in 2007-2011 he was a Senator of the Republic of Poland. Prof. Niesiołowski is also the author of many press articles and books of a commemorative, political and historical character.

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