

Professor Jiří Gaisler 3 July 1934 – 17 July 2014

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On 17 July 2014, the zoological community lost one of its true personalities when Professor Jiří Gaisler, chiropterologist, scholar, educator and gentleman, died at the age of 80 following a heart attack. Coincidentally, the unfortunate death of our teacher, colleague and friend Jiří occurred exactly 150 years after that of another famous resident of Brno, Professor Friedrich Anton Kolenati, one of the founding fathers of European bat research.

Born on 3 July 1934 in Prague, Jiří became an outstanding and internationally recognised mammologist who started with modern European bat research in the early 1960s, and spent much of that time studying in the Moravian region of his home country, the Czech Republic.

After completion of his graduate studies at the Faculty of Science at Charles University (Prague) in 1957, Jiří started his professional career as a research assistant at the Institute of Vertebrate Zoology of the Czechoslovakian Academy of Sciences (Brno). He specialised in bat research and the results of his postgraduate thesis on the ecology of the lesser horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus hipposideros* were published in three key papers (1963), which are still being cited to this day.

In addition to his distinguished scientific career, Jiří was also a respected teacher; indeed, science and education represented the two parallels of his life. In 1969, he joined the Department of Animal and Human Biology of the University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Brno (currently retitled the Department of Botany and Zoology, Masaryk University), where he worked, with only a few short breaks, to his untimely death. Having been made Associate Professor in 1979 and Full Professor in 1991, he held a number of positions at Masaryk University, including Head of the Department of Zoology and Ecology (1990–1996) and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Science for Scientific Education (1995–1999). Dozens of zoology students have graduated under his supervision. Over the last ten years of his life, Jiří, now recognised as an Emeritus Professor, was still helping with the tuition of Master's and Doctoral students and co-operating on research projects.

Jiří's prime research interest was always the study of bat biology. His contributions to our knowledge of bat biology resulted in a number of key achievements and his efforts were key in integrating international bat research efforts, one of the results of which was the founding of





International Bat Research Conferences. Together with Vladimír Hanák (Prague), he established extensive bat-banding and long-term population monitoring programs. His scientific publications have brought to light much original data on the population ecology of European bat species, including *Myotis emarginatus*, *Nyctalus noctula* and *Rhinolophus hipposideros*.

In addition to his work on bats, however, Jiří also published many professional papers dealing with other topics of vertebrate zoology and published or contributed to numerous books on the subject. Some of his most important works include chapters in two books, the *Ecology of Small Mammals* (1979) and the *Hanbuch der Säugetiere Europas* (2001). He produced a number of popular books and valuable textbooks, including the *Atlas of Mammals of the Czech and Slovak Republics* (2002), *Mammals of the Czech Republic* (2012), and updated the textbook *Vertebrate Zoology*, published in cooperation with Jan Zima (2007).

Jiří was active in many scientific societies, both in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic and abroad. He participated in the work of the Chiroptera Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and served on the Scientific Advisory Board of Bat Conservation International (USA). He was co-founder and first President of the Czech Bat Conservation Trust, later serving as Honorary President. In addition, he served on the Scientific Boards of numerous scientific bodies, including the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Czech Zoological Society, the National Committee of the International Union of Biological Sciences, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the American Society of Mammalogists. Finally, he was an active participant on the editorial boards of a range of scientific journals, including *Folia Zoologica* and *Acta Theriologica*.

For his achievements in the field of biology, Jiří was awarded the G. J. Mendel Medal of Honour of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in 1995 and the Prize of the Rector

of Masaryk University (Brno) in 1999. If this were not enough, his name has become eternal in the field of science in at least one other way, when a new bat, Gaisler's long-eared bat *Plecotus gaisleri*, was named after him.

Those who had the opportunity to meet Jiří personally quickly appreciated his brilliant intellect, his deep insight into diverse aspects of bat biology, his broad cultural background and his kind sense of humour. He will be remembered as a particularly kind and generous man who gave of his time and expertise unselfishly, and as a man who was highly respected by his students, colleagues and many friends. Whilst we aware that these few lines cannot hope to describe the incomparably rich and full human life that was Jiří Gaisler, as long-term collaborators and friends, we believe that the huge legacy of Jiří will long outlast him.

Bibliography of Professor Jiří Gaisler since 1994

Compiled by Zdeněk Řehák. Note: Most of older Gaisler's publications were comprised in the lists published by Zúkal (1994) and Nevrlý (2010). In this bibliography review some older unpublished or missing articles have been added. All abstracts published in various conference proceedings were excluded from this list. The publication titles are in their original languages.

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