



Izyaslav Moiseyevich Kerzhner  
(1936 - 2008)

# Iziaslav Moiseyevich Kerzhner

(6 March 1936 – 29 May 2008)

**Iziaslav Moiseyevich Kerzhner** – entomologist, Professor and Chief Researcher of the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a Commissioner of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

**Iziaslav Moiseyevich Kerzhner** died on 29 May, 2008, at the age of 72 in St. Petersburg.

Iziaslav Moiseyevich loved insects and mathematics from early childhood. In 1953 he enrolled in Kishinev University, but unfortunately their Department of Entomology closed shortly thereafter. He managed to move to Leningrad – a very difficult feat at that time – and became a student at the Department of Entomology of the Leningrad State University and studied under the famous Professor A.S. Danilevsky, then Head of Department. It was Danilevsky who suggested that he study the systematics of Hemiptera, which remained the primary focus of all his scientific activities and the central objective of his life. In 1958, after graduation, Iziaslav Moiseyevich was employed at the Zoological Institute and started work under the supervision of Professor A.N. Kirichenko, and soon became a recognised expert. He contributed to the Key for the Identification of Insects of the European USSR, which was a huge multi-volume project that lasted several decades. In 1965 Iziaslav Moiseyevich, defended his Candidate of Science (Ph. D.) thesis on predatory Heteroptera of the family Nabidae (damselfly bugs) of the USSR. He was an excellent expert in taxonomy of most of the Palaearctic terrestrial Heteroptera fauna and considerably contributed to our knowledge of Miridae, Pentatomidae, Coreidae and other families. However he continued to work on the Nabidae throughout his whole career. In 1990 I.M. Kerzhner obtained the degree of Doctor of Sciences with his book “Hemiptera of the Family Nabidae in the Fauna of the USSR”, a major contribution to the systematics, zoogeography, biology and morphology of the damselfly bugs.

The scientific interests of Iziaslav Moiseyevich were extraordinarily wide. Like his scientific supervisor A.N. Kirichenko he became an expert on the history of entomology and zoology in general, and was especially passionate about the history of fieldwork by Russian travellers and collectors. He also developed a deep knowledge of the entomological literature; library activities played an important role in Iziaslav Moiseyevich's work.

His expertise was recognised by the staff of the scientific library of the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and he was an indispensable adviser on the subject of dates of publication of rare books and papers. Even during his last illness he regularly came to the institute's library with colleagues to resolve bibliographic problems. He also loved zoological collections and could spend days and months deciphering illegible labels. These skills made him an outstanding nomenclaturist.

A Commissioner of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature from 1996, he relished the challenge of nomenclatural puzzles, and through his dedication and energy solved a vast number of problems concerning the nomenclature of many groups of animals, not only his beloved Heteroptera. The other commissioners considered him among the leading lights in zoological nomenclature. Iziaslav Moiseyevich participated in international debates on the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature right up until the time of his death. He translated two editions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature into Russian, an immense contribution to the development of taxonomy and systematics in countries with Cyrillic-based languages. His linguistic skills were remarkable; he knew Latin and Greek, English, German and French, and could read Italian, Spanish and basic Chinese!

A third major field of Iziaslav Moiseyevich's work was his editorial activity; it was mostly through his efforts that the 11 collected volumes of “Insects of Mongolia” were published over many years. He was a founder and Editor-in-Chief of the journal “Zoosystematica Rossica” which became the only Russian journal specialising in the taxonomy of animals. This role earned him tremendous respect all over the former USSR for his readiness to help colleagues to prepare and publish taxonomic papers.

Iziaslav Moiseyevich was a very skilled insect collector. He participated in numerous expeditions throughout the USSR and Mongolia, and further afield to Cuba, Mexico, USA, and Israel.

He collected extensive and rare material of many insect orders.

Izyaslav Moiseyevich's scientific-organization work was multifaceted. He was a member of the Scientific Council and Library Council of the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Council and Presidium of the Russian Entomological Society, a member of the International Hemipterists' Society, Honorary Member of the Russian Entomological Society and Hungarian Entomological Society.

It is impossible to list all of Izyaslav Moiseyevich Kerzhner's activities and achievements, and one cannot help admiring his high professionalism and his multitude of accomplishments. In all that he did his strictly logical frame of mind, excellent memory, outstanding linguistic ability, broad outlook, remarkable honesty, and fantastic efficiency shone through. Everyone who was ac-

quainted with Izyaslav Moiseyevich knows that he devoted much of his time to his colleagues helping them in their research, assisting them in resolving questions of zoological nomenclature and editing scientific editions. The many colleagues who sought his advice, whether on taxonomic or nomenclatural matters, received deep, careful and exhaustive answers.

Izyaslav Moiseyevich's everyday work as a scientific editor, and his generous and expert advice on taxonomy, nomenclature and entomological literature brought him deep respect and gratitude.

He was a person of rare talent, generosity, fidelity to principle, and selflessness. His death is an irreparable loss to entomology, nomenclature, and to everyone who knew him closely.

The memory of Izyaslav Moiseyevich Kerzhner will always live in our hearts.

*Alexander Emeljanov, Gleb Medvedev, Nina Bogutskaya,  
Boris Korotyaev, Svetlana Nikolayeva*